



KUWAIT TO LAUNCH NATIONWIDE CRACKDOWN AFTER JUNE 30

Grip tightens on amnesty defiers

Four sites allocated for visa offenders ahead of deportation

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 27: The Ministry of Interior, with all of its field security sectors, will carry out an unprecedented security campaign against Residency Law violators once the two-week extension of the deadline for them to leave the country or legalize their status ends on Sunday, June 30.

Sources from the ministry revealed that the campaign covers all governorates with the participation of security, residency affairs investigation, criminal investigation, rescue and special services directorates as per the directive

of First Deputy Premier, Minister of Interior and Defense Sheikh Fahad Yousuf Saud Al-Sabah.

Sources explained that the extensive security campaign is aimed at eliminating Residency Law violators; even those who are in the farms, chalets and remote areas. Sources also warned that the necessary legal measures will be taken against those who harbor these violators.

Sources disclosed that four sites have been allocated for violators who will be arrested or surrender to the authorities after the deadline. They said these sites include the Deportation Prison, Juvenile Welfare Department building at the Sulabiya Prison Complex, Accommodation Department and Detention Department building in the Residency Investigations General Department building along the United Nations Roundabout (formerly Al-Azham). They added these sites can accommodate about 3,500 people in preparation for their deportation upon completion of legal and administrative procedures -- the most

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Electricity crisis to ease

Kuwait plans 3 projects in infrastructure boost

By Mahmoud Shendi and Mohammed Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 27: Naif Al-Haddad, Director of the Office of Research and Strategic Planning at the Public-Private Partnership Projects Authority, recently disclosed plans for three major projects set to be launched in Kuwait.

These projects are notable both for their scale in terms of cost and for the significant international interest they have garnered among companies competing for their implementation.

Speaking at a workshop jointly held with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Al-Haddad highlighted the forthcoming announcement of the Shaqaya project, aimed at generating electricity from renewable sources.

He emphasized the readiness to issue tenders promptly, alongside the publication of qualified companies for the fixed communications project in collaboration with the Ministry of Communications in the Official Gazette.

Regarding the Al-Zour North Power Plant project, Al-Haddad noted an extension for bids from qualified investors until September 30. This project, encompassing phases two and three, is crucial for Kuwait's energy security, as it will add 2,600 megawatts to the national electricity production capacity.

Al-Haddad stressed the pivotal role of the private sector in these initiatives, highlighting how partnerships with private entities can alleviate the financial burden on the state while advancing infrastructure development aligned with societal objectives. He underscored that these public-private partnership projects not only foster private sector engagement but also serve broader community interests.

In summary, Kuwait's focus on promoting such partnership-driven projects reflects a strategic approach to enhancing national infrastructure and energy capabilities, leveraging international expertise and fostering economic growth.

In latest development, according to informed sources within the Ministry of Electricity and Water and Renewable Energy, the electricity crisis in Kuwait is expected to improve significantly by early July.

These sources revealed that 1,160 megawatts from the Al-Zour South station will be added to the national grid by the end of this month.

These additional megawatts will come from gas units of the "Elston" type, which are currently undergoing maintenance work. Efforts to expedite this maintenance have

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Ministry of Defense photo
Minister of Defense Sheikh Fahad Yousuf Saud Al-Sabah with the Chief of General Staff of the Kuwaiti Army, senior army commanders and the French military attaché.

New acquisition set to revolutionize Kuwaiti Air Force operations

Kuwait bolsters defense with final Caracal aircraft delivery

KUWAIT CITY, June 27: The recent arrival of the final batch of Caracal aircraft marks a significant milestone in Kuwait's efforts to modernize its Air Force, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousuf Al-Sabah emphasized the political leadership's commitment to enhancing the capabilities of the Kuwaiti Armed Forces across all domains.

This initiative aims to align Kuwait's military capabilities with advancements in armament and military equipment, adhering to the highest technical and technological standards.

Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousuf spoke at the ceremony held at Kuwait International Airport, celebrating the delivery of two Caracal helicopters as part of a larger French helicopter procurement agreement. This agreement includes a total of 30 aircraft, with 24 des-

ignated for the Kuwaiti Army and 6 for the National Guard's helicopter wing.

The ongoing modernization of Kuwait's aviation system is expected to bring about a profound transformation in the capabilities of the Kuwaiti Air Force.

The Caracal helicopters are equipped with advanced technologies and capabilities designed to provide comprehensive support to Kuwaiti army units. They are capable of executing landing and rapid

intervention operations efficiently, participating in search and rescue missions, facilitating immediate evacuations, and serving as reliable transportation assets.

In summary, Kuwait's investment in modernizing its Air Force through the acquisition of Caracal helicopters underscores its commitment to enhancing national defense capabilities and readiness, ensuring the ability to respond effectively to various operational needs and contingencies.

Kuwait exchange market recovery linked to black market crackdown

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 27: The Kuwaiti exchange market is currently experiencing a period of recovery after several months of severe stagnation. This stagnation was largely due to the growth of the black market mafia, which has been very active in recent years. Their activity intensified with the steep rise in the dollar's price on the Egyptian black market. This situation particularly affected the local exchange companies sector, which relies heavily on remittances from Egyptian workers.

Officials in the Kuwaiti banking sector confirmed to Al-Seyassah that the black market currency trading mafia exploited the significant currency difference when the dollar price in Egypt soared to approximately 70 Egyptian pounds, while the official exchange rate in banks was

around 30 pounds. This discrepancy led to a boom in illicit currency trade in Arab countries with a large Egyptian workforce, including Kuwait.

These officials added that many local accredited exchange offices and companies nearly went bankrupt from the second half of 2023 until the first quarter of 2024, with some reducing their workforce. The sources explained that the Egyptian government's decision to increase the dollar price in banks to about 47 pounds, along with tighter controls over the currency trade mafia, encouraged Egyptian workers abroad, especially in Arab countries, to use legitimate channels for their transactions.

In related news, a report by the Central Bank of Egypt on the balance of payments for the first quarter of the fiscal year 2023/2024 revealed a 29.9% decline

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Infrastructure overhaul tied to Kuwait economic success



KUNA photo
Kuwaiti Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan during a meeting on Thursday.

KUWAIT CITY, June 27, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan stressed Thursday the importance of establishing a distinguished infrastructure to enhance the economic and tourism potential of the country.

The aim is to ensure the provision of high-quality services in line with the aesthetic image of Kuwait, Al-Mashaan told KUNA after meeting with Minister of Commerce and Industry and

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Kuwait Field Hospital in Al-Mawasi, west of Khan Younis, receiving patients.

Beacon of hope amid Palestinian crisis

Kuwait Field Hospital services thousands in Gaza

GAZA, June 27, (Agencies): The administration of Kuwait Specialized Hospital succeeded in opening a field hospital in Al-Mawasi, west of Khan Younis, at a time when the health-care system in Gaza is collapsing due to the ongoing Israeli aggression.

Kuwait & Iraq step up border security collab

KUWAIT CITY, June 27: In a bid to enhance co-operation and bolster security along their shared borders, Kuwait and Iraq recently held a regular meeting at the Land Border Security Department in the Ratqa sector on the Kuwaiti side, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The Kuwaiti delegation was led by Brigadier General Walid Khaled AlSaaded, Director General of the General Administration of Land Border Security, while Major General Nofal Hassan Fouad,

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The Israeli aggression targeted the Hospital's main building in Rafah, resulting in the death of two staff members.

The Kuwaiti Field Hospital became a hub; serving thousands of Palestinians, as it includes a surgery department, a birth clinic, 13 specialized clinics, a dental center, and four emergency departments, with a 60-bed capacity and other services such as laboratories, radiology and a pharmacy.

The hospital location's plays a crucial role in combating infectious diseases and the difficulties of transferring patients to other hospitals, as it is among thousands of tents housing displaced persons.

Opening the hospital is a responsibility to serve Palestinians who deserve life amidst shelling and destruction, said Dr. Suhaib Al-Hams, director of Kuwait Specialized Hospital, in a statement to KUNA.

Dr. Al-Hams further explained the decision to establish the field hospital was made after the Israeli aggression invaded Rafah, as medical equipment from Kuwait Hospital was evacuated in stages for over than three continuous weeks.

Elsewhere, Egypt and Turkiye on Wednesday stressed the need to reach an immediate and permanent ceasefire in the Gaza Strip.

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News watch

KUWAIT CITY: The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) affirmed the importance of cooperation between humanitarian organizations to improve the lives of those in need, especially in Gaza. The statement was made in a video call by IFRC Vice President Maha Al-Barjas on Wednesday, during the 48th session of the Arab Red Crescent and Red Cross Organization (ARCO), held in the Syrian capital, Damascus.

IFRC is continuously exerting great efforts to resolve regional and international humanitarian issues, especially in the Middle East and North Africa, she said. (KUNA)



Al-Barjas

Prayer Timings

Fajr 03:16 Asr 15:25
 Sunrise .. 04:51 Maghrib .. 18:51
 Zohr 11:51 Isha 20:24

Local

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:
By Day: Very hot with light to moderate freshening at times northwesterly wind, with speeds of 10-40 km/h with a chance for rising dust over open areas.

Weather

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

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	48	38

Kuwait Airport	49	33
Abdaly	48	32
Jahra	49	35
Salmiyah	45	35
Nuwaisib	46	33
Wafra	48	33

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

MoE honors 145 outstanding Grade 12 students for '23-'24 academic year



Photos by Rizk Taufiq

Above: Some photos from the graduation ceremony held under the patronage and in the presence of Minister of Education, Higher Education and Scientific Research Dr. Adel Al-Adwani.

High school seniors express their overwhelming happiness

KUWAIT CITY, June 27: The Ministry of Education recently honored 145 outstanding Grade 12 students for academic year 2023-2024 at its theater under the patronage and in the presence of Minister of Education, Higher Education and Scientific Research Dr. Adel Al-Adwani, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a press statement, acting As-

sistant Undersecretary for Educational Development and Activities Maryam Al-Anzi disclosed that the ceremony is held annually in honor and appreciation of the outstanding students who exerted tremendous efforts to obtain high marks.

She confirmed that the ceremony included honoring the top 10 students in the scientific, literary and

religious education sections; top 50 Kuwaiti students in the scientific and literary sections; and top five students in the scientific and literary sections in special education schools.

She asserted this is not the end of the academic journey of the students, as it rather signals the beginning of their university journey; wishing

them good luck and success in serving their country.

She affirmed that she is proud of all the outstanding students who reaped the fruits of their long journey of seeking knowledge, hard work and persistence towards excellence. She pointed out that they are the future leaders who possess the qualities of leadership, creativity and

determination to realize the advanced goals of the nation. She also confirmed support for distinguished and talented students as they are the fundamental pillar in building the nation.

Meanwhile, the high school seniors expressed their overwhelming happiness for achieving academic excellence. They stressed

their determination to continue the path towards distinction and excellence in the university. They expressed their deep gratitude to their families, teachers and everyone who supported them during their academic journey; indicating this achievement is considered the beginning of a path full of opportunities and challenges.

National Day greetings

HH Amir congratulates Djibouti

KUWAIT CITY, June 27, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent Thursday a cable to the President of Djibouti, Ismail Omar Guelleh, congratulating him on the country's National Day.

His Highness the Amir wished the president good health and the people of Djibouti all progress and prosperity.

Meanwhile, His Highness the

Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent a congratulatory cable to President Ismail Omar Guelleh, on the occasion of his country's National Day, wishing the president good health.

Also, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent a cable to President Ismail Omar Guelleh, congratulating him on his country's National Day.

KFF closes 76 units for safety violations in major crackdown

Court sentences X platform user to 2 years with hard labor

By Munif Naif, Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 27: The Fire Prevention Sector personnel at Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) have been working continuously to guarantee public safety, while ensuring that all facilities in various areas adhere to security and safety regulations with the aim of mitigating the risks of non-compliance.

In this context, KFF on Thursday implemented an administrative closure of 76 violating units in commercial shops, garages, restaurants, basements of investment buildings, public markets and industrial facilities in several governorates for failure to obtain licenses from the fire department; and non-compliance with safety and fire prevention regulations despite receiving warnings.

In a press statement, Inspection Supervisor at the Fire Prevention Sector in Jahra Governorate Brigadier Hassan Al-Shammari revealed that the fine for the above-mentioned violations ranges from KD 5 to KD 50,000 after referring the violations to the judiciary.

During an expanded campaign targeting wood scraps in Amghara on Thursday morning, Al-Shammari confirmed the closure of 11 facilities for violating the safety and fire prevention regulations in the presence of a large number of officers and individuals.

He added: "Based on the directives of First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior and Defense Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousuf and KFF Director Major General Khaled Fahad, the Fire Prevention Sector in Jahra Governorate continues its inspection campaign in industrial plots in the Amghara scrapyard to close the violating facilities. Aside from the closure of 11 facilities, we uncovered violations of safety regulations and the violation reports were issued."

He confirmed that the campaign began two months ago; starting with the first warning followed by the second warning if the violation is not addressed. After this, a closure warning is issued, and then the facility is closed if the violation continues despite all the warnings. The violations were discovered in sawmills and other industrial crafts that lacked safety standards, which may cause huge fires. Everyone must fully comply with the safety regulations to guarantee public safety and avoid closures, he added.

He stressed the need to obtain firefighting licenses for all stores and to abide by the regulations of KFF, affirming the Fire Prevention Sector in Jahra Governorate makes continuous tours of all stores to ensure they have a firefighting li-



KUNA photo

FM Abdullah Al-Yahya meets with aides in the new ministry building in the Diplomatic District.

FM calls for diplomatic overhaul in high-level meeting

Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya on Thursday held a meeting with his assistants at the ministry's headquarters.

Minister Al-Yahya, during the session attended by his Deputy Ambassador Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, urged the senior diplomats to put all

resources at the disposal of overhauling "the level of work in the establishment in line with guidelines and vision of the (supreme) political leadership for attaining the aspired progress."

Regional and international issues were broached during the gathering. (KUNA)

Kuwait stays in Tier 2 ranking in US Human Trafficking Report for the third year in row

KUWAIT CITY, June 27: Kuwait remained in Tier 2 in the US State Department's report on human trafficking for the third year in a row, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The daily obtained a copy of the report that stressed the need to strengthen the implementation of the national strategy of the Committee on Combating Human Trafficking; and intensify efforts in raising public awareness on measures to protect migrant workers and punish their traffickers, especially among vulnerable population groups, including domestic workers, as well as the employers, company owners and recruitment agencies.

While the report stated that the Kuwaiti government does not fully meet the minimum standards for eliminating human trafficking, it noted that the country is making significant efforts to do so, such as investigating, prosecuting, and convicting traffickers and identifying trafficking victims, as well as helping vulnerable migrants reach government shelters.

The report noted that the government finalized and approved the National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking (NAP) and allocated resources for its implementation, including funding the National Referral System to Prevent Trafficking in Persons. However, the government did not show an overall increase in efforts compared to the previous reporting period.

The report noted that the government has not fully implemented the national referral system to prevent trafficking

in persons, but the number of victims identified through follow-up at the shelter remained low because of the insufficient use of these procedures by officials. It added: "The government did not take new steps to reform the employer-based visa system, which continues to make migrant workers vulnerable to exploitation, specifically trafficking. Since the government allocated sufficient resources to a written plan that, if implemented, would constitute a major effort to meet the minimum standards, Kuwait was granted an exemption under the Trafficking Victims Protection Law from the required reduction to Tier 3, and therefore it remained at Tier 2 on the watch list for the third year in a row."

The report recommended that male victims should be provided with dedicated protective services, including accommodation, define procedures for their access to care and ensure unhindered access, and disseminate a new policy to all officials to ensure that potential victims are not denied care. It also recommended strengthening domestic worker law enforcement by increasing domestic workers' ability to file grievances with authorities, increasing inspections of registered and fraudulent employment agencies, and improving screening of domestic worker complaints to identify potential cases of labor trafficking.

It called for reforms to the employer-based visa system, including allowing all workers to change employers any time and leave the country without the need for employer approval.

cense and that safety regulations are followed. In the same context, First Lieutenant Yousef Al-Zaher stated that the Fire Prevention Sector in the governorate continues to inspect stores, buildings and basements; and issues warnings to establishments that do not comply with the KFF regulations.

He revealed that the number of facilities closed daily from five to seven, while emphasizing the need to adhere to the regulations and obtain firefighting licenses to avoid legal accountability and to protect lives and properties.

The scorching heat of summer did not prevent the fire prevention staff from continuing their inspection

campaigns to ensure that the facilities adhere to safety conditions in order to guarantee the safety of everyone. They did not hesitate to move from one facility to another to carry out inspection and monitoring works to identify potential dangers.

The firefighters performed their work with perfection, dedication and sincerity under the direct supervision of Brigadier General Hassan Al-Shammari, First Lieutenant Yousef Al-Dhaher, and Public Relations Officer Fawaz Al-Farhan.

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'Nero' gets 2 year jail: The Criminal Court sentenced X platform user identified as 'Nero' to two years in

prison with hard labor in a State security case filed against him for insulting HH the Amir.

The Public Prosecution had earlier charged 'Nero' with defaming HH the Amir, challenging his authority, insulting him through the X posts, broadcasting false news about the internal situation of the country and misusing the mobile phone.

'Nero' denied the charges, claiming these charges are incorrect. However, the court found that his denial of some of the charges was erroneous and convicted him of these charges.

It is expected 'Nero' will file an appeal at the Court of Appeals to once again demand for his acquittal.



Photo by Mohammad Morse

Security personnel sealing one of the violating stores.

Non-chamber entrepreneurs benefit

MoCI circular aims at facilitating govt transactions, fight commercial fraud

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, June 27: Minister of Commerce and Industry and Minister of State for Communications Affairs Omar Saud Al-Omar, has issued a ministerial circular aimed at streamlining government transactions and services within the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The circular emphasizes that affiliation with the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry, or the lack thereof, should not hinder individuals from accessing government services or completing transactions. This directive aligns with Law No. 122 of 2023 concerning the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The circular notably facilitates the process for entrepreneurs who are not members of the Chamber to conduct their transactions without needing Chamber-issued certificates or documents. This applies across all Ministry of Commerce and Industry transactions, including those related to import and export activities, in compliance with the aforementioned law.

In related efforts, the Commercial Control Department of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry recently took decisive action by ordering the immediate closure of 9 commercial showrooms located in a Salmiya mall. These showrooms were found to be selling counterfeit goods, such as bags, clothes, shoes, and accessories bearing international brands under legal supervision. Approximately 6,000 counterfeit items were seized during this operation.

The individuals responsible for these showrooms have been referred to the Commercial Prosecution after completing necessary legal procedures, with legal penalties imposed against them. This enforcement

Full digitalization of all govt institutions

KUWAIT CITY, June 27: The government has adopted the idea of full digitalization of all public institutions with the slogan, 'A government without paper-based transactions', reports Al-Qabas daily quoting sources.

Sources stated that the idea obligates public institutions and ministries to provide all of their services online through the Sahel application. Sources disclosed the government intends to stop all paper-based transactions within three to five years, affirming the government is currently completing the national cloud system that will save time and minimize the cost in the long run.

In a relevant development, sources said the government intends to sign an agreement with Microsoft like the agreement it signed with Google one year ago. Sources pointed out that the strategic partnership between Kuwait and Microsoft aims to upgrade the information technology infrastructure and establish an advanced and efficient database, which cannot be hacked or leaked; in addition to its contribution to enhancing cybersecurity.

action underscores ongoing efforts to combat commercial fraud and protect against trademark counterfeiting.

Previously, former Minister of Commerce and Industry Abdullah Al-Jawaan issued a decision to cancel the requirement of the approval of KCCI for the transactions submitted to Kuwait General Administration for Customs (KGCAC) and replace it with the approval of the Ministry of Social Affairs or Public Authority for Manpower (PAM). This decision saved the fees that KCCI used to collect for stamping the certificates and documents, reports Al-Shahed daily.

diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

'Your Highness' active presence in political arena is very crucial'

"I HOPE that there will be no mis-interpretation of my words, and that they will faithfully reflect my intentions. I write with impartiality, devoid of any ill intent, prioritizing respect for all. The article may appear challenging to some, yet it earnestly reflects the community's concerns, offering advice rather than criticism," **Adel Youssef Al-Zawawi** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

"Given Your Highness's proven capabilities, I inquire out of curiosity, knowing your steadfastness and past achievements. I have admired your previous governmental roles, which makes the current period of apparent inactivity puzzling.

"The trust bestowed upon Your Highness was no accident. Like a caring father, you guide us with wisdom. Therefore, I respectfully raise pertinent questions. It is observed that Your Highness's recent presence has been minimal, perhaps in pursuit of diligent work behind the scenes. However, I differ in thinking that this approach is suitable, especially given the role akin to that of a Prime Minister, who must actively lead the state.



Al-Zawawi

"The recent Supreme Amiri decree to dissolve the National Assembly suspended certain constitutional articles but did not suspend the Constitution itself. Article 123 mandates executive authority to prioritize state interests, requiring active, visible leadership. Silence breeds unnecessary doubt and suspicion, necessitating clear communication.

"Critics, rightfully, seek more visible engagement from you, knowing your capabilities. We recall the unexpected resignation of former Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, which left a mark. We hope for no further surprises or retreats.

"The absence of the National Assembly intensifies your responsibilities, demanding your omnipresence at every state affair. Citizens rely on your leadership; hence, practical engagement is crucial to counter biased interpretations.

"To restore lost prestige, the state must uphold law, justice, and equality. This pivotal moment necessitates decisive action and leadership visibility to stabilize the nation.

"I present these thoughts merely as questions and reflections, acknowledging the complexity of the current circumstances. Your Highness's active presence in the political arena is crucial to inspire and motivate during these delicate times. We hope for a future marked by stability and renewed prestige, where apologies and excuses become unnecessary burdens of the past."

Also:

"The Council of Ministers, poised to elevate Kuwait beyond even Singapore and Japan in development, cautioned against the perils of spreading misinformation via social media and news outlets," columnist **Hassan Al-Issa** wrote for **Al-Jarida** daily.

"The government threatened legal action against those who engage in such rumor-mongering, omitting the usual 'iron fist' rhetoric, a subtle shift away from authoritarian intimidation tactics.

"The only recent disturbance involved erroneous reports surrounding Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan's temporary arrest, highlighting how divergent views from the dominant discourse now face severe legal consequences.

"Dr. Noura intends to pursue justice through legal channels, asserting her rights amidst a climate where differing opinions risk imprisonment.

"Citizens now anticipate clear governmental strategies to address longstanding issues like infrastructure, education, and oil dependence, exacerbated by a stagnant labor market and bureaucratic inefficiencies. Instead of mere rhetoric, the public demands concrete plans, implementation timelines, and visible progress, even suggesting leveraging international expertise to expedite reforms.

"Previously citing democratic hurdles, the government now faces scrutiny over its current rationale for delayed reforms."

"People's joy ... The citizen began to feel comfortable when many measures and reform steps were taken under the orders of His Highness the Amir, may Allah protect him, and with instructions and follow up by His Highness the Prime Minister to begin the implementation after a period of laxity. Thus, reassurance entered the hearts of Kuwaitis as they now feel optimistic about the realization of their dreams with the return of Kuwait to its previous status as the 'Pearl of the Gulf' in the next few years, God willing," **Sheikh Ali Al-Jaber Al-Ahmad** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"The government has a responsibility to invest satisfaction in the

public mood and double its efforts; while the citizen has a responsibility to avoid spreading information other than those taken from official sources. He should not spread rumors and stop criticizing small issues, so as not to frustrate ministers while performing their duties.

"We also hope that the brothers, who described the government as incapable at a time it is only two months old, will listen to their conscience and remember that criticism has logic. The writer must be honest in conveying his message to the public. We must not deny the measures the government has taken within this short period, which is considered the beginning of the wheel rotation.

"Where are you sitting? A question repeated by young people that has no meaning in the general sense, has no connection to the topic and has no place in discussions. It is an extraneous objectionable question that is not desirable to hear, especially from the educated and the intellectuals.

"It has been an hour... This is a youth phrase used when setting the date for a meeting or the time for communication. It is a clear exaggerated lie when one party says it to the other party, when he is a few minutes late, to show that young people are in a hurry and lack patience.

"Shamsoy ... One of the words of this generation comes in the form of a question after 'how are you? As if it complements 'salaam'. This is far from its place, as the one asking it has no business with what concerns others, especially at the first meeting, as it happened between the 'm' and the 'b'.

"May Allah protect Kuwait and its people from all forms of evil and harm."

"Power outages ... government negligence or effective action? Many blamed the government. Was the power outage the result of an overload on power consumption or was it the result of an 'active shooter'?" columnist **Ahmad Al-Dawas** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"In fact, we do not know until things become clear, but this year, electricity was cut off in about 41 areas in Kuwait. This is a strange thing that the country did not witness in previous summers. The power outage occurred while the government is making good and wonderful achievements in enforcing the law and exposing corruption. Is there anyone trying to disrupt its work for some purpose?"

"I would like to mention that all homes in Kuwait are illuminated by many lamps and devices. Every house has 40 or 50 lamps. This is extreme extravagance. For example, look at what a person notices if he enters the hall of a house or a consumer cooperative -- he sees many lights are on. Why don't the people in the house light one lamp for each area -- entrance, hall and the bedrooms, instead of lighting 50 lamps at the same time throughout the morning and later?"

"For instance, when I was working at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, I used to work even after the end of the official working hours. That time, I happened to see the printing machine was on and it was a Thursday. This means the employees did not turn off the machine. The saying, 'Your uncle's money does not matter to you,' is true. Just yesterday, the Ministry of Health asked its employees to turn off the lights after the working hours.

"In Norway, some roads appear not to be lit at night, but when a car, bicycle or a man crosses the road, the road lights are turned on, then the lights are off after; then the next lights are turned on, and so on, that is, whenever a person crosses a sensor linked to the radar. Thus, Norway reduces energy consumption and carbon emissions.

"When I worked at our embassy in Sudan, we were suffering from power outages at all hours of the day and night. We only benefited from electricity for approximately two hours every day. In my residence, I used a candle whenever I read a book, a Kuwaiti newspaper or Newsweek Magazine. When the weather is hot and the situation got tough, I went to a hotel to read and there I found half of the hotel lit and the other half in darkness. Water was cut from homes, because the government's power generators are not working. People were unable to fill their cars with gasoline, so thank your Lord for the blessing. In Kuwait, the electricity goes out for an hour or two only during summer.

"There is a large increase in the population; hence, an increase in electricity consumption. We do not want to propose a solution that will deter people from working to rationalize their consumption, such as raising the price of electricity, so the people's livelihoods are not harmed. We just need to work together to make them aware of the necessity of reducing their consumption and turning off lights and unnecessary devices."

— **Compiled by PFX Fernandes & Mahmoud Ateyieh**



Top security officials taking a tour of the awareness exhibition.

Photo by Samer Shiqr

Awareness events mark World Anti-Drug Day

KUWAIT CITY, June 27: A series of awareness-raising events were organized in conjunction with the Kuwait University to mark World Anti-Drug Day under the theme 'Your Life is Your Decision', reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

Held under the auspices of Lieutenant General Sheikh Salem Al-Nawaf, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior, these events featured a panel discussion and an awareness exhibition.

The session was attended by Major General Hamid Al-Dawas, Assistant Undersecretary for Criminal Security Affairs, alongside other security lead-

ers and representatives from relevant state agencies.

During the panel discussion, Major General Al-Dawas conveyed the Minister of Interior's greetings and reiterated the Ministry's steadfast commitment to combating the drug menace and safeguarding society. He highlighted the Ministry's achievements, noting a significant decrease in drug trafficking offenses by approximately 20% from 2021 to 2022.

Brigadier General Mohammed Qabazard, Director General of the General Department of Drug Control, underscored the importance of community

partnerships in the Ministry's efforts.

He emphasized the department's accessibility through its hotline (1884141) for reporting drug-related crimes and seeking assistance, reflecting their dedication to serving citizens and residents round-the-clock.

The discussion session addressed various pertinent issues such as legal strategies against drug abuse, psychological treatment methods, and initiatives to support voluntary recovery among addicts. These efforts underscored the collaborative approach taken by multiple agencies to combat the drug scourge effectively.

Sheikh, associates get jail in largest Malaysian Fund money laundry trial

Court obliges them to return billion dollars, fined KD 145m

By **Jaber Al-Hamoud**
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 27: The Court of Cassation -- headed by Judge Saleh Al-Muraishid -- sentenced a sheikh, his partner and two expatriates to 10 years in prison; and a lawyer to seven years in prison, in the largest money laundering case known as 'Malaysian Fund'.

The court also obliged them to return a billion dollars, and fined them jointly a total of KD145 million (the equivalent of half a billion dollars).

The Public Prosecution reopened the Malaysian Fund case after a two-year hiatus due to the failure to receive information from international bodies, without filing the case.

It had earlier charged the defendants with money laundering, as well as forgery of customary and official documents and criminal agreements, but they denied the charges. Then, through its representative in court -- Chief Prosecutor Hammoud Al-Shami -- the prosecution demanded that the maximum penalties be imposed on the accused.

The prosecution confirmed in its case that the defendants committed money laundering and forgery crimes across countries, and that the action they committed is considered a form of money laundering crime punishable by law.

It is worth mentioning that the convicted defendants are currently serving time in the Central Prison, except the Syrian and Chinese defendants who are outside the country and international arrest warrants have been issued against them.

Merits

The court said, in the merits of its ruling, that all the elements of the crime of money laundering and participation in it as described by the prosecution were present, which stated all these happened in the midst of development projects being implemented in Malaysia, including the construction of an oil and gas pipeline, and a high-speed railway system in cooperation with the People's Republic of China, and in conjunction with the issues of purchasing the debt of the Malaysian sovereign fund (IMDB) and its subsidiary (SRC). This resulted in one of the defendants using his influence to appoint his partners as secretaries of the highly influential Malaysian-Chinese Strategic Economic Committee, to ensure the signing of agreements for the two railway construction projects and the construction of an oil pipeline between the governments of Malaysia and China.

It added that this was done "by urging the awarding of the electric railway project to China Communications Co., Ltd. (CCCC), and the oil and gas pipeline project to the China Bureau of Pipelines Co., Ltd. (CPP).

The Malaysian Prime Minister issued instructions to the Malaysian Public Land Transport Authority to submit the proposal to the Economic Council for an agreement with the company (CCCC) to implement the electric railway project at a cost ranging from 45 to 55 billion Malaysian ringgit.

However, the Malaysian Public Land Transport Authority objected to the conditions, because the projects did not go through a public tender to add transparency to the award process. The Malaysian Ministry of Finance then established the Malaysia Rail Link Company (MRLSB) for the purpose of managing and implementing the electric railway project. CCCC was appointed as the contractor to implement the project.

The Malaysian Prime Minister submitted a memorandum to the Malaysian Council of Ministers regarding the agreement that the implementation of the electric railway train project and the oil pipeline project will be carried out by MRLSB at a cost of 55 billion Malaysian ringgit and CCCC is the contractor. It stated these projects are financed by the Chinese (EXIM) Bank, according to an agreement signed by the Malaysian Prime Minister during an official visit to China. The Economic Planning Unit in the latter's administration sent a letter presenting the electric railway project, according to which the Ministry of Finance agreed to allocate budgets in stages through a government grant to purchase pieces of land for the project, and the agreement for the project was signed.

MRLSB also concluded an agreement with the Chinese EXIM Bank under which the loan was provided at a rate of up to 85 percent of the cost of implementing the project, while the government of Malaysia approved 15 percent of the amount through Islamic sukuk and bonds.

The Malaysian Ministry of Finance established the Syria Strategic Energy Resources (SSER) -- a company related to energy resources, natural resources and minerals, their transportation and distribution, and the development of related infrastructure operations.

The contractor that was appointed to implement the project was the Chinese Pipeline Office Company Limited (CPP), and SSER Company applied for a loan from the Chinese EXIM Bank for each of the two projects -- equivalent to 85 percent of the total cost, and the agreement was signed.

Bid to tackle fake gas 'accessories'

KUWAIT CITY, June 27: Major General Khaled Fahd, Acting Chief of the Directorate-General of Fire Department (DGFD), convened a meeting with Captain Yousef Al-Saqr, Executive Vice President of Kuwait Oil Tanker Company for Fleet Operations Affairs which focused on mutual concerns regarding security and safety protocols between the Fire Department and the company, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

In a statement released by the DGFD Public Relations and Media Department Fahd and Al-Saqr reached agreements aimed at enhancing safety measures.

One of the key decisions was to jointly enforce a ban on the importation and distribution of liquefied petroleum gas cylinder regulators and extensions that do not meet the company's specified standards. This initiative will be coordinated closely with the General Administration of Customs to ensure compliance.

Furthermore, the Fire Department and the Kuwait Oil Tanker Company agreed to launch a collaborative media campaign. This campaign aims to raise awareness among the public about the hazards associated with using counterfeit gas accessories. The ultimate goal is to safeguard lives and properties while bolstering community security.

Experts warn of legal, social risks in Apple's latest iPhone 'update'

KUWAIT CITY, June 27: Cybersecurity and artificial intelligence (AI) experts have warned about the legal and social consequences of the latest iPhone update despite its benefits, reports **Al-Rai** daily.

These experts made the warning after Apple unveiled at the Worldwide Developers Conference the feature of recording phone calls, converting them into written text and obtaining summaries of them through AI techniques; which will be implemented through the latest operating system -- iOS 18. They stressed the need to pay attention to this feature, given the legal and social consequences of the registration process.

They explained that "while making a phone call, the phone application will include a button that records the conversation when pressed. Once this process begins, the other party making the call will receive a notification or alert informing him that the call is being recorded, and the recording will not take place unless approved by the other party."

Chairman of the Cybersecurity Committee at the Electronic Media Union Mohammad Al-Rashidi confirmed to the daily that "the call recording feature will be with the knowledge of both parties, because the person wishing to record will first send an alert to the other party, and upon approval, the recording process will begin. Caution and attention must be

given, because some may not be familiar with this technology. If approved, the consequences must be known, or it could be rejected from the beginning."

Information security and AI expert Eng. Nasser Al-Ustad said "there is a more dangerous stage, as some who obtain the voice could use AI techniques, which make the owner of this voice say false information and things that he did not say, and can even make him call other people.

They commit fraud using the voice generated by AI techniques, and then the concerned person finds he did and said things that he has nothing to do with and about which he knows nothing. The arrival registration notice is good, because technology is no longer a double-edged sword, but a weapon with more than one edge. On one hand, it is dangerous, and on the other hand, it cannot be dispensed with, as it is utilized in work, entertainment and all aspects of life."

Cybersecurity expert Abdulaziz Al-Mutairi has stressed the need to "raise public awareness about the risks of some updates, including call recording, which may expose sensitive data to the public and expose users to blackmail by some individuals (hackers). Unfortunately, not everyone is aware of how to use these technologies, which may expose them to the risk of having their calls recorded without their knowledge."

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'Accession considered a new environmental commitment to international obligations'

Kuwait joins IOSEA agreement to preserve sea turtles and wildlife

KUWAIT CITY, June 27, (KUNA): Deputy Director General for Technical Affairs at the Environment Public Authority, Dr. Abdullah Al-Zaidan, announced that the State of Kuwait has joined the Indian Ocean and Southeast Asia Organization (IOSEA) agreement to preserve sea turtles and signed a memorandum of understanding under the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species.

Al-Zaidan told the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that Kuwait, represented by the Environment Agency, participated in the ninth meeting of countries (MOS9), which was hosted by the city of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, with specialists from various parts of the world in attendance.

He added that the meeting witnessed the signing of a memorandum of understanding concerning the preservation of sea turtles and their habitats in the Indian Ocean and Southeast Asia to protect these unique creatures and their fragile ecosystems against ongoing human activities and global challenges.

He explained that Kuwait's accession to that organization is considered a new environmental commitment in addition to its international obligations, while the memorandum of understanding aims to protect and preserve sea turtles, fill the gap, and restore their habitats based on the best scientific evidence, taking into account the environmental, social, economic, and cultural characteristics of the signatory

countries.

He stated that six species of sea turtles globally, which are sensitive, endangered, or critically vulnerable to extinction, have been included in the IUCN Red List of Endangered Species.

Al-Zaidan said that the species are the pomegranate tortoise (Al-Raymani), the olive tortoise (Al-Taqqar), the green tortoise (Al-Hamsa), the tortoise (Al-Shurfaf), the ant tortoise, and the flat-backed tortoise.

He pointed out that during the aforementioned meeting, he reviewed Kuwait's efforts in cooperation with various local governmental and non-governmental agencies to preserve sea turtles, which have had a special historical relationship since the Dolomite civilization on Failaka Island.

He stated that Kuwait attaches importance to the preservation of sea turtles through the implementation of various international agreements, such as the Convention on the Conservation of Biological Diversity and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species, as well as regional commitments from the Regional Organization for the Conservation of the Marine Environment (ROPME).

He also pointed to the implementation of the Environmental Protection Law, which prohibits the hunting of these organisms and the violation of their nesting sites, in addition to Kuwait's commitment to the IOSEA's memorandum of understanding for sea turtles.



KUNA photo
Kuwait participated in the ninth meeting of the MOS9 countries, hosted by the City of Peace in the United Republic of Tanzania, alongside an elite group of specialists from various countries around the world.

Al-Mashaan rejects proposal for camping area in northern Kuwait

Significance in preserving geological region of Al-Zour highlighted

KUWAIT CITY, June 27: Minister of Works and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs, Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan, recently declined a proposal put forth by several municipal council members to establish a camping area in northern Kuwait under municipal supervision, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Her decision stemmed from the view that such an initiative would exceed the authority granted to municipalities under Law No. 33 of 2016. This law defines specific powers for municipalities, which do not extend to the establishment of tourism development sites or the supervision of recreational activities.

During the approval of the Municipal Council meeting minutes, held recently, Minister Al-Mashaan endorsed all decisions issued by the council, including allocating land for irrigation purposes and addressing the actuarial deficit of the Public Institution for Social Security (PIFSS).

The decision received praise from the Kuwait Society for Earth Sciences, which highlighted its significance in preserving the geological region of Al-Zour.

This area holds historical significance dating back 10,000 years to the Ubaid civilization, and recent studies have identified unique geological features, including rocks reminiscent of those found on Mars, characterized by their dark red to brown hues.

In essence, Minister Al-Mashaan's decision was grounded in upholding legal boundaries while also considering the cultural and geological heritage of Kuwait, earning commendation for its preservation efforts from concerned stakeholders.

Equal opportunity for all

Government OKs 24K job grades, hires 11K citizens

KUWAIT CITY, June 27: Director of the Civil Service Commission (CSC) Dr. Issam Al-Rubaian said the government has approved 24,000 job grades and provided 15,000 job opportunities in the first phase of the new recruitment plan; so the 11,000 citizens who applied for jobs in the public sector will be employed immediately, reports Al-Anba daily.

In his statement in the 'Kuwait Nights' program on Kuwait TV, Al-Rubaian revealed: "We have a new recruitment plan based on the principles of equal opportunities and justice, with the aim of including all specializations. Job titles were created in line with the work objectives and to reduce the waiting period for applicants."

Individual nomination

He clarified that individual nomination letters will not be accepted, so as not to deprive another citizen of the opportunity to work. He said the registration and nomination procedures are automated, and there is no discrimination based on specializations; because the new plan covers all those who registered in the recruitment system.

He affirmed "the government is keen on fulfilling all the requirements to guarantee equal opportunities and justice for all. We will not appoint an engineer in one entity with a salary higher than his counterpart in another entity. We stress that one of the basic goals is to unify the employment benefits in governmental entities."

He added the CSC nominated 363 law diploma holders to work in the Ministry of Justice.

University charts future strategic agenda

KU to launch new Master's programs across diverse disciplines by 2025/26 academic year

KUWAIT CITY, June 27: The College of Graduate Studies at Kuwait University announced plans to introduce new Master's programs across various disciplines, beginning in the academic year 2025/2026, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

This decision was made during the seventh meeting of the Council of the College of Graduate Studies, held at Sabah Al-Salem University City.

According to a press statement issued after the meeting, the new master's programs will encompass diverse fields. These include a Master's Program in Media Project at the College of Arts, a specialization in anthropology at the College of Social Sciences, a program in criminal law, and a program in education focusing on instructional design and technology at the College of Education.

The meeting agenda also included the ratification of previous meeting minutes and a review of the implementation schedule for previous decisions. Significant discussions centered on student affairs,

particularly a memorandum addressing the admission of individuals with special needs into graduate programs.

Academic affairs were also on the agenda, including a proposal to involve contributors other than the supervisor and co-supervisor in graduate students' research projects.

Planning and development issues were discussed as well, notably concerning the ratio of Kuwaiti to non-Kuwaiti graduate students admitted annually to the College of Graduate Studies. Additionally, there was a memorandum regarding the budget of the Consulting and Training Office for the fiscal year 2023/2024.

The meeting was attended by Dr. Ahmed Al-Mukhial, Acting Dean of the College of Graduate Studies, Dr. Mishari Al-Aifan, Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs, and various heads from different university colleges, highlighting the collaborative efforts to enhance academic offerings and administrative functions at Kuwait University.

Two astronomical phenomena this Friday

KUWAIT CITY, June 27: Al-Ojairi Scientific Center has announced that the country will witness two astronomical phenomena on Friday: the second spring moon and the conjunction of Mercury with the star Pollux, reports Al-Qabas daily.

In a press statement, the center revealed: "The moon will rise on Friday in the second quarter phase, in conjunction with the planet Saturn (the pearl of the solar system) - after midnight. The illuminated half of the moon's disk will be facing toward the Sun in the East, then the moon will move in the sky toward the West until the scene

disappears in the intense light of the morning twilight as the Sun rises."

It added that Mercury (the smallest planet in the solar system) will appear on the same day in conjunction with the star Pollux, which is the brightest star in the sign of Gemini. They will be seen with the healthy naked eye side by side on the sky toward the West immediately after sunset until 9:00 pm.

The center explained that Pollux is a giant orange star, about three times larger than the Sun and about 34 light-years away from Earth.



Part of the agreement signing ceremony.

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LOCAL

Kuwait's ambassador praises historic relations with Jordan

AMMAN, June 27. (KUNA): Kuwait's ambassador to Jordan Hamad Al-Meri praised his country's "historic" relations with Jordan, saying ties have made continued progress over the years thanks to the efforts of the two countries' political leaderships.

Conveying the greetings of Kuwait's Amir His Highness Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Ku-

waiti diplomat and Jordan's Crown Prince Hussein bin Abdullah agreed amid talks on the need for even more headway in bilateral relations.

The talks also covered current happenings around the region, in addition to matters of mutual concern, the envoy told KUNA, citing that more than 73 bilateral deals had come to fruition since diplomatic relations began in earnest back in 1961.

Enhancing emergency readiness

Kuwait, Abu Dhabi forge alliance in civil defense & crisis management

KUWAIT CITY, June 27: The Public Relations and Security Media Department of the Ministry of Interior announced a significant cooperation initiative between Kuwait and the Emirate of Abu Dhabi within the Gulf Cooperation Council framework, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Brigadier-General Nabil Al Shatti, Director General of the General Administration of Civil Defense, hosted a delegation from the Center for Emergency, Crisis, and Disaster Management in Abu Dhabi, led by Engineer Mohammed Al Falasi.

The purpose of the visit was to facilitate the exchange of expertise and coordination on managing shelters during crises, spanning a three-day period.

During their visit to Kuwait, the delegation from Abu Dhabi visited the headquarters of the Civil Defense Administration.

They delegation members were provided with comprehensive visual presentations detailing the Administration's operational tasks and preparedness protocols for handling emer-

gencies.

The delegation also toured several shelters, including those at Al Hamra Tower and Kuwait Credit Bank, where they received detailed briefings from specialized personnel regarding the shelters' roles and functions during times of crises and disasters.

At the conclusion of the visit, a meeting was held to discuss avenues for collaboration and coordination between Kuwait's Civil Defense Administration and the UAE's Emergency, Crisis, and Disaster Management Centre.

The discussions encompassed sharing experiences and best practices in civil defense strategies and enhancing capabilities to effectively respond to emergency situations.

This initiative underscores Kuwait's commitment to bolstering regional cooperation in disaster management and emergency response, leveraging shared knowledge and resources within the Gulf Cooperation Council framework for the benefit of all member states.

Diverse skills to fill critical gaps in gov't services

CSC launches new employment plan with 4,444 nominees for public roles

KUWAIT CITY, June 27: The Civil Service Commission (CSC) has announced the nomination of the first batch of citizens who applied for public sector jobs through the central employment system as part of the new employment plan, consisting of 4,444 citizens with various specializations, reports Al-Rai daily.

This batch includes applicants whose specializations were not found in government agencies in previous years like those with uni-

versity degrees in Political Science, International Relations, History and Philosophy; in addition to those with high school, primary and intermediate certificates, while others are specialized in the legal, administrative, financial and engineering fields.

The CSC confirmed that this batch will be followed by other batches next month in order to nominate all those who registered in previous employment periods; that is, before the start of the current period (87) on June 21, 2024.

Nomination will be made according to the job titles that correspond to each academic specialization based on objective criteria that guarantee justice and equal opportunities among applicants.

According to CSC, the next batches will include those specialized in industrial, chemical and petroleum engineering; those holding different types of technical diplomas and law diploma in order to meet the manpower needs of government agencies.

es faced by power networks globally.

In summary, Kuwait is on track to alleviate its electricity crisis with the upcoming activation of significant additional power generation capacity, coupled with external support from regional interconnections.

Kuwait exchange

Continued from Page 1

in remittances from Egyptians working abroad, totaling \$4.5 billion, compared to \$6.4 billion during the same period the previous fiscal year.

Earlier data showed that remittances from Egyptians working in Saudi Arabia and the UAE accounted for approximately 72.7% of the total remittances from Egyptians working in Arab countries during the fiscal year 2022/2023. Kuwait ranked third with \$2 billion, accounting for about 14% of these remittances.

Data from the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics indicated that Saudi Arabia topped the list with remittances from Egyptians working in Arab countries at \$8.3 billion, more than 58% of the total. The UAE came second with \$2.1 billion, about 14.6%. Qatar was fourth with approximately \$940.6 million, around 6.5%, and Jordan was fifth with \$415.3 million, about 2.9%. The total remittances from Egyptians working in Arab countries were estimated at \$14.3 billion by the end of the fiscal year 2022/2023, down from \$21.5 billion in the previous year, marking a 33.4% decrease.

Infrastructure

Continued from Page 1

Minister of State for Communication Affairs Omar Al-Omar and with Chairman of the Touristic Enterprises Company (TEC) Sheikh Mohammad Al-Salman Al-Humoud Al-Sabah earlier today.

She added that the meeting discussed ways to enhance cooperation amongst the three bodies and facilitate procedures to encourage entrepreneurs and investors, with a special focus on food trucks.

The meeting also addressed allocating strategic locations that are consistent with the architectural and cultural image of Kuwait, focusing on improving Kuwait's seafont by using well-planned walkways and seating areas.

Kuwait & Iraq

Continued from Page 1

Commander of the Borders of the Fourth Region of Iraq, headed the Iraqi delegation.

The meeting focused on implement-

ing agreements previously reached by regional leaders, including measures to monitor and patrol the border continuously to prevent infiltration and smuggling activities.

Both sides emphasized the importance of ongoing coordination and information exchange regarding smugglers and trafficking routes between the two countries.

Additionally, discussions centered on the maintenance and renewal of border infrastructure in accordance with existing security agreements. This joint effort reflects the commitment of Kuwait and Iraq to safeguard their shared borders effectively, ensuring regional security and stability through collaborative security measures and operational strategies.

Kuwait Field

Continued from Page 1

This came in a phone contact between Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry and his Turkish counterpart Hakan Fidan, in which they discussed bilateral relations and arrangements for a joint strategic council meeting, the Foreign Ministry's Spokesman Ambassador Ahmad Abu Zeid said in a press statement.

He added that both sides had warned of conflict spillover and instability in the region in the aftermath of the escalation between Lebanon and the Israeli occupation.

Both sides underlined that it is necessary to work together to ensure the delivery of humanitarian and relief aid to the Gaza Strip amid tough humanitarian circumstances due to Israeli occupation restrictions.

In other news, thousands of tons of food, medicines and other aid piled up on a beach in war-torn Gaza is not reaching those in need because of a dire security situation and lawlessness on the ground, a U.S. aid official said Wednesday.

Truck drivers are getting caught in the crossfire or have their cargo seized by marauding "gang-like" groups, said Doug Stroppe, with the U.S. Agency for International Development.

The sense of desperation gripping ordinary Palestinians is only compounded by the combination of Gaza being an active combat zone and a prevailing "general sense of lawlessness," Stroppe told The Associated Press.

The security "that's needed for the humanitarians to work is what's really lacking right now," the USAID official added.

The remarks are the latest amid international criticism over Israel's campaign against Hamas as Gaza faces severe and widespread hunger. The eight-month war has largely cut off the flow of food, medicine and basic goods to Gaza, and people there are now totally dependent on aid.

Kuwait's growing 'tyre crisis' sparks urgent call for sustainable solutions

Council pushes for eco-friendly innovations

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 27: Used tyres are still dumped randomly in landfills and desert areas – a serious issue that caused successive fire incidents in used tyre collection sites, not to mention their harmful effect on the environment, says Chairperson of the Environmental Affairs Committee in the Municipal Council Alia Al-Farsi.

Al-Farsi made the statement after the first workshop organized by the

committee entitled, "Impact of Tyre Landfills and Dumping Sites on Public Health and Environmental Safety: The Current Situation and Sustainable Solutions" with the participation of the concerned organizations and associations such as the Environment Public Authority (EPA), Public Authority for Industry (PAI), World Health Organization (WHO), ministries of Health, Public Works and Interior, Kuwait Fire Force (KFF), Legal Advice and Legislation Department, Kuwait Environmental Protection Society (KEPS), Kuwait Green Building Council, Tyre Recycling Factory, interested parties and activists.

She stressed the need for all concerned parties to work together in finding sustainable solutions to the Salmi tyres problem in order to improve the environmental

conditions in the country, while giving income-generating opportunities to entrepreneurs and factory owners.

The workshop discussed the process of randomly disposing used tyres in Salmi and fire outbreak from time to time, causing fumes and materials harmful to health and the environment.

Kuwait Municipality previously carried out the process of transporting these tyres; noting that countries around the world, including Kuwait, face big challenges in protecting the environment and reducing pollution through recycling and treating waste.

Al-Farsi affirmed that the workshop focused on finding sustainable solutions, the most important of which are ways to achieve zero waste and the use of soft tyre waste in the asphalt industry. She said recycled materials from used tyres were used in the maintenance of a street in Riggae.

In addition, recycled waste is utilized in many industries, such as fuel for factory furnaces and flooring for sports clubs, stadiums and bicycle paths.

She explained that the International Basel Convention on Strategies for Dealing with Hazardous Waste established a comprehensive table of the benefits and drawbacks of environmentally friendly waste disposal methods.

She revealed that the workshop discussed the possibility of treating and filling dangerous potholes on the streets with tyre waste as a quick and feasible solution that protects lives, as well as a mechanism aimed at reducing tyre fires and activating the role of the firefighting force.

She indicated that investment in the field of waste management and treatment is in line with the strategic objectives of the State of Kuwait in the field of improving the quality of life and sustaining and preserving resources.

She concluded by emphasizing that the workshop is a continuation of the efforts initiated by the current Municipal Council to address the problem of municipal waste management and public hygiene, and the role of the Environmental Affairs Committee in protecting the environment.

On the other hand, council member Farah Al-Roumi said everyone is aware of the danger of accumulating car tyres and assembling them in landfills in a way that does not comply with environmental, security and safety standards. She warned this is a threat to the environment and public health, as it is a source of pollution and a waste of natural resources.



The Kuwaiti Najat Society opens a model charity village in Somaliland.

Kuwaiti Najat Society launches charitable village in Somaliland

KUWAIT CITY, June 27. (KUNA): The Kuwaiti Najat Society has announced the opening of a model charitable village in the Hargeisa region of Somaliland, benefiting more than 26 thousand people. According to Abdul Ghafour Al-Abdul Ghafour, Director of the Association's Resources and Campaigns Department, the village embodies an integrated and sustainable development approach, incorporating educational, health, and social facilities, along with projects aimed at supporting impoverished families.

Al-Abdul Ghafour emphasized that the village consists of 50 houses

and various amenities serving neighboring communities. These include a mosque with a capacity for 400 people, a dispensary catering to 2,500 individuals, an artesian well benefiting 15,000 residents, an endowment farm supporting 3,500 people, as well as a bakery, gardens, and playgrounds for children.

He further clarified that the village and its facilities specifically target the most vulnerable groups of displaced persons. The initiative aims to alleviate their hardships, provide a dignified living environment, and create livelihood opportunities for hundreds of families.



Group photo during the opening of charity village.

KUNA photos

Association seeks enhanced medical practices

KMA proposes law amendments

KUWAIT CITY, June 27: Rapporteur of the Legal Affairs Committee at Kuwait Medical Association (KMA) Professor Tariq Senan said the association has completed a proposal on amending law number 70/2020 on the practice of medicine and support jobs, reports Al-Shahed daily.

Senan explained the proposal is aimed at addressing loopholes in the law. He cited as an example Article One of the law, which does not clearly define the terms 'medical

error' (minor or major), 'medical negligence' or the factors leading to negligence; thereby, leaving the matter to the decision of the concerned committee. He pointed out that the failure to clearly define these terms has negative consequences, because penalties vary according to the description of each case. He added the committee recommended adopting the relevant international criteria for defining these terms.

He went on to say that Article Three of the law authorizes the health

minister to add new assistant jobs, while the committee recommended assigning the minister to issue a decision defining the added assistant jobs for those occupying these jobs to be aware that they are subject to this law.

He revealed the committee recommended amending articles four and article five to specify a period of 15 days for the Licenses Department to issue the license for the applicant and provide it online as the case in most of advanced countries.

ABK announces Najat Abdulsamad Maqames as Alfouz KD 100,000 quarterly draw winner

KUWAIT CITY, June 27: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) is excited to announce Najat Abdulsamad Maqames as the winner of Alfouz KD 100,000 quarterly draw on Monday 24 June 2024. The draw took place in the presence of a Ministry of Commerce and Industry representative, ensuring transparency.

From the highly coveted mega annual draw of a KD 5,000 monthly salary for 10 years to its KD 10,000 weekly prize, the Alfouz account has already attracted the attention of the Kuwaiti market. Based on the account's great success, ABK decided to go above and beyond to reward customer loyalty.

By introducing a KD 100,000 quarterly draw, in addition to an exciting KD 20,000 monthly draw, the Alfouz offering has continued to surpass expectations and deliver even more customer satisfaction.

To top it off, ABK has simplified the ability to open the account and win! Customers can enter the draws and get extra entry chances for every KD 10 deposited as opposed to KD 100 previously. The more you save, the higher your chance to be the next Alfouz winner!

ABK encourages everyone to open an Alfouz draw account or increase their balance to participate in the upcoming weekly draw, which is scheduled to take place on 8 July



Alfouz quarterly draw winner flyer.

2024.

Open an Alfouz account today and enjoy increased opportunities to win the lifestyle you've been waiting for!

To learn more about the Alfouz account and its range of exciting draws and prizes, please follow the ABK's Instagram account @abk_kuwait, visit eahli.com, contact Ahlan Ahli 1 899 899 or visit one of the Bank's branches across Kuwait.

World News Roundup

Europe

British PM struggles with 'missteps': British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak has portrayed himself as thorough and evidence-led throughout his relatively brief political career, but there's always been a nagging question over the keenness of his political antenna.

The general election campaign over the past five weeks has clearly shown that he hasn't got the instinctive touch of some of his predecessors, such as Tony Blair or even Boris Johnson.

Sunak's campaign has seen several missteps since he announced the July 4 election date in the pouring rain in late May, including his suspension of candidates mired in a scandal over betting on the date of the election - a week after Labour Party leader Keir Starmer pressed him to do so.

The biggest blunder - one that prompted him to apologize - was his decision to leave the 80-year D-day commemorations in northern France on June 6 early.

Critics said the decision to skip the international event that closed the commemorations showed disrespect to the veterans and diminished the U.K.'s international standing. Other world leaders including President Joe Biden, French President Emmanuel Macron, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and Ukrainian leader Volodymyr Zelenskyy were all present. As was Starmer, who is the favorite to replace Sunak as prime minister. Since then, Sunak hasn't been able to lift the poll ratings for his Conservative Party, which have



Starmer

been depressed over the past few years as a result of the actions of his two immediate predecessors. (AP)

Le Pen questions prez's role as army chief: With just three days to go until France's landmark legislative election, the country's far-right leader on Thursday raised the question of who would be in charge of the military if her party takes over the government after the two-round balloting.

The early elections are plunging France into uncharted territory, and political scientists are scrambling to interpret how exactly President Emmanuel Macron and a prime minister who is hostile to most of his policies will share power if Marine Le Pen's National Rally wins the majority in the National Assembly, France's lower house of parliament.

Le Pen has repeatedly said that Jordan Bardella, her protégé and her party's star leader, will lead France's next government if their party wins. Macron has three years to serve out his final term as president. (AP)

Zelenskyy visits front-line troops: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and his Commander in Chief Oleksandr Syrskyi on Wednesday visited troops in the eastern Donetsk region who have weathered fierce Russian ground and air assaults in recent months.

The Kremlin's army has escalated its efforts to dislodge exhausted and outgunned Ukrainian forces holding eastern and northeastern areas. It aims to capture more land during spring and summer as muddy fields have dried out, allowing heavy military equipment to roll into key positions across the countryside.

Russia illegally annexed parts of Donetsk and three other regions in 2022 shortly after it invaded Ukraine, and the Kremlin regards taking control of all of Donetsk as a priority. Moscow is looking to exploit its advantages in troops and weaponry before Ukraine can get promised additional Western supplies to the front.

Civilians have also felt the force of Russia's onslaught. Ahead of Zelenskyy's visit, Russian forces dropped a powerful glide bomb on the Donetsk city of Selydove, causing extensive damage to 37 homes, six multi-story buildings and administrative infrastructure, regional authorities said Wednesday. They reported no injuries. (AP)

Train derailment kills 2 in Russia: A passenger train derailment in northern Russia killed at least two people, and left one other person missing, a state-run railway company said Thursday.

The 14-carriage train derailed in Russia's northern republic of Komi on Wednesday night, Russian Railways said in a statement, with nine carriages coming off the tracks. Up to 50 people were injured, Russia's news agency Interfax reported, citing emergency officials.

The train, carrying 232 passengers, was headed to the southern city of Novorossiysk from Vorkuta, a coal mining town in the north of Komi, Russian Railways said. It said that heavy rainfall, which washed out parts of the track, was the likely cause of the derailment.

Russian Railways has promised to pay 2 million rubles (just under \$22,900) to the families of each of those killed in the derailment on top of the 2.025 million-ruble (about \$23,100) insurance payout they will get. The injured who were hospitalized will get 1 million rubles (about \$11,400) each, and those who sought outpatient medical assistance will receive 500,000 rubles (about \$5,700), the company said. (AP)

Russia orders Austrian journalist out: Russia's Foreign Ministry said Wednesday it has revoked the accreditation of the chief correspondent of Austria's public broadcaster ORF and told her to leave the country in response to Austria's expulsion of the chief correspondent for Russian state news agency Tass.

The ministry said Carola Schneider, the ORF's Moscow bureau chief, was asked to hand over her media accreditation and leave Russia "in the nearest time."

It described the move as a "forced retaliatory measure linked to the continuing discrimination of Russian media representatives in Austria," noting that it followed Austrian authorities earlier this week ordering Arina Davidyan, Tass bureau chief in Vienna, to leave the country. (AP)

Austrian court frees ex-intelligence officer: A former Austrian intelligence officer at the center of the country's biggest espionage scandal in decades was released from custody Wednesday after a court approved his bid to be freed.

The Vienna state court ruled that Egisto Ott should be released because it doesn't see a danger of him offending at present, though he remains under investigation, the Austria Press Agency reported. The court said there were no indications that he committed offenses after a previous spell in custody in 2021.

Court spokesperson Christoph Zonsics-Kral said he was released from jail on Wednesday morning.

Ott was arrested on March 29 under a warrant that, among other things, alleges he handed over cellphone data of former high-ranking Austrian officials to Russian intelligence, helped plot a burglary at a prominent journalist's apartment, and wrote up "suggestions for improvement" after a Russian-ordered killing in Germany. (AP)

Gasoline bomb attack injures Greek officer: A Greek police officer guarding the house of a top judge was hospitalized with burns after a gasoline bomb attack in Athens early Thursday, authorities said.

The motive for the pre-dawn attack in a city suburb was not clear and there was no immediate claim of responsibility.

Police said gasoline bombs were thrown at the officer by unknown people who escaped. The officer, who suffered face and arm injuries, was stationed outside the house of Supreme Court President Ioanna Klapa, which was not damaged. A nearby police car was severely damaged.

Government spokesperson Pavlos Marinakis condemned the attack and said it was an "absolute priority" for authorities to arrest the perpetrators. (AP)

Police, and more rarely other symbols of authority, are frequently targeted by Greek far-left militants, although attacks leading to death or severe injury have declined in recent years. (AP)



British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak speaks during a Conservative general election campaign event, in Edinburgh, Scotland on June 24. Sunak has portrayed himself as thorough and evidence-led throughout his relatively brief political career, but there's always been a nagging question over the keenness of his political antenna. (AP)

Politics

Boebert will likely fill House seat vacated by Buck

Kennedy faces hurdles to stay relevant

PHOENIX, June 27, (AP) - Independent presidential candidate Robert F. Kennedy Jr., won't be with his better-known rivals, President Joe Biden and former president Donald Trump, when they debate Thursday in Atlanta.

And aside from a livestreamed response to the debate, he also has nothing on his public schedule for the coming weeks. Nor does his running mate, philanthropist Nicole Shanahan.

After a busy spring hoppedotching the country for a mix of political rallies, fundraisers and nontraditional campaign events, Kennedy appears to be taking a breather.

Kennedy's absence from the debate stage and the campaign trail carries risk for his insurgent quest to shake up the Republican and Democratic dominance of the US political system. He lacks the money for a firehose of television commercials, and he must spend much of the money he does have to secure ballot access. Public appearances are a low-cost way to fire up supporters and drive media coverage he needs to stay relevant.

Kennedy himself says he can't win unless voters know he's running and believe he can defeat Biden and Trump. That problem will become increasingly acute as the debate, followed by the major party conventions in July and August, push more voters to tune into the race.

Continues

Still, Kennedy has maintained a steady stream of social media posts and he continues to sit for interviews, most recently with talk show host Dr. Phil.

"Mr Kennedy has a full schedule for July with many public events, mostly on the East Coast and including one big rally," said Stefanie Spear, a Kennedy campaign spokesperson. "We will start announcing the events next week."

For Thursday's debate on CNN, the network invited candidates who showed strength in four reliable polls and ballot access in enough states to win the presidency. Kennedy fell short on both requirements.

He's cried foul about the rules, accusing CNN of colluding with Biden

and Trump in a complaint to the Federal Election Commission and threatening to sue.

Sujat Desai, a 20-year-old student from Pleasanton, California who supports Kennedy, said Kennedy's absence from the debate is a major hurdle for him to overcome.

"I don't think there's any way to get awareness if you're not on the debate stage," Desai said. "I think it's a pretty lethal blow not to be in this debate, and it would be detrimental not to be in the next."

Still, Desai said he won't be dissuaded from voting for Kennedy even if he appears to be a longshot come November.

"I think this is probably the strongest I've seen an independent candidate in a while, so I'll give him that," Desai said. "I think he's definitely doing well. His policies are strong enough to win, I just don't know if there's awareness."

Kennedy plans to respond in real time to the same questions posed to Biden and Trump in a livestream.

Famous

Independent and third-party candidates like Kennedy face supremely long odds, but Kennedy's campaign has spooked partisans on both sides who fear he will tip the election against them. Biden supporters worry his famous Democratic name and his history of environmental advocacy will sway voters from the left. Trump supporters worry his idiosyncratic views, particularly his questioning of the scientific consensus that vaccines are safe and effective, will appeal to people who might otherwise vote for Trump.

Christy Jones, 54, a holistic health and mindfulness coach from Glendora, California, worries people won't know Kennedy is running without him standing next to Biden and Trump at the debate. But she said he's still all over her social media feeds and she's confident he's making himself visible.

"I do feel like he could still win if people choose to be courageous," she said. "If all the people that actually want change voted for him he would be in. People are asking for change."

Until recently, Kennedy's website

promoted a variety of events weeks or more in advance, including public rallies and private fundraisers. He held comedy nights with prominent comedians in Michigan and Tennessee.

But since he went to the June 15 premiere of a film on combatting addiction, Kennedy has been dark, though he continues to promote in-person and virtual organizing events for his supporters.

Also:

DENVER: Former Republican US Rep Ken Buck resigned from Congress frustrated by a flank of the GOP's unwavering devotion to former president Donald Trump. Now he will likely be replaced by one of their most boisterous leaders, Rep Lauren Boebert.

Boebert, who has built a name as a headline-grabbing devotee of Trump, won in Tuesday night's Republican primary election in Colorado's 4th Congressional District. Boebert joined the district's race last year, escaping what would have been a tough reelection bid in the seat she currently holds and nearly lost to a Democrat in 2022.

The congresswoman's political play succeeded. Buck's hopes for a more tempered Congress apparently did not, at least in his former seat.

While other Republican candidates in Boebert's vein lost their primaries in Colorado on Tuesday, Boebert has a clear road to victory in a dark red district that threw its weight behind Trump in 2020.

After her win Tuesday, Boebert donned reflective gold shoes sold by Trump and a "Make America Great Again" hat with his signature and defended her unyielding politics. While some may disagree with her style in Washington, she said, "nothing happens without force."

But that road to victory in Tuesday's primary wasn't so clear. The roll of the dice to hop districts was made more dicey by an embarrassing moment when the congresswoman was caught on tape vaping and causing a disturbance with a date at a musical production of "Beetlejuice." Boebert was also beset along her journey by accusations of carpetbagging from fellow Republicans.



In this image provided by Jenny Braden, smoke rises from a wildfire on June 25 in La Pine, Ore. The wildfire near the popular vacation destination of Bend, is growing rapidly. Officials on June 27 urged the continued evacuations of hundreds of homes in the area best known for its microbreweries, hiking, river rafting and skiing on nearby Mount Bachelor. (AP)



DeMonte



Hamzy

America

Feds charge 5 people: Five people were charged Wednesday with conspiring to bribe a Minnesota juror with a bag of \$120,000 in cash in exchange for the acquittal of defendants in one of the country's largest COVID-19-related fraud cases, the US Attorney's Office and the FBI announced Wednesday.

Court documents made public reveal an extravagant scheme in which the accused researched the juror's personal information on social media, surveilled her, tracked her daily habits and bought a GPS device to install on her car. Authorities believe the defendants targeted the woman, known as "Juror 52," because she was the youngest and they believed her to be the only person of color on the panel.

According to court documents, the group came up with a "blueprint" of arguments for the juror to help persuade other jurors to acquit, injecting the idea that prosecutors were motivated by racial animus: "(w)e are immigrants, they don't respect us," the list of proposed arguments read.

Abdiaziz Shafii Farah, Abdimajid Mohamed Nur, Said Shafii Farah, Abdulkarim Shafii Farah and Ladan Mohamed Ali are each charged with one count of conspiracy to bribe a juror, one count of bribery of a juror and one count of corruptly influencing a juror, according to the indictment. (AP)

Texas man executed: A Texas man who admitted he kidnapped, assaulted and fatally shot an 18-year-old woman in 2001 was executed Wednesday evening.

Ramiro Gonzales, 41, was pronounced dead at 6:50 pm following a chemical injection at the state penitentiary in Huntsville for the January 2001 killing of Bridget Townsend.

Gonzales was repeatedly apologetic to the victim's relatives in his last statement from the execution chamber.

"I can't put into words the pain I have caused y'all, the hurt, what I took away that I cannot give back. I hope this apology is enough," he said.

As the drug took effect, he took seven breaths, then began sounds like snores. Within less than a minute, all movement had stopped. (AP)

'Attack fuelled by interaction': The ambush killings of two Connecticut police

officers were likely fueled by an angry interaction the gunman had with police earlier, along with building pressures in his personal life and his abuse of alcohol and drugs, according to a report released Wednesday by the state's Inspector General.

The report detailing how Bristol police Sgt Dustin DeMonte and Officer Alex Hamzy were gunned down in the driveway of a home also found that a third officer who



Japan's Emperor Naruhito and Empress Masako with the V&A Museum Director Tristram Hunt watch children from Cayley Primary School in an origami making session at the Young V&A Museum in Bethnal Green in London on June 27. (AP)

survived the 2022 attack was justified in fatally shooting the gunman, identified by police as Nicholas Brutcher.

Inspector General Robert Devlin's investigation - required by law in cases of deadly force - describe Brutcher in a downward spiral in the face of mounting debt, his ex-wife's pregnancy with a former friend, and a scolding by his mother following a traffic stop that evening. (AP)

Man held in triple-shooting: A man arrested in connection to a fatal shooting in northern Colorado allegedly killed a man by shooting him in the head, and wounded two others, according to court documents.

Henry Corral, 44, was taken into custody following an intensive search that authorities said involved him fleeing from a vehicle crash and an attempted carjacking.

Officers found the three victims after responding to a report of shots fired at The Sunset Inn in Alamosa at about 2 am Sunday. The city of about 10,000 people is roughly 30 miles (50 kilometers) from the New Mexico border.

According to an arrest affidavit for Corral released Wednesday, Corral's wife had been spending time with Manuel Flores, a childhood friend who was recently released from prison and visiting from the Denver area. Flores was wounded in the shooting as well as his friend Gabriel Pina, the affidavit said. The man who was killed, Aurelio Pina, was identified as Gabriel Pina's father. (AP)

Lat/Am

Hernández gets 45 yrs

Bolivia coup attempt fails, general arrested

LA PAZ, Bolivia, June 27, (Agencies): Calm returned to Bolivia's capital on Thursday after troops led by a top general stormed the presidential palace, then quickly retreated, tumultuous scenes that threatened to pitch the long-troubled South American democracy into chaos.

The nation of 12 million watched in shock and bewilderment Wednesday as Bolivian military forces appeared to turn on the government of President Luis Arce, seizing control of the capital's main square with armored personnel carriers, crashing a tank into the palace and unleashing tear gas on protesters who flooded the streets.

The country's army chief, Gen. Juan José Zúñiga, addressed a scrum of TV reporters from the palace, vowing to "restore democracy," replace the cabinet, and free political prisoners.

But as opposition leaders condemned the apparent coup attempt, it became clear that the coup had no meaningful political support. Arce refused to relent and named a new army commander, who immediately ordered troops to stand down, ending the rebellion after just three chaotic and head-snapping hours. Hundreds of Arce's supporters rushed the square outside the palace, waving Bolivian flags, singing the national anthem and cheering.

"Here we are, firm, in the presidential palace, to confront any coup attempt," Arce said after facing down Gen. Zúñiga, calling on Bolivians to mobilize in defense of democracy.



Arce

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Rivalry

Authorities swiftly arrested Zúñiga as his soldiers retreated from central La Paz, crushing the apparent coup attempt and defusing the latest crisis in a country wracked by a bitter political rivalry and economic crisis.

"Their goal was to overturn the democratically elected authority," Government Minister Eduardo del Castillo told journalists in announcing the arrests of Zúñiga along with an alleged co-conspirator, former navy Vice Adm Juan Arnez Salvador.

The short-lived rebellion followed months of mounting tensions between Arce and his one-time ally, former President Evo Morales. Bolivia's first Indigenous president, Morales remains a global leftist icon and towering figure in national politics years after mass protests that prompted him to resign and flee in 2019 - an ouster his supporters view as a coup.

Since returning from exile, Morales has staged a dramatic political comeback. Threatening to challenge Arce in 2025 primaries, Morales has sparked an unprecedented rift in their ruling socialist party. The feud has paralyzed efforts to resolve a spiraling economic crisis, with the country's foreign currency reserves diminishing, its natural gas exports plummeting and its currency peg collapsing.

As police in riot gear set up blockades outside the presidential palace, Bolivians - though no stranger to political conflict in a country that has witnessed some 190 coups by one count - thronged ATMs, formed long lines outside gas stations and emptied shelves in grocery stores and pharmacies.

Reassurance

Flanked by the newly appointed military chiefs late Wednesday, Defense Minister Edmundo Novillo sought to reassure the rattled public and shed light on what had happened.

The turmoil began earlier this week, Novillo said, when Arce dismissed Zúñiga in a private meeting Tuesday over the army chief's threats to arrest Morales if he proceeded with his presidential bid in 2025. In their meeting, Novillo said that Zúñiga gave officials no indication he was preparing to seize power.

"He admitted that he had committed some excesses," Novillo said of Zúñiga. "We said goodbye in the most friendly way, with hugs. Zúñiga said that he would always be at the side of the president."

The frantic palace takeover began hours later. Tailed by armored vehicles and supporters, Zúñiga burst into government headquarters and declared that he was sick of political infighting.

Members of the country's fragmented opposition, which Zúñiga claimed to support, rejected the coup before it was clear it had failed. Former interim President Jeanine Áñez, detained for her role in Morales' 2019 ouster, said that soldiers sought to "destroy the constitutional order" but appealed to both Arce and Morales not to run in the 2025 elections.

The mutiny by a lifelong member of the military with a low political profile stirred confusion. Just before his arrest, Zúñiga claimed that President Arce himself had asked the general to storm the palace in a ploy to boost the embattled leader's popularity.

Justice Minister Iván Lima denied Zúñiga's claims, insisting the general was lying to justify his actions.

Also:

MEXICO CITY: Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador said he anticipated a "smooth" transition to the incoming administration with no risk of a currency devaluation that typically occurred during previous handovers.

The economy was in good shape, including healthy public finances, adequate levels of tax collection, and continued foreign investment flows, said the president during his daily press conference.

"I don't see any problem ... on the contrary, it is going to be a smooth transition, the likes of which has not been seen in a long time," Lopez Obrador told reporters.

Lopez Obrador, who took office in December 2018, concludes his term in September. He will be succeeded by president-elect Claudia Sheinbaum, the candidate of the ruling party who won the presidential elections in early June and will take office on Oct. 1.

NEW YORK: A defiant former Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernández was sentenced in New York Wednesday to 45 years in prison for teaming up with some bribe-paying drug traffickers for over a decade to ensure over 400 tons of cocaine made it to the United States.

Judge P. Kevin Castel sentenced Hernández to 45 years in a US prison and fined him \$8 million, saying that the penalty should serve as a warning to "well educated, well dressed" individuals who gain power and think their status insulates them from justice when they do wrong.

A jury convicted him in March in Manhattan federal court after a two-week trial, which was closely followed in his home country.



US Army's armored vehicles prepare to move during an exercise in Paju, near the border with North Korea on June 27. Inset: This photo provided by the North Korean government, shows what it says the separation and guidance control test of individual mobile warheads at an undisclosed place in North Korea on June 26. (AP)

Asia

Stella Assange thanks Australian lawmakers

NKorea tests new multiwarhead missile

SEOUL, South Korea, June 27, (AP): North Korea said Thursday it had successfully tested a multiwarhead missile in the first known launch of a developmental weapon coveted by leader Kim Jong Un to overwhelm US and South Korean missile defenses. South Korea quickly dismissed the claim as deception to cover up a failed launch.

North Korea's state media said the launch Wednesday tested the separation and guidance control of individual mobile warheads to ensure the capability of the Multiple Independent Reentry Vehicles. It said the separated warheads "were guided correctly to the three coordinate targets" and a decoy that separated from the missile was verified by radar.

If confirmed, it would be North Korea's first public launch event related to the development of a multiwarhead missile, though at a preliminary stage.

South Korea's military said later Thursday that a joint analysis by South Korean and US authorities assessed that the North Korean missile launch failed.

Separation

Joint Chiefs of Staff spokesperson Lee Sung Joon told reporters that the separation of warheads in MIRV tests happens in descending stages but the North Korean missile exploded in the initial stage of its flight. He said North Korean photos of the launch showed a weapon similar to a liquid-fuel Hwasong-17 ICBM that the country test-fired in March 2023.

The South Korean military's earlier assessment Wednesday was that a suspected solid-fueled hypersonic missile was launched and exploded off the North's east coast, scattering fragments in the water. It said it detected more smoke than normal launches, suggesting a possible combustion issue caused by an engine fault.

A multiwarhead missile was among the high-tech weapons systems Kim cited on his wish list during a ruling party meeting in early 2021, along with spy satellites, solid-fuel intercontinental ballistic missiles, hypersonic weapons and submarine-launched nuclear missiles. North Korea has since performed a series of tests to develop such weapons systems.

"I had been anticipating a MIRV test for some time now, as this was one of the last remaining items on Kim Jong Un's modernization wish list from the 8th Party Congress back in January 2021," said Ankit Panda, a senior

analyst at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Panda said Wednesday's test appeared to be an initial evaluation of some of the key subsystems to develop a workable MIRV. He expects successive tests of the technology to follow, leading up to a launch of an intercontinental ballistic missile on a lofted trajectory. Panda said it appeared that "South Korea misinterpreted the nature of this test initially."

Lee Choon Geun, an honorary research fellow at South Korea's Science and Technology Policy Institute, said North Korea appeared to have begun testing individual technological elements of multiwarhead missiles. He said more tests are expected to perfect the separation and guidance control and other facets of multiwarhead missile technology.

Chang Young-keun, a missile expert at Seoul's Korea Research Institute for National Strategy, said the North Korean test hasn't yet proved it has sufficient MIRV controlling technologies needed for ICBMs. He said North Korea didn't release enough information to verify its MIRVs made successful atmospheric reentries and hit designated targets.

Panda said the presence of a decoy in the North Korean test is significant. But South Korea's military said it couldn't immediately confirm whether North Korea has the technology to build such a decoy.

"North Korea has made no secret of its intention to stress and overcome U.S. homeland missile defenses," Panda said. "Decoys will assist in that endeavor and will likely be incorporated onto their single-warhead missiles as well."

The North Korean test, its first weapons display in a month, came as the country protests the regional deployment of a U.S. aircraft carrier for an inaugural joint training with South Korea and Japan.

Also:

MELBOURNE, Australia: Stella Assange thanked the spectrum of lawmakers who campaigned for her husband, WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange, to be freed during her visit Thursday to Australia's Parliament House, where political leaders differed over how welcome the convicted felon was in his homeland.

"Julian is overjoyed and so grateful to the Australian people, to the members of Parliament and to the govern-

ment and also the opposition who came together to voice the need for his release," Stella Assange said.

Assange has made no public comment since he arrived in Australia on Wednesday after pleading guilty to obtaining and publishing U.S. military secrets in a deal with U.S. Justice Department prosecutors that ended his 14-year legal battle for freedom.

The Bring Julian Assange Home Parliamentary Group began with a few federal lawmakers in 2019 and expanded to 47 - one of five of the total in Canberra - as a consensus grew that the prosecution over WikiLeaks' release of almost half a million documents relating to the U.S. wars in Iraq and Afghanistan in 2010 had taken too long.

His lawyers now want to swing that public and political support behind a campaign to have Assange's conviction pardoned.

"President (Joe) Biden or any subsequent president absolutely can and, in my mind, should issue a pardon to Julian Assange," lawyer Barry Pollack said.

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has been credited with the diplomatic coup that enabled Assange to be released from a London prison to travel to Northern Mariana Islands, a US commonwealth in the Western Pacific where he pleaded guilty to a single charge under the Espionage Act.



TOKYO: Three bodies were found inside a crater at the summit of Mount Fuji, Japan's most famous mountain, with one of them already brought down from the slopes, police said Thursday.

The identities of the people, including gender or age, were not confirmed. An effort to bring back the two other bodies will continue Friday or later, depending on weather conditions, they said. A search was called off for Thursday because of forecasts for heavy rainfall.

It's unclear whether the three people were climbing the 3,776-meter (12,388-foot) mountain together, as the bodies were found several meters apart.

The official climbing season had not yet started when the climbers entered the mountain from the Shizuoka Prefecture side.

Japanese media reports showed a vehicle with one of the bodies driving into a police station in Shizuoka Prefecture. The rescue team had been searching for a 53-year-old man for whom a missing person report was filed.



Congo's President Felix Tshisekedi, along with the US and UN experts, accuses neighboring Rwanda of giving military backing to M23. Rwanda denies the claim, but in February it effectively admitted that it has troops and missile systems in eastern Congo to safeguard its security, pointing to a build-up of Congolese forces near the border. (AP)



'Oppn activists moved to jails': Opposition politicians who were arrested in a crackdown in Mali were sent to prisons across the country this week, their families said, in a move rights groups decried as another step back for the country where the ruling junta has suspended all political activities.

Mali, a landlocked nation in the semiarid region of Sahel, has been embroiled in political instability that swept across West and Central Africa over the last decade. The nation has seen two military coups since 2020 as an insurgency by jihadi groups linked to al-Qaida and the Islamic State group worsened. The junta has ruled the country with an iron fist, and earlier this year suspended all political activities.

The eleven opposition politicians were arrested earlier this month during a meeting in a private residence, the Malian National Human Rights Commission, a government agency, said in a statement, denouncing what it called "arbitrary arrests" and "violations of private homes." (AP)



Bolivian police hold the detained Juan Jose Zuniga, former general commander of the Army, in La Paz, Bolivia on June 26. An apparent failed coup attempt erupted Wednesday in the country, and Zuniga appeared to be leading the rebellion. (AP)



Ruto



Tshisekedi

Africa

Kenya police clash with protesters: Kenyan police on Thursday clashed with protesters in Nairobi before planned protests against a contentious finance bill, despite the president's decision not to sign it after the plans sparked deadly chaos in the capital and saw protesters storming and burning part of the parliament building.

Protesters who said last week that they would march to the State House on Thursday say they still don't trust President William Ruto, who has said the tax hikes would be withdrawn and budget cuts would be made.

Police have hurled tear gas canisters at groups of protesters attempting to congregate within the central business district. The military has been patrolling the city despite a Wednesday court order that suspended their deployment to support police during the protests.

Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua on Wednesday urged the young protesters to call off planned protests and give dialogue a chance.

The leaderless movement began online with young people demanding that legislators reject the proposed tax hikes. It later morphed into calls for the president's resignation after the bill was passed. On Tuesday, thousands of protesters stormed Kenya's parliament, burning parts of the building and sending lawmakers fleeing. Police opened fire and at least 22 people were reportedly killed in the chaos.

Activists were divided about the agenda of Thursday's protests. One protester, Boniface Mwangi, urged others to peacefully march to parliament road where protesters were killed to pay their respects. "Invasion of the State House isn't a solution," he wrote on X. But Francis Gaitho, one of the many activists mobilizing for the protests online, insisted that young people should march to the State House. Activists and others warned that the stakes were higher than in past protests, because Ruto vowed on Tuesday to quash unrest "at whatever cost". (AP)

'Congo conflict worsened': The decades-old conflict in Congo's mineral-rich east has "drastically deteriorated" since early 2022, and gotten even worse since last October, with sharp increases in sexual violence, the number of wounded, and child recruitment, the top Red Cross official in the country said Wednesday.

Francois Moreillon called Congo a "double-edged crisis," with the last 30 years of conflict weakening the capacity of government, including at local levels, to deliver basic services such as water, education and food. When it came to protecting civilians, Moreillon said the crisis was "extremely acute."

Eastern Congo has struggled with armed violence as more than 120 groups fight for power, land and valuable mineral resources, while others try to defend their communities. Some armed groups have been accused of mass killings.

The head of the International Committee of the Red Cross, known as the ICRC, said "all indicators are going through the roof" since Oct 1 when fighting resumed between Congolese government forces with their allies, and the M23 rebel group.



A contestant is pictured during a contest of the second Belt and Road International Skills Competition in southwest China's Chongqing Municipality on June 24. The second Belt and Road International Skills Competition kicked off at Chongqing International Expo Center on Monday, attracting participants from 61 countries and regions. (Xinhua)

oil plunges

The price of Kuwaiti oil went down 68 cents to USD 86.90 pb on Wednesday, compared to USD 87.58 pb the day before, said Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) on Thursday.

On a global scale, the price of the Brent crude futures contracts went up 24 cents to USD 85.25 pb, while the West Texas Intermediate crude went down seven cents to USD 80.90 pb. (KUNA)

Kuwait extends offer submission for Al-Zour north station project

Eng. Nayef Al-Haddad, the Director of the Research and Strategic Planning Office at the Public-Private Partnership Projects Authority, recently announced the extension of the period for receiving offers from qualified investors for the Al-Zour North Station project phases two and three, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The new deadline for submission is set for September 30 of this year. This decision was disclosed during a joint workshop held by the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry in collaboration with the General Authority for Partnership Projects, titled "The New Vision of Kuwait through Partnership Projects." The Al-Zour North Station project is a critical initiative

aimed at bolstering Kuwait's electrical energy production capacity by up to 2,600 megawatts, thereby enhancing the nation's energy security.

In addition to the Al-Zour project, Eng. Al-Haddad highlighted other strategic endeavors the Partnership Authority is advancing.

These include the forthcoming announcement of qualified companies for the Al-Shaqaya project, focused on generating electricity from renewable sources, and the publication of names for the fixed telecommunications project in cooperation with the Ministry of Transportation in the Official Gazette soon.

Looking ahead, the Authority plans to unveil three new

strategic projects, anticipated to be the largest in terms of cost and competitive participation from companies globally. This move underscores Kuwait's commitment to attracting substantial investment and diversifying its economy, with international companies participating for the first time, illustrating the state's capability in drawing significant investment opportunities.

Eng. Al-Haddad underscored the pivotal role of the private sector in alleviating the financial burden on the state through collaborative partnerships in infrastructure development. He emphasized that Kuwait's partnership projects prioritize activating the private sector's role while achieving common societal goals and interests.

Market Movements

27-06-2024

	Change	Closing pts		Change	Closing pts
SAUDI - TASI	+73.27	11,729.62	JAPAN - Nikkei 225	-325.53	39,341.54
DUBAI - DFMGI	+2.89	4,008.96			
PHILIPPINES - PSEI	+77.47	6,390.58			
EGYPT - EGX 30	+265.71	27,766.27			
PAKISTAN - KSE 100	+332.33	78,564.63			

Business

12 companies pre-approved for flow line contracts

KOC issues three contracts for flow lines & associated works

KUWAIT CITY, June 27: The Kuwait Oil Company has offered three contracts for the construction of flow lines and associated works for wells in the southern and southeastern regions. One of the contracts relates to producing wells, the second relates to injection wells, and the third relates to drainage wells, reports Al-Qabas daily.

"Med" magazine reported that pre-bid meetings for all three contracts are scheduled for July 1, and the deadline for submitting bids for the contracts is July 22, with bids across the three contracts limited to 12 companies, which were previously approved by the Kuwait Oil Company for flow line work.

The list of approved companies can be expanded if contractors who were not included file a com-

plaint against their non-listing, or submit a request to participate in the tender.

The following is a summary of the key points from the recent developments since the KOC has issued three contracts for the construction of flow lines and associated works in the southern and southeastern regions. The contracts are categorized into producing wells, injection wells, and drainage wells.

Pre-bid meetings for these contracts are scheduled for July 1, and the deadline for submitting bids is July 22.

Initially, bids are limited to 12 companies that were pre-approved by KOC for flow line work, with a possibility to expand this list upon requests or complaints.

Q8 marks 40th anniversary

Kuwait Petroleum International acquires 50% stake in Eco Focus

KUWAIT CITY, June 27: The Kuwait Petroleum International Company (Q8) announced the successful acquisition of a 50 percent stake in Eco Focus, an Italian biofuels production company fully owned by Focus Petroleum, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

This milestone follows approvals from the European Competition Commission and the Italian Competition Authority, marking a significant step in Kuwait Petroleum Corporation's strategy towards sustainable energy by 2050.

In a statement to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), Kuwait Petroleum International highlighted the strategic importance of this acquisition in diversifying its product offerings and expanding its footprint in the European market.

The CEO Shafi Al-Ajmi expressed pride in enhancing the company's ability to supply sustainable fuel across Europe, particularly in Italy, underscoring the alignment with their long-term market development strategy.

Fadel Al-Faraj, Executive Vice President of Marketing,

emphasized that this acquisition positions the Q8 brand as a leader in sustainable biofuels production in Europe. He noted the transformation of the company in Italy from a traditional fuel provider to a key player in sustainable energy solutions, coinciding with Kuwait Petroleum International's 40th anniversary.

Eco Focus, established in the 1990s, specializes in advanced biodiesel production and industrial by-products, boasting significant production and storage capacities.

This acquisition strengthens Kuwait Petroleum International's global presence, complementing its extensive network of retail fuel stations and aviation fuel supply operations at major international airports.

Overall, the acquisition underscores Kuwait Petroleum International's commitment to sustainability and strategic growth in the European market, leveraging national expertise to capitalize on global investment opportunities and meet evolving consumer demands.

Kuwait opens investment office in Saudi for economic diversification

Vital moment in bilateral ties

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 27: Kuwait has taken a significant stride towards economic diversification by opening an investment representation office in Saudi Arabia, aimed at boosting sources of income and accelerating national development across various sectors.

This move has been hailed by economists as a positive step that not only strengthens economic ties between the two countries but also promises substantial benefits for both economies.

Badr Al-Hamidi, a prominent businessman and former Housing Minister, praised the decision by Kuwait Investment Authority to establish a representative office in Saudi Arabia, emphasizing its role in enhancing economic relations beyond oil-dependent sectors.

Highlighted

He highlighted the secure investment climate in Saudi Arabia and its potential for profitable returns, suggesting it as a preferable destination for Kuwaiti investments over European and Asian markets.

Sultan Al-Jazzaf, member of the Kuwaiti Economic Society, echoed this sentiment, describing the initiative as highly successful and foreseeing expanded economic

Over 136m SAR to be spent on mining exploration

Saudi reveals preferred bidders for fifth mining licensing round

RIYADH, June 27. (Xinhua): The Saudi Ministry of Industry and Mineral Resources announced the preferred bidders for its fifth mining licensing round, with the bidders' total exploration spending across six mining sites exceeding 136 million Saudi riyals (about 36.25 million U.S. dollars).

The tenders included the exploration rights of a variety of metal ores from regions covering 1,000 square km in total, the Saudi Press Agency reported.

The ministry's spokesperson, Jarrah bin Mohammed Al-Jarrah, said the six sites, offered in the fifth round of the Saudi Exploration Competition, constitute the largest area the kingdom has ever recorded for a group bid.

Among the local and international winners, a Saudi private mining group, Al Masane Al Kobra Mining Company, secured the exploration rights of two major sites by allocating 46 million riyals for each.

The two sites are namely the Jabal Qaran site in Najran, south of the kingdom, which spans over 46 square km and contains copper, gold, and lead deposits, as well

as the 274 square km Al-Hajirah site in the Asir region boasting gold, copper, and zinc deposits.

The second largest preferred bidder by exploration spending was the Saudi state-owned mining company Maaden, which has committed approximately 17.9 million riyals to win the rights to explore copper, silver, and gold deposits in the An-Nimas site in Asir.

Saudi-based Royal Roads Arabia Company won the Al-Mihah site in Mecca with 14.6 million riyals for exploration work at the 228 square km site containing copper, silver, and gold deposits.

Rights to the smaller Makman Hijab site in Riyadh, rich in gold and silver ores, and the Al-Halahila site in Najran, containing copper, zinc, and gold minerals, went to an alliance by the Saudi Eqleed Group and Indonesia-based Indotan Mining Company, and the Discovery Arabian Mining Company, respectively.

Al-Jarrah noted that the winning companies pledged to invest an additional 15 million riyals in community development near these sites and fostering local job opportunities.

cooperation between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

He emphasized that this step opens avenues for Kuwaiti private sector investments in Saudi Arabia, promoting employment and capital deployment in a stable environment.

Muhammad Al-Furaih, an economic advisor specializing in food

security, underscored the economic boom in Saudi Arabia and welcomed Kuwait's strategic move to open an investment office there.

He encouraged Kuwait to leverage Saudi Arabia's agricultural investments to benefit its own agricultural sector, fostering mutual economic growth and cooperation.

Overall, the establishment of Ku-

wait's investment representation office in Saudi Arabia marks a pivotal moment in bilateral economic relations, promoting diversification of income sources and strengthening ties through joint investment ventures across multiple sectors including industry, healthcare, technology, and tourism.

Dollar bonds in demand

Emerging markets see surge in debt securities issuance: report

KUWAIT CITY, June 27: According to a recent report by Fitch Ratings Agency, emerging market countries such as the Gulf states, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Turkey have significantly increased their issuance of debt securities in global markets, reports Al-Qabas daily.

These countries, along with others, have contributed to emerging market debt securities (excluding China) constituting 51% of the total global dollar-denominated debt in the first five months of 2024, compared to the same period in the previous year.

Fitch expects this trend of increased issuance to continue throughout the remainder of 2024 and into 2025. Governments in these markets are driving this growth through initiatives aimed at developing capital markets, financing fiscal deficits, and managing debt maturity.

The report highlights that Islamic sukuk, which are Islamic financial instruments similar to bonds, have emerged as a significant financing tool, comprising 12.4% of the total emerging market debt issued since the beginning of 2024 (excluding China).

The key findings from the report include:

Issuance Volume -- Emerging market debt bond issuances (excluding China) amounted to \$200 billion in the first five months of 2024. Saudi Arabia led these issuances with 18.5%, followed by Argentina (9.1%), UAE (9%), Brazil (8.5%), Turkey (7.8%), Indonesia (5.7%), Mexico (5.2%), and Chile (3.8%).

Dollar Bonds -- Inclusion of these countries in global bond indices has bolstered demand for dollar-denominated bonds from investors.

Expectations of lower interest rates are also supporting investor demand for high-yield debt bonds.

Sukuk Market -- Sukuk issuances are predominant in local capital markets, accounting for 60% in Malaysia, 56% in Saudi Arabia, and 55.3% in Indonesia. Saudi Arabia aims to deepen its sukuk and debt markets further to address government budget deficits, while the UAE seeks to diversify revenue financing with a potential surplus in its balance sheet.

Outstanding Debt -- As of May 2024, outstanding dollar-denominated debts in emerging markets (excluding China) totaled \$2.3 trillion. Mexico had the largest share at 11.4%, followed by Argentina and the UAE (8.5% each), Saudi Arabia (8.4%), Brazil (7.9%), Turkey and Indonesia (5.7% each), Chile (4.2%), and Qatar (3.5%).

Market Influence -- Corporate bonds from Gulf states, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Turkey accounted for 23.2% of the JP Morgan Emerging Market Bond Index by May 2024.

Banking Sector -- The report also notes significant assets held by banks in emerging countries, totaling \$42 trillion since the beginning of 2024. The largest banks by size are primarily located in China, followed by Turkey, UAE, and Brazil.

Fitch's analysis underscores the growing role of emerging markets in global debt markets, driven by strategic government initiatives and investor demand for diverse financial instruments like sukuk and high-yield bonds. These developments are expected to shape the trajectory of capital flows and market dynamics in the coming years.

Islamic loan market lags behind bond issuances in H1 with volumes decreasing by 21% to \$13.35 billion

ESG and sovereign issuances drive expansion of MENA fixed income market in H1

DUBAI, June 27: The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) market for Sukuk has continued to expand in the first six months of 2024, while the Islamic loan market has seen a decline, according to data from Bloomberg's Capital Markets League Tables. Growth in Sukuk has been primarily driven by ESG-related and sovereign issuances, reflecting issuer initiatives to broaden their funding base and capitalise on increasing investor interest in Islamic finance portfolios.

Volumes for ESG-related Sukuk, where funding is allocated to green and social projects, increased by 48% year-on-year in the first six months of 2024 to reach \$6.2 billion from 8 issuances. Saudi Arabia was the leading issuer, accounting for \$3.98 billion from five Sukuk, with the UAE representing the remaining \$2.25 billion.

The region's banks were the driver, with a notable debut issuance from Emirates Islamic Bank (\$750MM). The positive trend reflects the commitment of Islamic

finance in the region to ESG investing, in relation to the significant climate finance announcements made by the UAE during COP28 last year.

The Islamic loan market, however, has lagged behind the uptick in bond issuance during the first half of 2024, despite offering competitive rates and terms, compared to conventional loans. Islamic loan volumes in the MENA region floated around \$13.35 billion in H1 2024, a 21% year-on-year decrease, reflecting the level of activity seen in the bond market since the pandemic.

Global sovereigns have driven the sector in the first half of the year, with Saudi Arabia issuing \$33.6 billion in the local and international capital markets, followed by Malaysia issuing \$4.3 billion, and the UAE issuing \$2.9 billion. Noteworthy transactions including Saudi Arabia \$5 billion Sukuk transaction split across 3-, 6- and 10-year tranches and Bahrain \$1 billion 7 year Sukuk.

Venty Mulani, Data Specialist - Sustainable Fixed Income,

Bloomberg LP, said: "The continued expansion of MENA Islamic debt issuances aligns with broader trends in the fixed income space while pointing to increased issuer interest in sustainable debt and an appetite to diversify portfolios. In the second half of the year, we can expect to see continued growth, particularly for ESG-related Sukuk, reflecting a deepening commitment to sustainable finance in the MENA region."

Bloomberg's league tables are a one-stop shop for constant and timely access to the most comprehensive information available on capital markets representation. Bloomberg Terminal users can access the full range of league tables on LEAG, while Bloomberg Intelligence ESG data is available on BI ESG. More information on Islamic Capital Markets can be found on ISLM, including a comprehensive overview of the integration of Islamic finance data with Bloomberg core analytics for all asset class coverage.

Iran and Russia dominate global gas reserves

Russian gas supply deal with Iran finalized

TERHAN, June 27, (KUNA): Iran signed on Wednesday a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Moscow to supply gas to Tehran.

Iranian Oil Minister Javad Oudji stated to the official Iranian television that the National Iranian Gas Company signed the agreement with the Russian energy giant Gazprom, with the presence of Iran's Acting President Mohammad Mokhber and Gazprom's head Alexey Miller in Tehran.

Oudji stated that Iran is fully prepared to receive the Russian gas supply as it has a strong infrastructure and pipelines, adding that Iran and Russia own more than 60 percent of gas reserves in the world.

Bitcoin investment products see \$600 mln outflow surge

KUWAIT CITY, June 27: In the past two weeks, Bitcoin-related investment products have experienced substantial outflows totaling approximately \$600 million, marking the highest withdrawal amount since the approval of exchange-traded funds (ETFs) for Bitcoin in January by the United States, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Data from CoinShares International reveals that digital asset products overall faced divestments amounting to \$584 million in the week ending June 21. Bitcoin products specifically accounted for the majority of these outflows, totaling \$630 million, following another \$600 million in outflows in the preceding week.

Among the notable outflows,

Fidelity's Bitcoin fund saw withdrawals amounting to \$270 million, while Grayscale recorded exits of \$150 million, according to a report from Cryptocurrency market research firm.

The decline in Bitcoin's value over the past two weeks reflects reduced demand for Bitcoin ETFs and uncertainty surrounding monetary policies. Bitcoin prices have decreased consecutively for two weeks, dropping approximately 4% on Monday to around \$61,100.

These developments underscore a period of significant divestment in Bitcoin-related investment products, influenced by market dynamics and investor sentiment amidst evolving regulatory and economic conditions.

Southwest says a key measure of pricing power will be weaker than expected in Q2

Southwest Airlines, already under pressure from a hedge fund for disappointing financial results, said Wednesday that a key revenue ratio will be weaker than expected because of changes in how consumers book travel.

The airline said it still expects second-quarter revenue to hit a record.

However, Southwest said, revenue for each seat flown one mile - a closely watched measure of pricing power - will fall by 4% to 4.5% compared with the same quarter last year. In April, the air-

line said the decline would be 1.5% to 3.5%.

Costs per mile will rise by 6.5% to 7.5% compared with a year ago, said the airline, which is dealing with rising labor costs.

The Dallas-based carrier said the revenue per mile outlook is worsening mostly due to "complexities" in adapting its pricing to "current booking patterns in this dynamic environment."

Travel is booming. Airlines expect a record number of passengers this sum-

mer, but they have undercut their pricing power by adding more flights and seats. Southwest still plans to increase flying by 8% to 9% over the second quarter of last year.

After losing \$231 million in the first quarter, Southwest announced it will end service at four airports and shrink its work force by 2,000 people this year.

This month, hedge fund Elliott Investment Management bought a \$1.9 billion stake in Southwest and called for the

ouster of CEO Robert Jordan and former CEO and current Chairman Gary Kelly, saying they had failed to modernize the airline's technology and strategy to keep up with changes in travel.

Jordan says he is not resigning, and he promises to unveil a plan to boost profit during an investor day in September.

Elliott said Wednesday marked the eighth time Southwest had lowered financial guidance in 18 months. "Southwest's industry-trailing revenue performance is clearly continuing along the same disappointing trend line, despite management's repeated promises for improvement," two of the firm's executives said in a statement. "Southwest is led by a team that has proven unable to adapt to the modern airline industry."

Southwest shares fell more than 4% Wednesday morning before recovering to close down a fraction of 1%. Shares are down about 15% in the past year, while the S&P 500 index is up 28%. (AP)

Stock value over \$2T

Amazon 'joins' exclusive club

NEW YORK, June 27, (AP) Amazon joined the exclusive \$2 trillion club Wednesday after Wall Street investors pushed the value of the e-commerce giant's stock past that threshold.

Shares in Amazon.com Inc. finished the day up almost 4%, giving the Seattle-based company a stock market valuation of \$2.01 trillion. Its stock has gained 52% in the past 12 months, partly driven by enthusiasm for the company's investments in artificial intelligence.

Amazon now joins Google's parent Alphabet, software behemoth Microsoft, iPhone maker Apple and chip maker Nvidia among companies with valuations of at least \$2 trillion.

Last week, Nvidia hit \$3 trillion and briefly became the most valuable company on Wall Street. Nvidia's chips are used to power many AI applications and its valuation has soared as a result.

Amazon has also been making big investments in AI as global interest has grown in the technology. Most of the focus has been on business-focused products, including AI models and a chatbot called Q, which Amazon makes available to businesses that use its cloud computing unit AWS.

"A big part of the valuation boost has been cloud and AI," said Wedbush tech analyst Dan Ives. "Amazon is going to be a major player in the AI revolution."

In April, Amazon CEO Andy Jassy said that AI capabilities have reaccelerated AWS' growth and that it was on pace for \$100 billion in annual revenue. The unit's growth slowed last year as companies cut down on costs amid high inflation.

Amazon has also invested \$4 billion in the San Francisco-based AI company Anthropic to develop so-called foundation models that underpin generative AI systems. In addition, Amazon makes and designs its own AI chips.

Outside of its cloud business, Amazon has cut costs significantly since late 2022, laying off more than 27,000 corporate employees across several divisions. It reported revenue and profits for the first quarter of the year, aided by growth in AWS as well as its core retail business and advertising. All those things are boosting investor sentiments, said Neil Saunders, the managing director at GlobalData Retail.

"Certainly, there are downsides, but these are mostly external - such as the threat from the FTC," Saunders said, alluding to the federal agency's antitrust lawsuit against the company.

Poles seeking safety in gold investments

WARSAW, Poland, June 27, (AP) When COVID-19 hit, long lines formed outside shops selling gold in Poland. Then came Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, triggering another rush for gold.

Piotr Kozik, the manager of a Warsaw shop selling gold bars and coins produced by the Mint of Poland, remembers how the day of Russia's invasion, Feb. 24, 2022, was Fat Thursday, when Poles gorge themselves on paczki, jam-filled donuts.

"On that day there were longer lines for gold at our store than for donuts at the bakery," Kozik said.

Poles were shaken by the war across the border, which sent refugees fleeing to their country, and to many gold seemed to offer financial and psychological security.

Today those lines are gone, but demand for gold remains steady as the war rages on into its third year. Adding to unease is a migration crisis at Poland's border with Belarus, which Polish authorities view as hybrid war engineered by Moscow and Minsk.

Radoslaw Paklikowski, a 38-year-old entrepreneur in the western Polish city of Wroclaw, began buying gold and silver coins in 2021 and now invests 5% of his assets in precious metals.

"Having real physical gold is important and by that I don't mean a ton of gold, but an amount that will help you cross the border or make your family safe if anything will happen," he said.

Membership in NATO gives one a feeling of security. Still, many in this region once under Moscow's control worry that if Russia prevails in Ukraine it won't stop there.

The Conversation

More women in venture capital doesn't mean more funding for female-led businesses, new research suggests and here's why

Prospect poses big threat to America's automakers



Sales staff stand near the Seagull electric vehicle from Chinese automaker BYD at a showroom in Beijing on April 10, 2024. Considered a marvel of engineering efficiency, its lightweight design allows the Seagull to go farther per charge on a smaller battery. (AP)

Low-priced Chinese EVs via Mexico

WASHINGTON, June 27, (AP) It's a scenario that terrifies America's auto industry.

Chinese carmakers set up shop in Mexico to exploit North American trade rules. Once in place, they send ultra-low-priced electric vehicles streaming into the United States.

As the Chinese EVs go on sale across the country, America's homegrown EVs - costing an average of \$55,000, roughly double the price of their Chinese counterparts - struggle to compete. Factories close. Workers lose jobs across America's industrial heartland.

Ultimately, it would all become a painful replay of how government-subsidized Chinese competition devastated American industries from steel to solar equipment over the past quarter-century. This time, it would be electric vehicles, which America's automakers envision as the core of their business in the coming decades.

Low-priced Chinese EVs pose a potentially "extinction-level event" for America's auto industry, the Alliance for American Manufacturing has warned.

Especially worrisome: The 2020 U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement would potentially let Chinese cars assembled in Mexico enter the United States duty-free or at a nominal 2.5% tariff rate. Either way, China could sell its EVs well below typical U.S. prices.

To defuse the threat, the U.S. has options. Customs officials could rule that Chinese EVs don't qualify for the low-duty or duty-free benefits of being made in Mexico. U.S. policymakers

could also pressure Mexico to keep Chinese vehicles out of that country. Or they could bar Chinese EVs from the U.S. on the grounds that they would threaten America's national security.

The threat from Beijing is emerging just as U.S. automakers face slowing EV sales. High prices and a shortage of charging stations are keeping many American consumers away.

Cheap Chinese EVs might help by pushing down prices, accelerating sales and encouraging investment in charging stations. "It would be cheaper just to let the Chinese cars come in, forget all the tariffs and subsidies, let the market figure it out," said Christine McDaniel, a senior research fellow at George Mason University's Mercatus Center. "Yes, it would be disruptive. But EVs would get on the road in the U.S. a lot faster."

At stake is who stands to dominate the manufacture and sale of zero-emissions electric vehicles.

China has so far taken a daunting lead. It accounted for nearly 62% of the 10.4 million battery-powered EVs produced worldwide last year. The United States made 1 million - less than 10% of the total, according to GlobalData.

Chinese automakers have made remarkable strides holding down costs. China's BYD last year introduced a small EV called the Seagull that sells for just \$12,000 in China (\$21,000 for a version sold in four Latin American countries). The Seagull's lightweight design allows it to go farther per charge on a smaller battery. BYD has said it's considering building a factory in Mexico - but only for the Mexican market.

Critics note that BYD and other Chinese EV makers have achieved their cost efficiencies thanks to heavy subsi-

dies from the Beijing government. The Chinese government spent more than \$130 billion on EVs and other green vehicles from 2009 through 2021, according to the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Last month, President Joe Biden raised the tariff on Chinese EVs, from the 27.5% established during Donald Trump's presidency to 102.5%. It's meant to price even the bargain-priced BYD Seagull out of the U.S. market. (The European Union says it plans to impose provisional tariffs of up to 38.1% on Chinese EVs for four months starting in July.)

The U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement, though, potentially lets vehicles assembled by Chinese firms in Mexico enter the U.S. at a much lower tariff or none at all. If made-in-Mexico cars met the USMCA's requirements, they could enter the United States duty-free. At least 75% of a car and its parts would have to come from North America. And at least 40% of it must originate in places where workers earn at least \$16 an hour.

Still, for a Chinese EV maker like BYD, qualifying for duty-free treatment under the USMCA would be difficult. "Even North American automakers have a challenging time reaching those thresholds," said Daniel Ujcz of the Thompson Hine law firm.

But there's an easier way Chinese EV makers could use Mexico to try to dodge Biden's killer 102.5% import tax: They would have to pay only 2.5% - the tax imposed on most cars imported to the United States - if they could show that assembling their EVs in Mexico involved a "substantial transformation" that essentially transformed them from Chinese into Mexican cars.

Japan warns of necessary steps on currency moves

TOKYO, June 27, (KUNA): Japanese Finance Minister Shunichi Suzuki warned on Thursday that the government will take necessary actions on foreign exchange moves after the yen weakened to a 38-year low against the dollar.

"Rapid and one-sided moves in exchange rates are undesirable. In par-

ticular, we are deeply concerned about the impact on the economy," Suzuki told reporters.

The minister made remarks after the Japanese yen fell to the mid-JPY 160 against the dollar in Tokyo, the lowest level since December 1986, and touched the psychologically important threshold earlier in the day.

"We will analyze the background to these movements with a high sense of urgency, and take necessary measures," Suzuki said. At 3:00 pm (0600 GMT), the US dollar traded at JPY 160.35-37 versus JPY 160.78-88 in New York and JPY 159.89-91 in Tokyo at 5:00 pm Wednesday.

Global economic trends behind keywords at 2024 Summer Davos

DALIAN, June 27, (Xinhua): China's northeastern coastal city of Dalian currently finds itself at the nexus of world attention, as the host of the 15th Annual Meeting of the New Champions.

Running from June 25 to 27, the ongoing event, also known as Summer Davos, has drawn over 1,700 representatives of the political, business, academic and media communities in more than 100 countries and regions to explore new frontiers in revitalizing the sluggish global economy.

Amid discussions among the leading figures, several keywords have emerged, shedding light on the economic trends commanding the world's

attention.

Economic growth & cooperation
The global economy is facing challenges such as complex and volatile geopolitical landscapes and increased economic uncertainty.

According to the World Bank, global economic growth is projected to slow for the third consecutive year, declining from 2.6 percent in 2023 to 2.4 percent in 2024. The period from 2020 to 2024 is set to become the slowest five-year span for global economic growth in the past 30 years.

The question of how to stimulate global economic growth and make the economic pie bigger has become a topic of discussion among partici-

pants at the three-day grand gathering.

At this year's forum, Chinese Premier Li Qiang provided a feasible solution.

When meeting with Executive Chairman of the World Economic Forum (WEF) Klaus Schwab at the event's opening plenary, Li called on all nations and regions to maintain an open mindset, enhance their mutually beneficial cooperation and jointly seek new frontiers of economic growth.

Echoing Li's remarks, Schwab highlighted the necessity of global cooperation and innovation.

"To drive future economic growth, we must embrace innovation and fos-

ter collaboration across sectors, regions, nations and cultures to create a more peaceful, inclusive, sustainable and resilient future," he noted when addressing the opening plenary.

Next frontiers & AI
As a term included in the theme of this year's forum, "next frontiers" for development in the future have been observed as a major topic of several sub-forums.

Future growth points will revolve around new growth engines from technological innovation and green, low-carbon exploration amid a global transformation, said Chen Liming, chair of Greater China of the World Economic Forum.

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

By Lei (Jeremy) Xu,
University of Missouri-St. Louis

Venture capital plays an important role in helping new businesses get off the ground. The field also has a stubborn gender gap.

More than 4 in 5 partners at U.S.-based venture capital firms are men, surveys and research show. Perhaps relatedly, VC firms overwhelmingly direct their funds to man-led businesses: In 2023, only about 1 in 4 VC funds were allocated to woman-led companies, according to Crunchbase data.

Advocates for gender equity have long called for firms to have more female senior venture capitalists on their teams. The idea is that having more women making investment decisions will translate into more funding for woman-led businesses.

As a professor of entrepreneurship, I wondered whether the facts supported this idea. So my co-authors and I analyzed funding decisions from more than 150 mid- and large-sized U.S.-based VC firms over eight years.

What we found surprised us: Firms whose decision-making groups included more female senior venture capitalists offered less funding to woman-led businesses. Every additional senior female venture capitalist in a firm's decision-making group was linked to a 0.46% decline in the proportion of newly funded woman-led businesses in its investment portfolio.

Since the average funding round in our sample was \$5.4 million, that suggests adding one extra female senior venture capitalist into a VC decision-making group translates into woman-led businesses receiving about \$25,000 less funding.

To be clear, my team isn't saying that individual female venture capitalists are to blame for this state of affairs. Our work was not aimed at assigning personal responsibility. We simply found that having more women in VC decision-making circles was associated with less funding of woman-led businesses.

On its face, this may seem like a paradox. But it's consistent with previous research that shows male dominance

is entrenched in the U.S. entrepreneurial finance market. According to our interviews with female entrepreneurs and senior venture capitalists, this fosters a culture where women tend to defer to their male counterparts.

Research also suggests that women in male-dominated spaces have incentives to distance themselves from less-powerful women to improve their status. That might help explain why female senior venture capitalists would hesitate to fund woman-led startups.

My team also found, however, that two key factors can mitigate this effect.

First, when senior venture capitalists in a decision-making group had worked together previously, we didn't see the same negative impact. That suggests trust matters.

And when a group includes politically neutral senior venture capitalists, which we judged by looking at public political donation records, it reduces the negative effects on funding for woman-led businesses. This is because politically impartial decision-makers improve and facilitate group communication and consensus building.

Our findings suggest that VC firms might want to explore innovative approaches to fighting gender bias. For example, they could invite outside female investment professionals who have connections with many incumbent senior venture capitalists to work as consultants. These professionals could then independently assess investment proposals and offer advice to VC firms' decision-making groups.

In some cases, efforts to elevate women in the workplace may pay off. For example, an analysis of all companies listed on the S&P Composite 1500 index from 2004 to 2015 found that calls for greater gender diversity in the boardroom were linked to the inclusion of more female directors.

But as our research suggests, efforts to promote diversity aren't always so successful, especially in those male-dominated contexts such as the U.S. entrepreneurial finance market. Indeed, they can backfire if they fail to address underlying cultural biases and power dynamics.

To be clear, our study isn't a call to abandon the pursuit of diversity among venture capitalists. Instead, it underscores the importance of persisting until women achieve equal status in business and society at large. (AP)

Action signals likely rejection

Federal judge puts \$30 bln Visa, Mastercard settlement on hold

NEW YORK, June 27, (AP) A federal judge said she's not likely to approve the \$30 billion settlement between the payment processing giants Visa and Mastercard and the merchants who say they've overpaid on swipe fees.

Visa and Mastercard reached a settlement with a group of small businesses and merchants back in March. The deal would lower and cap the fees charged by Visa and Mastercard and allow small businesses to collectively bargain for rates with the payment processors in a similar way that the large merchants do on their own now.

But the settlement was not universally accepted. The National Retail Federation, the largest U.S. retail trade group, said it was likely to oppose the settlement, saying the relief was only temporary and that payment processing fees remain too high. The settlement would have capped swipe fees for five years, which merchants opposed to the settlement said was insufficient.

In a brief order, Judge Margo

Brodie of the Eastern District of New York said she was unlikely to grant final approval to the settlement. The decision means that, absent a settlement, the case could go to trial.

The settlement stems from a 2005 lawsuit that alleged merchants paid excessive fees to accept Visa and Mastercard credit cards, and that Visa, Mastercard and their member banks acted in violation of antitrust laws. Visa and Mastercard collect a fee from every transaction that runs on their network. The fee varies depending on the size of the merchant as well as the industry they operate in, but generally it's between 1% and 3% of a transaction's value.

In 2018 Visa and Mastercard agreed to pay \$6.2 billion as part of the long-running suit filed by a group of 19 merchants. But the lawsuit then had two pieces that needed to be resolved: a dispute over the rules Visa and Mastercard impose to accept their cards, and the merchants who chose not to participate in the settlement.

INNOVATION

Business Plus



Summer Davos returns to Dalian for future growth talks

China's AI, green tech drive global change



Participants try AI digital image in the exhibition area of 5G 'New Calling' in Dalian, northeast China's Liaoning Province, June 27, 2024. The 15th Annual Meeting of the New Champions, also known as the Summer Davos, concluded in northeast China's coastal city of Dalian on Thursday. (Xinhua)

‘The technology advancements in many countries including China are open-sourced, with a spillover effect benefiting other developers globally.’

DALIAN, June 27, (Xinhua): Five years on, the Annual Meeting of the New Champions brought worldwide business gurus, political leaders and academic elites back to northeast China's coastal city of Dalian, exploring new horizons for future growth.

Many dialogues at the event, also known as Summer Davos, led to a consensus that China's high-quality development amid its drive to foster new quality productive forces had been a boon for countries and multinational companies across the globe, helping them weather the predicament of the world economy.

In various domains, ranging from technological development represented by artificial intelligence (AI) to green innovation spearheaded by new energy technologies, industry insiders at the event recognized that China is among the flagbearers, eyeing more spillover effects from China's progress.

China's continuous recovery and long-term improvement, as well as the transformation, upgrading and profound changes in its economy, will

surely provide new and broad space for the development of global enterprises, said Chinese Premier Li Qiang, when attending a symposium for foreign business representatives at the event.

Next frontiers with AI

According to Chen Liming, chair of Greater China of the World Economic Forum, future growth points will revolve around technological innovation and green low-carbon exploration, creating new engines for growth amidst global transformations.

Rapid advancements in areas including AI and energy transition are set to provide unprecedented momentum for the high-quality and steady development of the global economy, Chen noted.

For many distinguished panelists at the event, China serves as a prominent trendsetter and a second-to-none magnet for related industries amid the trend of exploring new frontiers of AI and new energy sectors.

“China's AI industry remains at the forefront globally. As a strategic technology that will lead the

future, AI is considered a crucial engine for creating new quality productive forces,” said Cai Wei, chief strategy officer of KPMG China Advisory, noting that the rapid development of AI in China is empowering various industries, enhancing efficiency and providing new opportunities for businesses and individuals alike.

China is leading the way in AI spending and serves as a significant contributor to the world economy growth brought by AI-related sectors, said Jessica Zhang, senior vice president, APAC at Automatic Data Processing Inc., an American provider of human resources management software and services, regarding China as one of the major global players in AI sector.

Speaking at Xinhua, Zhang said that China's development opportunities, openness and massive data resources are surely benefiting both domestic and foreign companies. “We also see these great opportunities in China, and will continue investing in China and building our own channels to AI and AI tools.”

For Kang Xi, an assistant professor at Vanderbilt University in the United States, AI technologies advanced in China will benefit other countries.

“The technology advancements in many countries including China are open-sourced, with a spillover effect benefiting other developers globally,” Kang told Xinhua. “China's computing power and its vast consumer data are going to refine the foundation of AI models and also help create customized smaller models that can be implemented in other countries.”

Sharing green development

Besides AI, China has been vigorously developing the new energy sector to meet its dual carbon commitments and help fight the climate crisis.

China provides 50 percent of the world's wind power equipment and 80 percent of global photovoltaic equipment. It has driven down the cost of renewable energy and helped some other countries obtain clean, reliable, and affordable energy.

Espen Mehlum, head of Energy Transition Intelligence and Regional

Acceleration, World Economic Forum, spoke highly of China's green transition and highlighted its reference significance.

“We need to make sure that the clean energy revolution touches all countries of the world. That's where China is playing a leading role,” Mehlum said, adding that China's related industries are effectively reducing the cost of clean energy for consumers in many countries and providing them access to this green technological revolution.

Benoit Boulet, associate vice principal, Innovation and Partnerships, at McGill University in Canada, also hailed China's vigorous energy transition efforts.

“We have to move away from fossil fuels as quickly as possible to renewable energy,” Boulet said. “China is really pushing hard right now, and I think that's a signal to the world.”

China opportunities

Business leaders from across the world reaffirmed their commitment to China's opportunities at the event, applauding the country's rapid progress in new energy and AI as well as its open and expansive market.

China's innovations in the new energy sector, such as photovoltaics and lithium-ion batteries, have captured the world's attention, and there is also ample room for growth in AI, according to Martin Franc, chief executive officer of Invesco Australia.

Franc said the new sectors offer opportunities for multinationals and international organizations, and the company looks forward to future innovation and cooperation opportunities in China.

Premier Li Qiang said at the opening plenary of the event that the rapid growth of new industries and new drivers has buttressed the sound and sustained development of the Chinese economy. China has the confidence and capability to achieve the growth target of around 5 percent for this year, Li said.

Gaven Chai, vice president of Honeywell Industrial Automation and general manager for China, emphasized that China's opening up brings growth opportunities and new growth points, which is the reason why the country has attracted a huge amount of foreign investment.

Chai added that China's vast market offers diverse application scenarios for testing innovative solutions. “For Honeywell, the Chinese market serves as an ideal testing ground to validate our innovative solutions,” he said.

In promoting emerging industries such as new energy vehicles and AI, China has achieved its own economic growth and also made significant contributions to global innovation and sustainable development, said Cai Wei, suggesting businesses should fully seize these opportunities and work together to achieve a win-win situation for economic growth and global development.

Too many passwords to remember? Try using a password manager

Password recycling poses cybersecurity risks

‘A good password manager should also be able to generate complex passwords with letters, numbers and symbols, for whenever you're setting up a new account.’

LONDON, June 27, (AP): Everyone has too many passwords. The credentials we need to remember to navigate online life keep multiplying, not just for frequently used email, banking, social media, Netflix and Spotify logins, but also, say, the little-known e-commerce site you're not sure you'll buy from again.

According to some unscientific studies, the average person has hundreds of passwords. That's a lot to keep track of. You might be tempted to recycle them, but it's one of the bad password habits that cybersecurity experts warn against.

Instead, use a password manager. They've been around for a while and can be useful tools to keep on top of your credentials. But they can also be intimidating for those who aren't tech-savvy.

Here's a guide on how to use them:

Many people just use the same password for all their online ac-

counts, mainly because it's the most convenient thing to do.

Don't!

If your credentials are caught in a cyber breach, the hackers could try using the stolen passwords to get into other services.

Other no-nos: Using easily guessed information like birthdays, names of family members, favorite sports teams, or simple phrases like abc123.

The best strategy, experts say, is to use a different password for each account, the longer and more complex the better, backed up by two-factor authentication where possible.

But it's impossible to remember all those various codes. So let a password manager do the job.

The basic concept is simple: Your passwords are stored securely in a digital vault. When you need to access an online service, it auto-fills the login and password fields. The only thing you'll need to remember

is a single password to open the password manager.

Most password managers have a smartphone app that works with mobile browsers and other apps and can be opened with a thumbprint or facial ID scan. If you're using a computer, you can also log in to your password vault through a browser plug-in or by going to a website.

A good password manager should also be able to generate complex passwords with letters, numbers and symbols, for whenever you're setting up a new account. And it should also recognize that you're signing into an online service for the first time and ask if you want to save the credentials you've entered.

Password managers can also help you avoid falling prey to phishing scams. Those deceptive emails from fraudsters trying to trick you into clicking a link to a phony website designed to harvest login details? A password manager won't automati-

cally fill in the details if the web address doesn't match the one linked to the saved password.

They don't just store passwords. You can save bank and credit card PINs, for example. Many also support passkeys, a new technology that companies like Google have been rolling out as a safer alternative to passwords.

There are dozens of password managers on the market, so it can be hard to figure out what's best for you.

Better-known platforms include 1Password, Bitwarden, Dashlane, Bitdefender, Nordpass, Keeper and KeePass.

Check out the many tech review websites that have conducted in-depth testing and compiled rankings of the most popular services. If you want to nerd out, users on Reddit have drawn up spreadsheets with side-by-side comparisons. Britain's National Cyber Security Centre has a buyer's guide.

editor's choice



What's On



Khaled AlShamlan presenting an honorary shield to Maryam Al-Enezi, the Assistant Undersecretary for Educational Development and Activities.



Khaled AlShamlan, Maryam Al-Enezi honoring one of the top female achievers.



Khaled AlShamlan, Maryam Al-Enezi, and KFH officials with the honored students.



Khaled AlShamlan, Maryam Al-Enezi honor outstanding students from private high schools and those with international recognition.

Awards ceremony celebrates excellence

KFH honors 2024's top high school graduates in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, June 27: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) organized an honoring ceremony to celebrate 150 high school top achievers in literature, science, and religious disciplines. The ceremony also recognized students from private schools and those with international recognition.

The ceremony was held under the patronage of Minister of Education, Higher Education and Scientific Research, Dr. Adel Al-Adwani, and in the presence of KFH Kuwait Chief Executive Officer, Khaled AlShamlan, and Maryam Al-Enezi, Assistant Undersecretary for Educational Development at the Ministry of Education.

Al Shamlan extended the congratulations on behalf of KFH to the high school graduates who achieved the highest academic

honors for the 2023-2024 academic year. He also commended the role of the graduates' parents and families, whose unwavering support throughout the year undoubtedly contributed to this achievement.

Furthermore, AlShamlan expressed his sincere gratitude to His Excellency Dr. Adel Al-Adwani, Minister of Education, Higher Education and Scientific Research, the sponsor representative Assistant Undersecretary for Educational Development at the Ministry of Education, Maryam Al-Enezi and the entire educational personnel at the Ministry for their vital role and tireless efforts throughout the school year.

AlShamlan noted that high school graduation is the start of an exciting new chapter in university studies

Khaled AlShamlan:

■ Supporting youth and outstanding students is a core pillar of the Bank's strategy

journey which requires planning effectively to maintain this success. He also stated that choosing a major that aligns with students' aspirations and the employment market demands is crucial.

"Setting clear long-term goals, continuing your learning process, and acquiring new skills are all essential elements that pave the way for distinguished opportunities," he added.

AlShamlan added that: "KFH prioritizes youth and outstanding

Maryam Al-Enezi:

■ KFH's initiative motivates outstanding students to sustain their success

students, a core tenet of its strategy. As a testament to this commitment, KFH established the 'You are our Pride' platform, the first of its kind in Kuwait, to celebrate young achievers. KFH is also a leading supporter of youth in general, with a particular focus on sponsoring outstanding students. This dedication reflects KFH's belief that young people are the nation's true assets, the foundation for driving future development and prosperity."

"Given our keenness to fulfill youth aspirations and provide them with limitless opportunities, KFH launched Tam Digital Bank as the First sharia-compliant digital bank in Kuwait. Tam offers various banking services that are innovative and easy to use that align with the modern lifestyle of youth. Tam users can benefit from the exceptional rewards and offers that cater to all their needs," he explained.

He pointed out that KFH also offers the Forssah program to attract and develop high-achieving university graduates. This program helps participants build their career paths by providing practical experience and skills sought after in the job market. Forssah specifically targets recent Kuwaiti graduates from both local and international universities.

AlShamlan concluded his speech by congratulating the students on their success and dedication and wished them success and excellence in their future in various fields.

Meanwhile, Assistant Undersecretary for Educational Development at the Ministry of Education, Maryam Al-Enezi commended KFH's annual initiative to honor outstanding students.

She stated: "Societal partnerships play a significant role in fostering various aspects of development, particularly education. We applaud KFH and its Board of Directors for hosting a ceremony honoring these outstanding high school graduates. This initiative serves as a powerful motivator, inspiring them to continue their success in the future."

People & Places

Television

Unscripted series

'CSI' creator brings real crimes on CBS

NEW YORK, June 27, (AP) — There have been five "CSI" shows with actors playing forensics experts — "CSI: Crime Scene Investigation," "CSI: Miami," "CSI: New York," "CSI: Cyber" and "CSI: Vegas." Now it's time for the real experts to bask in the spotlight.

"The Real CSI: Miami," premiered on CBS on Wednesday night, is a documentary-style look at the hunt for real criminals told by the officers and lab-coated pros who actually solved the murders.

"CSI" has that ability to live in different spectrums," says writer-producer **Anthony E. Zuiker**, who created the hit franchise. "It made perfect sense to try the unscripted version of the show because the format could still relatively be the same."



Zuiker

The series uses real 911 calls, actor portrayals, surveillance video, interrogation and bodycam footage, crime scene images, cool graphics and re-creations. There are also interviews with survivors and family members to underline the pain of loss.

"I know what makes 'CSI' work and what does not work. And what does not work is when the episodes are emotionally vacant," says Zuiker. "It's very important to have the survivors and emotionality. That was one of my No. 1 mandates to have."

The technicians and officers explain their thinking on motives and clues and return to key crime scenes. So if a detective went scuba diving for a vital clue, we see him back in the water describing how he found it.

"You have to make sure it still feels like a 'CSI,' but you also don't have the ability to get extra creative in the writing because you have to stick to the bona fide facts of the case," says Zuiker. "That was the challenge."

One of the first episodes revisits the 2015 gunshot murders of couple Tara Rosado and Carlos Ortiz in the Florida Keys. Their bodies were found in a bedroom, with signs of a struggle but no gun was recovered. "That tells me there was someone else in the room. And that's when the hunt for the killer began," says investigator Mary's Martinez.

Murders

Viewers watch as authorities eye an ex-husband before the discovery of an old gun in a canal leads scuba teams to find a submerged iPhone nearby that reveals the reason for the murders might have been a fight between friends over a bale of cocaine.

Another episode examines the 2018 murder of rapper XXXTentacion, gunned down outside a motorsports store. Authorities investigate whether it was the result of a rap beef or a simple robbery. Smartphone GPS and metadata, surveillance video and the discovery of a live cartridge help finger the suspects.

"A lot of what I had to do with the producers of the show was to give them the confidence that the forensics was not boring and that the forensics drove the narrative," Zuiker says.

In many ways, "The Real CSI: Miami" is a nod to the forensic sciences that sparked the birth of "CSI." Zuiker was inspired after watching an episode of "New Detectives" on the Discovery Channel about a cheerleader killed by an obsessed photographer.

Detectives in that case found the dead woman's hair follicles in the suspect's car, determined the body had been redressed and that she was wearing no makeup, undermining the killer's alibi that she was doing a photoshoot.

"I think when those three particular pieces of evidence were explained to me as a novice in forensics, I realized that the body was a perfect specimen to solve crime," Zuiker says. "That's how 'CSI' was born."

Zuiker was 28 when he realized he had a potential show on his hands. Now he is 55 with a hit, Emmy Award-winning franchise that rivals the "Law & Order" universe and is broadcast in 171 countries and multiple languages. "Did I think we'd get past 13 episodes? No. Did I believe we had something special? Yes," he says.

"CSI" has indeed proved a durable property, going from the desert of Las Vegas to the waters of Miami and into the urban jungle of New York and even online.

"This is a particular franchise that can live and be malleable in scripted, unscripted and docu-series, movie formats, gaming formats," he says. "I think, for me, personally, this 'Real CSI: Miami' is a tremendous pivot in the right direction to keep the entire franchise healthy."

Zuiker is an active producer, always looking for storylines for his shows. He was inspired to write an episode of "CSI: Vegas" after learning about a metal drum washing up with a body inside and another show by discovering that someone made micro-crochet koalas on Etsy. He thought little koalas might be an interesting "cry for help" by a fictional killer to leave at crime scenes.

"I was always hoping that 'CSI' would be a crime deterrent. I sit back as the creator of the franchise and have to chuckle to myself every morning when I read crime stories about the colossal mistakes that people are making when they commit a crime, as if the show never existed. If they just took the time to watch my show, they probably would think twice about it."

Also:

NEW YORK: In "Land of Women," **Eva Longoria** plays Gala, a New Yorker who is living the good life one day, and the next is left with her husband's massive debt after he disappears. She flees to northern Spain with her mother and teenage daughter. The fish-out-of-water series is based on a popular novel and was created for TV by the prolific Spanish TV producer **Ramón Comptos**. The dialogue is a combo of English, Spanish and Catalan — a language spoken in northeastern Spain. "One of the big sources of comedy is miscommunication and this is ripe for that," Longoria told TV critics earlier this year. The "Land of Women" debuts Wednesday on Apple TV+.



Models wear creations for the Elie Saab Haute Couture Fall-Winter 2024-2025 collection presented Wednesday, June 26, in Paris. (AP)

Fashion

Vintage glamour meets modern sophistication

Saab unveils fairytale fall couture

PARIS, June 27, (AP) — Elie Saab again transported his VIP guests, including Avril Lavigne and Ellie Goulding at Paris' Musee des Arts Decoratifs, to a realm of magic and splendor. With silks and velvet, the Lebanese couturier once again conjured a fantastical, almost fairytale world of bridal queens, gleaming foliage and midnight shadows. This season, the fashion world also had another peek at couture for men, which is a slowly growing phenomenon.

Here are some highlights of Wednesday's fall-winter 2024 couture collection.

The Lebanese designer's fall collection came with dramatic flair, strikingly at midnight, enveloping the audience in a welcome dark mood. Models in black leather opera gloves and graphic bands of black satin set the tone.

Men's couture capes, part of Saab's theme since fall 2022, were embroidered with sequins and gleaming threads, resembling silver foliage kissed by morning dew. Saab's opulent men's couture line continues to add a new dimension to his brand, catering to a market segment that craves visibility.

In the predominantly women's display, organza whooshes swirled upward from the waist in a feat of artistry. As the collection progressed, the color palette softened. Tried-and-true floor-length silhouettes dazzled in gemstone hues.

A standout piece was a shoulderless gown in powder red, where sequins on the bodice morphed into a sea of feathers cascading down the mermaid-like skirt. The transformation of textures underscored Saab's craftsmanship.

While Saab's designs may not always break the mold in innovation or surprise, the commitment to his signature style ensures that his creations remain timeless. His stary clientele appreciates the red carpet-ready classicism. Wednesday's influential front row was a testament to Saab's enduring appeal.

Dynamic design duo Viktor & Rolf are often praised in couture for thinking outside the box. This season, they

expanded the box — literally and figuratively. Couture looks paraded past a visibly amused VIP audience, morphing models with cubic and rectangular structures. One of the first creations featured minimalist fabric with rectangular shoulders, as if the model had been wrapped as a gift or encased in couture for some sort of luxury delivery. Topping off the look, she donned a red, dog-collared-neck adornment that added an extra layer of whimsy.

Elsewhere, the boxy structures beneath garments riffed on the concept of rigid shoulder pads, recalling in a tongue-in-cheek way the glamour years of Hollywood. The piece de resistance was a clashing ensemble featuring a blue houndstooth shirt, pastel-striped mini skirt, and a Bordeaux embroidered jacket with gargantuan, box-like 'shoulder pads' towering above the model's forehead. It was a sight to behold, blending past and future in a surreal collision.

Theatrical

"The human body intersects with three-dimensional, abstract geometric shapes like cubes, triangles, and spheres ... as well as from a child's block set," the house said, acknowledging "a certain absurdism."

Known for their theatrical presentations, Viktor & Rolf once again delivered an engaging and entertaining show that transcended traditional fashion. Hairpieces were stiff and android-like, whimsically swept by the wind, enhancing the surrealist and ironic humor that has become their signature.

Their meticulous construction techniques and structural experimentation shone through, recalling past feats like exaggerated shoulder lines and detachable corsets from a Nosferatu-inspired show. This season's designs were not just garments but a commentary on fashion itself, and the absurdity of couture. Viktor & Rolf have once again shown that they are the grand architects of high fashion, deconstructing and rebuilding the box with every stitch.

French couturier Julie de Libran is renowned for her intimate shows. She often enlists her close friends as mod-

els and muses, evoking a nostalgic charm reminiscent of traditional couture presentations.

On Wednesday, de Libran took her signature style even further with the models, including the designer's niece Julia and even de Libran herself!

Models held numbered cards, a nod to the historical way collections were once presented for a light and airy display.

This vintage touch was complemented by details like a pink feather trim on a limp-waisted gown, which exuded a 1930s flair. Yet, the gown's vivid red hue injected a contemporary twist.

De Libran's affinity for vintage-inspired fabrics shone through in a Bordeaux column dress and a coat with large proportions, both adorned with gleaming lamé velvet flowers. These pieces exemplified her commitment to high-quality craftsmanship and up-cycling. Using exquisite fabrics from Lyonnaise mills, her creations are often unique and cannot be replicated, highlighting the artisanal nature of her work.

As a rare independent designer on the couture calendar, de Libran continues to captivate with her blend of nostalgic elegance and modern sophistication.

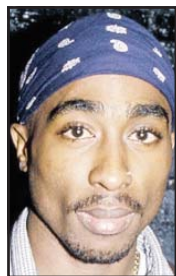
In the Paris luxury industry, the art of the chic invite is vital. Fashion houses vie to create the most inventive and flamboyant show invitations, often delivered by gas-guzzling couriers to each guest's personal or professional address, with little regard for the environment.

The miniature masterpieces sometimes hint at the forthcoming collection, while at other times they are simply whimsical.

Chanel's latest invitation, a pair of opera glasses, hinted at the show's theme inside Paris' opera house. Staying true to its classic roots, Dior sent out beautifully penned cards by an age-old calligrapher, evoking the maison's timeless elegance. Schiaparelli's giant gold key invitation reflected the surreal legacy of founder Elsa Schiaparelli, promising an avant-garde showcase.



Lupita Nyong'o attends the Paramount Pictures premiere of 'A Quiet Place: Day One' at AMC Lincoln Square on Wednesday, June 26, in New York. (AP)



Shakur



Margera

Variety

LAS VEGAS: An ailing former **Los Angeles**-area gang leader has been denied release from a Las Vegas jail ahead of his trial in the 1996 killing of music legend **Tupac Shakur**, despite a bid by a hip-hop music figure to underwrite his \$750,000 bond.

A Nevada judge rejected house arrest with electronic monitoring for **Duane "Keffe D" Davis**, 61, saying she wasn't satisfied with assurances that Davis and his would-be benefactor — Cash "Wack 100" Jones — weren't planning to reap profits from the sale of Davis' life story.

A Nevada law prohibits convicted killers from profiting from their crime.

Clark County District Court Judge **Carli Kierny** said in her ruling issued Wednesday that a review of Jones' financial records also did little to address her concerns that Jones might be a "front" or "middleman" for the true bond poster.

Davis has sought to be released since shortly after his arrest last September made him the only person ever charged with a crime in the killing, which has drawn intense interest and speculation for 27 years.

Davis has pleaded not guilty to first-degree murder. His trial is scheduled for Nov. 4. If convicted, he could spend the rest of his life in prison. (AP)

WEST CHESTER, Pa.: Former "Jackass" star **Bam Margera** will spend six months on probation after pleading guilty to disorderly conduct Wednesday over an altercation at his home near Philadelphia.

Margera, 44, had been charged with assaulting his brother and making threats to other family members during what the brother called a "frightening and unpredictable" two-week visit home last year.

The plea ends a long legal case that spun out of his stay at the Chester County home known as **Castle Bam**. At a hearing last year, Margera told the judge he was getting drug and alcohol treatment.

Jess Margera, at the same court hearing, called his brother "a good dude when he's not messed up" but said he had exhibited troubling behavior for two decades and, while home, had been awake for days. Jess Margera suffered a ruptured eardrum in the altercation, while Margera's girlfriend called police when he kicked in her bedroom door, the brother testified.

"You can really say he won his case before today just by turning his life around," Brennan said Wednesday. (AP)

MEMPHIS, Tenn.: The Memphis Music Hall of Fame inducted its inaugural class of 25 luminaries at a rousing ceremony 12 years ago, honoring legends spanning generations and genres, from **Elvis Presley** to ZZ Top to Three 6 Mafia.

In later years, dozens of other musicians who recorded, taught and performed in Memphis secured their place in the Hall of Fame in this cradle of blues, soul and

rock 'n' roll — **Justin Timberlake**, **Tina Turner**, **Carla Thomas**, to name a few.

This year, it will be inducting its 100th member of the Memphis music landscape with a class of nine, including soul singer **Wilson Pickett**, rapper, producer and songwriter **Jazze Pha**, and **Jack Soden**, who teamed up with Elvis' former wife **Priscilla Presley** to open **Graceland** as a tourist attraction in 1982. That was five years after

the singer and actor died in Memphis at the age of 42. Today, Graceland, Elvis' former home-turned-museum, is an American tourist mainstay, annually drawing hundreds of thousands of visitors to this city by the **Mississippi River**.

Graceland has evolved from a museum on the 13-acre property where the house sits to a sprawling entertainment complex that features a soundstage, exhibition space, restaurants and a 450-room hotel. (AP)

CHENGDU: A pair of giant pandas from **China** are heading to the San Diego Zoo in the United States, the first to enter the country in over two decades.

Yun Chuan and **Xin Bao** left their hometown in southwest China's Sichuan Province on Wednesday, transiting through **Hong Kong**. Sent as part of a 10-year international giant panda protection cooperation program, the duo are scheduled to arrive in the **United States** on Thursday, according to the China Wildlife Conservation Association.

This marks a new round of giant panda protection cooperation between the two countries, following an agreement signed in February between the China Wildlife Conservation Association and the San Diego Zoo.

"This is a historic conservation partnership that will help protect these magnificent creatures and their habitat," tweeted **Todd Gloria**, Mayor of **San Diego**, who attended a farewell ceremony in **Ya'an**, where the pandas had been residing. (Xinhua)



Burna Boy performs at a concert during the 19th edition of Mawazine festival in Rabat, Morocco, Wednesday, June 26. (AP)

Virus fatal for infants and the elderly

CDC strengthens RSV shot recommendation for people 75 and older

NEW YORK, June 27, (AP): US health officials on Wednesday made a stronger endorsement for RSV vaccinations for people 75 and older, but offered a narrower recommendation for people 60 to 74.

The director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention accepted the recommendations from a committee of outside advisers, making it the government's updated guidance to doctors.

A year ago, the same advisory group said that people 60 and older should simply talk to their doctors about whether to get the shots. Physicians have said that kind of lukewarm recommendation is confusing to patients, challenging to explain, and a likely reason that fewer than 25% of older Americans have gotten a shot.

RSV, or respiratory syncytial virus, is a common cause of cold-like symptoms but it can be dangerous

for infants and the elderly. Last year, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration licensed single-dose RSV vaccines made by two companies, GSK and Pfizer, for older people.

At the time, the vaccine advisers refrained from saying all older Americans should get the shots because of questions about possible side effects and the duration of protection.

Some of those questions still exist, and panel members on Wednesday declined a request by vaccine manufacturers to more forcefully recommend the shots for all Americans 60 and older.

Instead, they voted that people 75 and older should get the shots and that those 60 to 74 should do so only if they are higher risk for severe disease. The panel also declined to endorse giving the GSK vaccine to

people in their 50s, even though the FDA this month licensed the company's shot for that age group.

A newly approved RSV shot from Moderna will be subject to the same guidance.

Panel members said data has demonstrated that the shots make sense for all people 75 and older, because they are at higher risk for severe RSV cases.

For people who are 60 and older, the conditions that put them at higher risk of severe illness include chronic heart disease, advanced-stage kidney disease, chronic lung illnesses and severe obesity.

About 39% of people in that age group would qualify under the strictest interpretation of that guidelines, CDC officials said.

The committee also recommended the vaccine for 60- to 74-year-olds who live in nursing homes or are

deemed by their doctors to be frail for other reasons.

Underlying the panel's hesitancy are reports of a nervous system disorder, Guillain-Barre syndrome. Though rare, there have been a higher-than-expected number of Guillain-Barre cases among RSV vaccine recipients, particularly in those who got the Pfizer shot.

FDA officials on Wednesday said there is no clear evidence that the shots are causing the disorder, but some panel members noted research is ongoing.

"I do agree with the overall conclusion that the risks of RSV vaccination are greatly outweighed by the overall benefits," said one panel member, Dr. Camille Kotton, an infectious diseases expert at Massachusetts General Hospital. "Nonetheless, I remain quite concerned" about recurring indicators of Guillain-Barre in vaccination surveillance data, she added.

Wild poliovirus detected

India confirms two test positive for 'Zika virus'

NEW DELHI, June 27, (Xinhua): Two persons have been diagnosed to be suffering from the Zika virus in India's south-western state of Maharashtra, confirmed a local health department official on Wednesday.

A 46-year-old doctor and his teenage daughter tested positive for the Zika virus in Maharashtra's Pune district. The duo were said to be in stable condition.

Their three family members were said to be negative for the virus.

According to the World Health Organization, the Zika virus is a mosquito-borne virus that can cause fever, rash, and other symptoms. It is primarily transmitted by the "Aedes" mosquito, which is active during the day.

Wild poliovirus: Sewage samples collected from seven districts of Pakistan's southern Sindh province, including six previously infected districts, have tested positive for wild poliovirus type 1, the Pakistani Health Ministry said.

The environmental samples collected between June 3 and 5 from Qambar, Hyderabad, Jacobabad, Sukkur, Jams-horo, Karachi South and Karachi Malir districts contained the virus, the ministry said in a statement on Wednesday.

The virus found in these samples was genetically linked to the YB3A genetic cluster of type 1, which has been detected in all positive cases and sewage samples reported this year, said the statement.

This virus has been found in 46 districts this year, including from two districts where only cases have been reported, not positive environmental samples, it added.

So far this year, six people have been affected by the poliovirus, according to the ministry.

Cholera: Zimbabwe may soon declare an end to the cholera outbreak that has affected all 10 provinces if the current trend of declining cases continues, Minister of Health and Child Care Douglas Mombeshora said Tuesday.

At least 87 people have been confirmed to have died from the water-borne disease since an outbreak was first reported in February 2023, according to the ministry.

Some provinces have not reported any cases of cholera for more than a month, which is a good sign that the country is on course to end the outbreak, said Mombeshora in an interview with Xinhua over the phone. "If we have zero cases for a month, then we declare the outbreak over. So yes, in some provinces we can say we have no problem anymore. We have areas that have gone more than six weeks with no cases," he said.

The latest cholera situation report published by his ministry Monday

showed that nine provinces had not reported any cases of either suspected or confirmed cholera that day, while Harare Province had one suspected case. As of Monday, the country has recorded a cumulative total of 34,547 suspected cholera cases and 4,217 laboratory-confirmed ones.

In November 2023, Harare, the capital of Zimbabwe, declared a state of emergency following an upsurge in cholera cases. The declaration was meant to enable the city to seek assistance from local and international partners in fighting the disease, including the supply of potable water.

Mombeshora said the last challenge was in Sanyati District in Mashonaland West Province, but the situation has been brought under control after the government dispatched vaccines to the area. "So we are seeing an improvement, and we are watching," he added.

The minister also urged citizens to maintain good hygiene standards so that the pandemic does not recur. "It's important for people to always maintain good hygienic practices and use safe drinking water. They should not only do it when there is an outbreak; this should be their way of life," he said.

Monkeypox: South Africa's National Department of Health has confirmed that the death toll in the ongoing outbreak of monkeypox, or mpox, in the country has risen to three, with the total number of cases climbing to 16.

"The country has recorded three more positive cases of mpox and one death as the efforts to curb the spread of this infectious disease are ongoing in the affected communities around the country," the department said in a statement Tuesday evening.

According to the statement, the latest cases involve a 40-year-old male from KwaZulu-Natal province who presented with mpox-like symptoms including rash all over his body and never presented in hospital. "He passed on at home and the results came back positive for mpox on June 23, 2024."

The other two cases were confirmed in Gauteng province. Both of them presented with symptoms indicative of the disease but had no international travel history.

"This brings the total number of laboratory-confirmed cases of mpox in South Africa to 16 since the outbreak of the disease in May 2024. Eight cases from KwaZulu-Natal, seven cases from Gauteng, and one from Western Cape. All cases are males, aged between 23 and 43 years old," said the department. "The number of mpox-related deaths has also increased to three."

"We are trying to check the patterns of infection," said health department spokesperson Foster Mohale Wednesday.

China plans new deep space exploration missions

China opens lunar rock research to world, but notes obstacle with US

BANGKOK, June 27, (Agencies): China's space officials said Thursday they welcomed scientists from around the world to apply to study the lunar rock samples that the Chang'e 6 probe brought back to Earth in a historic mission, but noted there were limits to that cooperation, specifically with the United States.

Officials said at a televised news conference in Beijing meant to introduce the mission's achievements that any cooperation with the US would be hinged on removing an American law that bans direct bilateral cooperation with NASA.

"The source of the obstacle in US-China aerospace cooperation is still in the Wolf Amendment," said Bian Zhigang, vice chair of the China National Space Administration. "If the US truly wants to hope to began regular aerospace cooperation, I think they should take the appropriate measures to remove the obstacle."

Cooperation

The Wolf Amendment was enacted in 2011 and prevents direct US-Chinese bilateral cooperation except in cases where the FBI can certify that there is no national security risk to sharing information with the Chinese side in the course of work.

Still, China could cooperate with scientists of other countries. It worked with the European Space Agency, France, Italy and Pakistan in the Chang'e 6 mission.

"China welcomes scientists from all countries to apply according to the processes and share in the benefits," said Liu Yunfeng, director of the international cooperation office of the China National Space Administration.

The near side of the moon is what is seen from Earth, and the far side faces outer space. The far side is also known to have mountains and impact craters and is much more difficult to reach.

The probe's journey to the far side of the moon was historic in that it was the first time a probe had successfully taken off and brought back samples from the far side directly. Previous samples thought to be from the far side of the moon are from meteorites found on Earth.

Meanwhile, the weight of the samples collected from the far side of the moon by the Chang'e-6 mission will be made public on Friday, the China National Space Administration (CNSA) said on Thursday.

Hu Hao, chief designer of the Chang'e-6 mission, revealed his initial impressions of the lunar soil samples at a press conference held by the CNSA.

"The lunar soil samples from the moon's near side are fine and loose, while the samples from the far side ap-



The Chang'e-6 lunar probe returner was opened during a ceremony at the China Academy of Space Technology in Beijing, under the China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation, on June 26, 2024. (Xinhua)

pear in Hong Kong, which also obtained samples. The results of research on the Chang'e-6 samples are even more promising, and we hope they will actively participate in that too," he added.

Previous lunar sampling missions all collected samples from the moon's near side. The Chang'e-6 probe has successfully collected samples from the far side of the moon for the first time, which is expected to provide an opportunity for a more comprehensive understanding of the moon, said Li Chunlai, deputy chief designer of the Chang'e-6 mission.

The Chang'e-6 probe landed and collected samples in the South Pole-Aitken (SPA) Basin. The colossal SPA Basin was formed by a celestial impact over 4.3 billion years ago and has a diameter of 2,500 km and a depth of about 13 km. It is believed to be the largest impact crater found in the inner solar system so far.

"As the sampling site was in a huge impact basin, it was possible to collect samples from the deep part of the moon and even from the lunar mantle," Li said. "The deep materials are very precious and difficult to obtain, and they will provide valuable data for us to understand the internal structure of the moon and its material composition."

They will also help in the study of the solar system's early evolutionary history, and promote research on comparative planetology, Li added.

Also:

BEIJING: China is scheduled to launch the Tianwen-2 mission around 2025 for asteroid exploration, Tianwen-3 mission around 2030 to collect Martian samples and Tianwen-4 mission also around 2030 to explore the Jovian system, according to a senior official from the China National Space Administration (CNSA) on Thursday.

Bian Zhigang, deputy head of the CNSA, speaking at a press conference, said that the three future missions were among four planetary exploration missions given state approval.

The first mission, the Tianwen-1 Mars mission, already achieved a complete success in 2021, and the remaining missions are expected to be completed in 10 to 15 years.

He noted that the country's future planetary exploration missions will focus on major scientific goals, such as research into the origin and evolution of the solar system, the impact of small bodies and solar activities on Earth, and extraterrestrial life.

In addition, the Chang'e-7 probe will conduct surveys on the lunar south pole region and Chang'e-8 will carry out technology tests on the in-situ utilization of lunar resources.

\$843m deal to decommission ISS

NASA taps SpaceX to bring ISS out of orbit in few more years

WASHINGTON, June 27, (AP): NASA has awarded SpaceX an \$843 million contract to build the vehicle that will bring the International Space Station out of its longtime orbit of Earth when its operating lifespan ends in a few more years.

SpaceX, a privately held company controlled by technology mogul Elon Musk, will build the vehicle that will bring down the space station, but NASA will still oversee the eventual mission.

The International Space Station, launched in 1998, is expected to be needed to be brought out of orbit by 2030. The station is operated by space agencies from the US, Europe, Japan, Canada and Russia. All the countries involved have pledged to operate the

station until 2030 except Russia, which has only committed to participate until 2028.

Crews of astronauts have been occupying the space station since 2000.

"The orbital laboratory remains a blueprint for science, exploration, and partnerships in space for the benefit of all," said Ken Bowersox, NASA's associate administrator for space operations mission directorate.

The contract is another vote of confidence in the technological prowess of SpaceX, a rocket maker based in Hawthorne, California, that Musk founded in 2002 to explore new frontiers in space. Musk, 52, then became the driving force behind in Tesla, the electric car maker that accounts for most of his estimated fortune of \$220 billion.

According to Hu, the Chang'e-6 mission encountered many challenges, one of which was communicating with Earth from the far side of the moon. To solve this problem, China launched the Queqiao-2 relay satellite in March to provide relay communication support for the mission.

Additionally, the terrain and landforms on the far side of the moon are much more complex than on the near side, said Li Chunlai, deputy chief de-

signer of the Chang'e-6 mission. "We have overcome many difficulties in landing and collecting samples."

Hu also highlighted that the sampling device developed by a research team at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University enabled the mission to be completed smoothly.

"I believe that Chang'e-6 carried out its sampling work more smoothly than Chang'e-5, with each sampling operation obtaining more samples than expected," he said.

"During previous lunar sample research, we received applications from several universities and research institu-

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The Conversation

For many Olympic medalists, silver stings more than bronze

By Andrea Luangrath, University of Iowa and William Hedgcock, University of Minnesota

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



At the 2022 Beijing Olympics, a distraught Alexandra Trusova won silver and promptly declared, "I will never skate again." Swimmer Michael Phelps displayed a mix of frustration and disappointment at the 2012 London Olympics when he added a silver to his trove of gold medals. At those same games, gymnast McKayla Maroney's grim expression on the medal stand went viral.

These moments, caught by the camera's unblinking eye, reveal a surprising pattern: Silver medalists often appear less happy than those winning bronze.

In a 2021 study, which we conducted with our research assistant, Raelyn Rouner, we investigated whether there's any truth to this phenomenon.

When the athletes of the world convene in Paris this summer for the games of the 33rd Olympiad, many will march in the opening ceremonies dreaming of gold.

But what happens when they fall just short? We studied photos of 413 Olympic athletes taken during medal ceremonies between 2000 and 2016. The photos came from the Olympic World Library and Getty Images and included athletes from 67 countries. We also incorporated Sports Illustrated's Olympic finish predictions, because we wanted to see whether athletes' facial expressions would be affected if they had exceeded expectations or underperformed.

To analyze the photos, we used a form of artificial intelligence that detects facial expressions. By using AI to quantify the activation of facial muscles, we eliminated the need for research assistants to manually code the expressions, reducing the possibility of personal bias. The algorithm identified the shapes and positions of the athletes' mouths, eyes, eyebrows, nose and other parts of the face that indicate a smile.

Even though second-place finishers had just performed objectively better than third-place finishers, the AI found that

bronze medalists, on average, appeared happier than silver medalists.

So why does this happen?

The answer has to do with what psychologists call "counterfactual thinking," which refers to when people envision what didn't occur but could have happened.

With this thought process in mind, there are two main explanations for this medal stand phenomenon.

First, silver medalists and bronze medalists form different points of comparison - what are called category-based counterfactuals.

Silver medalists form an upward comparison, imagining a different outcome - "I almost won gold." Bronze medalists, on the other hand, form a downward comparison: "At least I won a medal" or "It could have been worse."

The direction of this comparison shows how happiness can be relative. For silver medalists, almost winning gold is a cause for disappointment, while simply being on the medal stand can gratify a bronze medalist. We also point to a second reason for this phenomenon: Medalists form something called expectation-based counterfactuals.

Some silver medalists are disappointed because they expected to do better. Maroney's famous grimace is an example of this. Sports Illustrated predicted she would win the gold medal by a wide margin. In other words, for Maroney, anything other than gold was a big disappointment.

We found evidence consistent with both category-based and expectation-based counterfactual accounts of Olympic medalists' expressions. Unsurprisingly, our analysis also found that gold medalists are far more likely to smile than the other two medalists, and people who finished better than expected were also more likely to smile, regardless of their medal.

Prior studies

haven't been able to thoroughly test this phenomenon. But by using artificial intelligence, we were able to test these theories on a large and diverse set of image data for the first time.

It's important to note that these findings do not speak to how the athletes actually felt about winning bronze or silver. Smiles can be faked for the cameras. Other times, people smile when they feel awkward or uncomfortable. (AP)



Mexico's Johan Vasquez (right), challenges Venezuela's Salomon Rondón during a Copa America Group B soccer match in Inglewood, Calif. (AP)

Venezuela 'advance' to Copa America quarters

Ecuador eliminate winless Jamaica

INGLEWOOD, June 27, (AP) — Salomón Rondón scored on a penalty kick in the 57th minute, and Venezuela advanced to the Copa America quarterfinals with a 1-0 victory over Mexico.

Venezuela, which opened with a 2-1 win over Ecuador, is assured finishing among the top two in Group B. Mexico began with a 1-0 victory over Jamaica and has three points along with Ecuador, which defeated the winless Reggae Boyz 3-1 earlier Wednesday.

Mexico plays Ecuador at Glendale, Arizona, on Sunday, and needs a victory to advance. Venezuela faces already eliminated Jamaica at Austin, Texas.

Venezuela ended a 13-game winless streak against El Tri.

Brazilian referee Raphael Claus awarded the penalty kick when Julián Quiñoned shoved Jon Aramburu in the penalty area.

Rondón sent his kick to the right of goalkeeper Julio González, who jumped left, and Rondón got his 42nd goal in 107 international appearances. His scoring total is almost double that of Juan Arango, second among Venezuelans with 23.

Mexico was awarded a penalty kick for a handball by Miguel Navarro on Jorge Sánchez's shot but Rafael Romo leapt to his right to push Orbelín Pineda's penalty kick wide in the 87th minute.

While the Vinotinto reached the quarterfinals for the third time in four tournaments, Mexico is on the verge of first-round elimination for the third time in its last four Copa America trips.

Under Argentinian coach Fernando Batista, the Venezuelans have just two losses in their last 15 matches, to Italy and Colombia.

Mexico's midfield was without Edson Álvarez, who injured a hamstring against Jamaica and will miss the rest of the tournament.

Seventeen-year-old Kendry Páez scored in first-half stoppage time, Alan Minda added another goal late

in the second half and Ecuador beat winless Jamaica 3-1.

Ecuador, which rebounded from a 2-1 loss to Venezuela, won its first Copa America game since a 4-0 victory over Haiti in 2016, stopping an eight-game winless streak.

Jamaica became the first team eliminated from the 16-nation tournament when Venezuela beat Mexico 1-0.

Kasey Palmer's 13th-minute own goal put Ecuador ahead and Páez

SOCCER

made it 2-0 with a penalty kick in the fourth minute of first-half stoppage time. Michael Antonio scored Jamaica's first Copa America goal in the 54th, and Minda got the final goal in the first minute of second-half stoppage time.

Venezuela has six points and clinched a quarterfinal berth, while Mexico and Ecuador have three points each. Ecuador closes the Group B against Mexico at Glendale, Arizona, on Sunday, when Jamaica faces Venezuela.

Jamaica is 0-8 over three Copas, getting outscored 12-1.



Jamaica's goalkeeper Jahmali Waite, (right), clears the ball challenged by Ecuador's Moises Caicedo during a Copa America Group B soccer match in Las Vegas. (AP)

Ecuador went ahead when Piero Hincapié centered the ball from near the corner flag and it deflected off a sliding defender Palmer and over backpedaling goalkeeper Jahmali Waite.

Páez, the youngest player in the tournament at 17 years, 1 1/2 months, scored his second international goal after Chilean referee Cristián Garay called a hand ball on Reggae Boyz defender Greg Leigh following a video review.

Antonio scored after Palmer's corner kick bounced to Ethan Pinnock. His shot hit the back of defender William Pachó, ricocheted off Hincapié and bounced toward Antonio. He swiveled, turned his torso and volleyed the ball in off goalkeeper Alexander Domínguez's right post for Antonio's fourth goal in 16 appearances.

Garay decided not to award a penalty kick after another video review in the 75th. Michael Hector teepoked the ball and it appeared to hit an arm and the head of Ecuador's Alan Franco.

Minda broke in alone on White in a counterattack following a Jamaica corner kick and slotted a shot past Waite for his first goal in six appearances, fed by a Carlos Gruezo pass.

Joins US as only country with 3 players within top 10 picks

Historic NBA draft for France

NEW YORK, June 27, (AP) — The NBA may have to rethink the timing of its annual draft. Not the month, but a tweak to the hour the picks start coming off the board.

Paris is six hours ahead of New York, so French basketball fans eager to see history had to stay up into the wee hours of Thursday morning to see France join the United States as the only countries with three players drafted in the top 10 picks of an NBA draft.

And as the first round was coming to an end, a total of four Frenchmen had been drafted: Zacharie Risacher, Alex Sarr, Tidjane Salaun, Pacome Dadiet.

The question going into Wednesday night's draft was whether Risacher or Sarr would hear their name called as the No. 1 pick overall by Commissioner Adam Silver, and become the second straight Frenchman to be taken first overall on the heels of last season's eventual Rookie of the Year Victor Wembanyama.

Atlanta made Risacher that player. Washington took 7-footer Sarr at

BASKETBALL

No. 2, making a second straight draft the Wizards selected a player from France. Then the NBA draft really took on a decidedly French flavor with Charlotte helping France make history by selecting Salaun at No. 6 overall.

France made it a quartet when the New York Knicks drafted Dadiet as the 25th pick overall. Dadiet, who turns 19 in July, is a developing player at 6-8 who can finish at the rim. He is also a versatile defender who has been honing his game in Germany.

Risacher (pronounced Ree-zah-shay) said it means a lot for all of France and the country's booming basketball pipeline to the NBA.

"I know that a lot of France stayed up all night to watch this," Risacher said. "That's amazing for French basketball, and I'm so happy to be a part of something special for my country. I think it's going to be more players who will be able to get to the NBA and do

Title vacated by Usyk

Joshua to 'fight' Dubois for IBF heavyweight belt

LONDON, June 27, (AP) — Anthony Joshua will fight Daniel Dubois in an all-British bout for the IBF heavyweight belt on Sept. 21 at Wembley Stadium, following Oleksandr Usyk's announcement that he will vacate the world title.

Dubois was the IBF's mandatory challenger and was upgraded to champion after Usyk vacated the belt, meaning the Ukrainian is no longer the undisputed world heavyweight champion.

"I'm ready to let my fists do the talking," the 26-year-old Dubois said at a press conference Wednesday after the bout was announced.

The 37-year-old Usyk beat Tyson Fury last month in Saudi Arabia to become the first undisputed world heavyweight champion in 24 years. He added Fury's WBC title to his own WBA, IBF and WBO belts.

something great. I'm really proud to be a part of it."

This is the second straight year Washington went for a player from France. The Wizards traded up a spot a year ago, swapping lottery picks with Indiana to land Bilal Coulibaly. Washington general manager Will Dawkins said he feels like he got the same question on French basketball talent a year ago.

"It's only getting better," Dawkins said. "And I'll be honest, it's going to continue to get better, because there are some more guys coming."

The timing couldn't be better for France, which is hosting the 2024 Summer Olympics.

The country Tony Parker win four NBA titles with the San Antonio Spurs are a true gold medal threat thanks in

part to Minnesota center Rudy Gobert, this season's NBA Defensive Player of the Year.

Charlotte general manager Jeff Peterson said France truly loves basketball and the NBA now is reaping a generation influenced by players like Parker, Evan Fournier and Nicolas Batum.

"It's a very, very strong country when it comes to basketball," Peterson said. "So I just think that this younger generation, they've grown up and they've seen it and they've loved it. And those guys have been great role models for them."

Salaun said French players have improved with their impact now being felt in the world.

"It's just the beginning," Salaun said.

Doubts remain over Vingegaard's fitness

Vingegaard, Pogacar set to resume Tour rivalry

PARIS, June 27, (AP) — When Jonas Vingegaard and Tadej Pogacar faced off in the heat of July last year, the main question mark was whether Pogacar would be fit enough to mount a decent challenge. This year, as the two cyclists prepare to write the next chapter of one of the greatest rivalries in the storied history of the Tour de France, the scenario has switched.

Pogacar, the two-time champion from Slovenia who finished behind Vingegaard the past two years, is in top shape ahead of Saturday's start in the Italian city of Florence. It is the form of the Danish titleholder that is worrying his team following the crash that wreaked havoc with his season.

"Of course, we don't know how far he can go yet," said Merijn Zeeman, the sporting director of Vingegaard's team. "We are being cautious because he has not been able to race and his preparation has been less than ideal, to say the least."

Vingegaard was hospitalized for nearly two weeks in April following a high-speed crash in the Tour of the Basque Country. He sustained a broken collarbone and ribs and a collapsed lung.

He has not raced competitively since that crash but will be immediately put to the test this weekend with an opening stage that takes riders through a series of tricky hills and climbs that could set the scene for an early battle between the top contenders.

Before the crash, Vingegaard was among the Tour favorites after dominating the race the past two years. It's

now impossible to say how his body will respond over three weeks of intense cycling.

As for Pogacar, he doesn't ask himself too many questions as he pursues a rare double following his victory at the Giro d'Italia this season.

Pogacar is arguably the most exciting rider of his generation, capable of winning on all terrains with an appetite for victory that has drawn comparisons with the great Eddy Merckx. And as if his own talent was not enough, he will be supported by a UAE Emirates squad also featuring Juan Ayuso, Pavel Sivakov, Marc Soler, Nils Politt,

CYCLING

Adam Yates, Joao Almeida and Tim Wellens.

Vingegaard is also part of a strong squad, the Visma-Lease a Bike team. He'll be supported by the versatile Wout van Aert, a three-time cyclo-cross world champion whose Tour resume includes nine stage victories and the prestigious points classification. Matteo Jorgenson of the U.S. is also part of the squad alongside Christophe Laporte, Tiesj Benoot, Wilco Kelderman, Jan Tratnik and Bart Lemmen.

Behind Pogacar and Vingegaard, other contenders include Primoz Roglic and Tour rookie Remco Evenepoel, with the Ineos Grenadiers leader Carlos Rodriguez also in the mix.

For the first time since 1905, the final stage of the race will be held outside Paris due to a schedule clash with

the Olympics. Because of security and logistical reasons, the French capital won't have its traditional Tour finish on the Champs-Élysées. The race will instead conclude in Nice on July 21, five days before the Paris Olympics open.

The first stage in Italy includes more than 3,600 meters (11,800 feet) of climbing. High mountains will then be on the schedule as soon as the fourth day in a race that features two individual time trials and four summit finishes. There are seven mountain stages on the program, across four ranges. Riders will first cross the Alps during Stage 4, when they will tackle the 2,642-meter (8,669-foot) Col du Galibier.

There should be suspense right until the very end because the last stage, traditionally a victory parade in Paris for the race leader until the final sprint takes shape, will be a 34-kilometer (21.1-mile) individual time trial between Monaco and Nice.

Britain doesn't have a top contender for the yellow jersey. Across the Channel, all eyes will be on veteran sprinter Mark Cavendish, who has delayed his retirement in a bid to set a record for most career stage wins at the Tour.

Cavendish equaled Merckx's record of 34 stage wins during the 2021 Tour, 13 years after his first success, and went close to winning a 35th in the seventh stage of the 2023 edition. But he crashed during the eighth stage last summer, breaking his right collarbone. He's won the Tour's best sprinter green jersey twice and also claimed stages at all three Grand Tours - the Tour, the Giro and the Spanish Vuelta - and was the world champion in 2011.

Muguruza named new tournament director of WTA Finals in Saudi Arabia

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia, June 27, (Xinhua) — Former World No. 1 Garbine Muguruza will serve as Tournament Director of the WTA Finals Riyadh, the WTA announced.

The 30-year-old Spaniard becomes the first former player

to spearhead the season-ending championships, which she won in 2021.

"I feel very privileged to be able to contribute to the future of this great sport as Tournament Director of the WTA Finals Riyadh," the two-time Grand Slam

champion Muguruza said.

"I know how special this event is for our top players, and I've also seen its potential to inspire communities all over the world. I'm excited to work with a great team to present a showcase for women's tennis that not only

grows the game but encourages all fans, and especially girls and women, to pursue their dreams," she added.

During her playing career, Muguruza qualified for the WTA Finals on four occasions, capturing the Billie Jean King

Trophy in Guadalajara, Mexico, in 2021.

Muguruza defeated Serena Williams to win the French Open in 2016, and Venus Williams to win Wimbledon in 2017, making her the only player to beat each sister in a

Grand Slam final. Other notable results include three WTA 1000 titles: the China Open in 2015, the Cincinnati Open in 2017, and the Dubai Duty Free Tennis Championships in 2021. On September 11, 2017, Muguruza reached No. 1 in the rankings.

Patel plays crucial innings of 35 runs in 34 balls

Kuwait Swedish clinch the prestigious T20 title



KCC T20 Elite champions Kuwait Swedish.



Runners up Al Mulla Exchange.

KUWAIT CITY, June 27: The finals of the KCC T20 Elite- Edition 3 Powered by Al Muzaini Exchange was held on June 21st, 2024 at the Sulabiya Cricket Ground in Kuwait. The highly anticipated final matchup featured an exciting contest between Al Mulla Exchange and Kuwait Swedish. After winning the toss, Al Mulla Exchange elected to field first. The Kuwait Swedish team put together a resolute batting performance, setting a challenging target of 147 runs before being bowled out in 19.5 overs. Yasin Patel in the middle order played a very crucial innings of 35 runs in 34 balls comprising three maximum and one boundary helped Kuwait Swedish to post a competitive total. Other notable performances of Kuwait Swedish were Adnan Idrees (28) and Usman Patel (21). The pick of the bowlers for Al Mulla Exchange were Arun Raj, Anudeep, and Naveen Raj who each claimed two wickets.

Chasing the modest target of 147 runs, Al Mulla Exchange struggled throughout their innings and ultimately fell short by 29 runs, finishing their innings at 117 in 19.4 overs. This resulted in a fantastic victory and championship for the Kuwait Swedish team. Some outstanding bowling performances from the Kuwait Swedish attack included Sumon who took three wickets while

CRICKET

conceding just 16 runs in his four overs. Bulbul also claimed three wickets in 3.4 overs. For his impressive bowling display, Sumon Mohammad was named the Player of the Final.

The second finals of KCC T20 Challengers Cup 2024 - EDITION 3 Powered by Al Muzaini Exchange was played on 21st June 2024 at Sulabiya Cricket Ground.

The KCC T20 Challengers Cup 2024 - Edition 3 featured a thrilling match between Al Mulla Exchange (B) and Bader & Nie Cricket. After winning the toss, Al Mulla Exchange (B) opted to field first and demonstrated strategic prowess by restricting Bader & Nie Cricket Club to a modest score of 143 all out in 20 overs. Mandeep was the top scorer for Bader & Nie Cricket Club with 28 runs, while Prasanth and Shibu from Al Mulla Exchange (B) each took two wickets.

In a nail-biting chase, Al Mulla Exchange (B) reached the target on the final ball of the match. Nikhil Dsouza's fantastic performance was the key to their triumph, as he scored 71 runs off just 41 balls, hitting 4 boundaries and an impressive 6 sixes. He was well supported by Kackson, who scored 29 runs, and Arjun, who contributed 25 runs. For Bader & Nie Cricket Club, Thyagi picked up 3 wickets and Sajan took 2 wickets, standing out as the top bowlers. Nikhil Dsouza was declared the player of the finals for his match-winning performance.

The presentation ceremony was graced by Mr. Saud Qamar, Public Relations & HPC, Mr. Robert D Souza, Head of Operations, Mr. Rishi D Jayan, Head of Marketing, Mr. Tahir Khan, Venue Manager and Head Coach Juniors handed over the trophies and cash awards to Winners, Runners Up, Best Individual Performers Awards to the awardees.

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Award Winners
KCC T20 Elite Cup 2024 Edition 3
Best Bowler: Yasin Patel (Kuwait Swedish): 16 Wickets
Best Batter: Rajesh Krishnan (Almulla Exchange): 379 Runs
Best Allrounder: Adnan Idrees (Kuwait Swedish): 270 Runs & 11 Wickets
Player of The Finals: Sumon Mohammad (Kuwait Swedish): 3 wickets
Champions: Kuwait Swedish



Captain of a winning team receives a trophy from an official.



A winning team awarded.



Kuwait Swedish players presented with the championship trophy.



Al Mulla captain receives the runners up trophy.

Rangnick rewriting legacy at Euro 2024 with Austria

DUESSELDORF, Germany, June 27. (AP) Cristiano Ronaldo said he'd never heard of him and Manchester United fans have few fond memories of his short-lived spell as manager of the Premier League club.

But Ralf Rangnick is rewriting his legacy at Euro 2024 with his Austria team emerging as one of the surprise packages of the tournament.

Topping a group that included France and the Netherlands, the Austrians have announced them-

selves as contenders for the European Championship and advanced to knockout phase on the opposite side of the draw to Spain, Germany, France and Portugal.

Not bad for the German coach whose previously solid reputation took a hit after an unsuccessful six months as interim manager of United through 2021-22, which included a run of just three wins from his last 14 games and heavy losses to Manchester City, Liverpool and Brighton.

Runners up: Almulla Exchange KCC T20 Challengers Cup 2024 Edition 3

Best Bowler: Sajan Noor (B & N CC): 14 Wickets

Best Batter: Gokul Sunil Kumar (Stack CC XI): 293 Runs
Best Allrounder: Wendar Bhotaju

(NCM Investment - B): 266 Runs & 11 wickets

Player of The Finals: Nikhil Dsouza (Almulla Exchange-B): 71 Runs

Champions: Almulla Exchange-B
Runners up: Bader & Nie Cricket Club

Georgia upset Portugal, reach Euro 2024 last 16

Tosun sends Turkey into knockout stage

GELSENKIRCHEN, Germany, June 27, (Xinhua): Türkiye advanced as Group F runner-up into the last 16 after goals from Hakan Calhanoglu and Cenk Tosun eliminated ten-men Czech Republic 2-1 while third-placed Georgia also progressed after beating leader Portugal 2-0 in the last round of group play.

The Czech Republic needed a victory to reach the next round, but Antonin Barak's dismissal for repeated foul play handed the Turks a numerical advantage with only 20 minutes into the encounter.

SOCCER

Türkiye assumed control and created a presentable opportunity in the 27th minute when Arda Guler's sideways scissor kick got blocked in the last nick of time by Ladislav Krejci.

The Czechs almost stunned Türkiye before halftime, but David Jurasek couldn't finish the job with only goalkeeper Mert Gunok to beat.

After the restart, Türkiye piled on the pressure and came close in the opening stages of the second half as Baris Yilmaz's header forced goalkeeper Jindrich Stanek into action.

Stanek was hapless though moments later as Calhanoglu benefited on a rebound and slotted home the opener from the edge of the box into the far post bottom corner.

Türkiye's lead didn't last long as outnumbered Czechs answered against the flow of the match after Türkiye couldn't clear the ball from their area following a throw-in, allowing Tomas Soucek to level the scores in the 66th minute.

Vincenzo Montella's men put their progression beyond doubt in the added time as substitute Cenk Tosun finished off a solo run to make it 2-1 on the scoreboards.

In the other Group F match, Euro debutant Georgia secured its spot for the last 16 after edging uninspired group leader Portugal 2-0 on the goals from Khvicha Kvaratskhelia and Georges Mikautadze.

Headed enough with the last pass and in front of the goal, and their goalkeeper staged an amazing performance. We tried to score but couldn't, and that made Georgia believe more. They deserved to win," said Portugal coach Roberto Martinez.

With the results, Portugal completed the group stage atop the standings, followed by Türkiye (both six points), Georgia (4 points) and the Czech Republic (1 point).

Belgium advanced into the round of last 16 despite a goalless draw with eliminated Ukraine, while Romania and third-placed Slovakia progressed after a 1-1 draw in the last round of group play.

The Belgians were on the front foot and produced the first opportunity of the clash in the seventh minute when Kevin De Bruyne danced through Ukraine's defense before feeding Romelu Lukaku, who couldn't beat goalkeeper Anatoliy Trubin from a promising position.

Ukraine grew into the game and chanced its luck with long-range



Portugal's Goncalo Ramos challenges for the ball with Georgia's Guram Kashia during a Group F match between Georgia and Portugal at the Euro 2024 soccer tournament in Gelsenkirchen, Germany. (AP)



Czech Republic's Mojmir Chytil, (right), challenges for the ball with Turkey's Samet Akaydin during a Group F match between Czech Republic and Turkey at the Euro 2024 soccer tournament in Hamburg, Germany. (AP)

efforts as Roman Yaremchuk and Artem Dovbyk tested custodian Koen Castels.

Belgium nearly marked the opener at the half hour, but De Bruyne's free kick rattled only the side netting.

After the restart, chances remained a rare occurrence as Belgium dominated possession but lacked in ideas whereas Ukraine missed the finishing touch.

Lukaku unleashed a weak shot on target while Ukraine pressed for the winner, which would lift them into the last 16, as Ruslan Malinovskyi's direct corner attempt almost caught Castels flat-footed before Georgiy Sudakov couldn't finish his solo run.

"We knew today that we couldn't fail. We can score earlier, we can score more, then many things are easier. I'm proud of my team because they did well at the end. If you concede one goal, you are out," said Belgium coach Domenico Tedesco.

"Unfortunately, we did not qualify because of the first game, which we lost to Romania. I'm grateful for how the players responded against Slovakia. We showed that we were trying to win this game, and there were enough good moments," said Ukraine coach Serhiy Rebrov.

In the other Group E clash, Slovakia and Romania played out a 1-1 stalemate as Razvan Marin canceled out Ondrej Duda's opener.

With the results, Romania advanced as group winners, followed by Belgium, Slovakia and Ukraine (all with four points).

Response needed

Oranje 'spoiling' fans Euros party

BERLIN, June 27, (AP): The Netherlands' soccer team is becoming a party-pooper for its thousands of exuberant orange-clad fans at the European Championship.

The Oranje have impressed off the field but not on it at Euro 2024, where Ronald Koeman's team limped into the knockout stage after finishing third in Group D.

Koeman, who was a key defender on the Dutch team that won Euro '88 in West Germany, is back for his second stint as coach. But he's clearly unhappy with his charges, who are maintaining a longstanding Dutch tradition of disappointing at major tournaments.

"We have to come up with some response as a team for the next match, because that's what's at stake, it could be the final knockout for us," Koeman warned after his team's 3-2 loss to Austria on Tuesday.

It was Austria's first win over the Netherlands since 1990 and the latest lackluster display from a team boasting highly regarded individual players across all positions who seem to underperform when playing in the national team's famous orange shirt.

SOCCER

Memphis Depay missed several shooting chances in the opening 2-1 win over Poland, goalkeeper Bart Verbruggen was the key player in the scoreless draw with France, and it was Donnyell Malen's turn to miss chances in the defeat to Austria. The luckless Malen also scored an own goal.

Wednesday's final group games determined the Netherlands will play Group E winner Romania in the round of 16 in Munich on Tuesday. A Dutch win could set up a quick rematch with Austria in Berlin in the quarterfinals, if Austria gets past Turkey in its round of 16 clash.

Koeman's team is missing influential Barcelona midfielder Frenkie de Jong, who failed to recover from an ankle injury in time for the tournament. Midfielder Teun Koopmeiners dropped out after getting injured warming up for a test match.

The demise of Ajax Amsterdam, a four-time European champion, is another factor hampering the Netherlands. Ajax had long been known as the country's "football factory," producing young players who would go on to star for the national team. Many a Dutch squad has been built on an Ajax backbone.

But last season was one to forget for the storied club. Ajax had issues off the field and on, slumping to last place in the Eredivisie before former player Johan van 't Schip took over as coach and steered it to fifth.

Koeman has only two Ajax players - forwards Steven Bergwijn and Brian Brobbey - in his squad for Euro 2024. Neither has played a minute in the tournament so far. The 26-man Netherlands squad is made of players from 19 different clubs which doesn't help Koeman's ability to forge a cohesive unit.

Dutch disappointment in recent tournaments is nothing new, but it's humbling for a country that has contributed so much to modern soccer. The Dutch team of the 1970s led by Johan Cruyff was known for "total soccer," where every outfield player could play in any position, and it reached World Cup finals in 1974 and 1978.

Brazilian coach Cakarato to lead Kazma Club volleyball team

KUWAIT CITY, June 27: Kazma Club has contracted Brazilian coach Cakarato to lead the first volleyball team for the 2024-2025 season, replacing Iranian coach Javad Shamami, whose contract has expired. Cakarato previously coached the Bahraini national team and Dar Kulaib Club, achieving notable success.

The team is also reviewing several CVs of professionals from Cuba, Brazil, and France to sign two new players to strengthen the team for the upcoming season. This follows the decision not to renew contracts for last season's professionals, Bulgarian Fino and German Igor Bogachev.

Khaled Al-Bahwa, the director of volleyball at Kazma Club, confirmed that Cakarato's extensive experience and impressive resume make the contract well deserved. He ex-

pressed gratitude to the club's management for their support of the volleyball team and their efforts to overcome obstacles to prepare the teams, especially the first team, for the new season.

VOLLEYBALL

Al-Bahwa added, "We are currently seeking high-level professionals and have contracted several local players for the season, including Abdulaziz Muhareb, Abdulwahab Al-Jiran, Ali Al-Saqan, and Muhammad Sayyar Al-Anzi."

He also mentioned that the first team will begin its preparations for the new season at the start of August.



Kazma new coach Cakarato displays the Brazilian flag in this file photo.



South Africa's Reeza Hendricks bats during the men's T20 World Cup semifinal cricket match between Afghanistan and South Africa at the Brian Lara Cricket Academy in Tarouba, Trinidad and Tobago. (AP)

Sports

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Sheikh Mubarak Al-Faisal chairs meeting

Kuwait Olympic Committee postpones Ethics Committee formation

By Khaled El Anzi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 27: The General Assembly of the Kuwait Olympic Committee held its regular meeting recently at the committee's headquarters in Hawalli, with 22 federations and specialized clubs present out of a total of 30.

The meeting was chaired by the Vice Chairman of the Committee, Sheikh Mubarak Al-Faisal, and attended by Assistant Secretary Ali Al-Marri and the Director of the

Committee, Muhammad Khalfan.

During the assembly, the formation of the Ethics Committee, originally headed by the late Dr. Rashid Al-Enezi, was postponed. The committee's term was supposed to run from 2020 to 2024. The formation of this committee will now take place within three weeks to a month through an "extraordinary" general assembly.

The General Assembly approved the meeting agenda and appointed three members to review the minutes: Hani Al-Marshad (Taekwon-

do), Abdullah Al-Salem (Electronic Games), and Meshal Fulaiteh (Winter Games). Additionally, the assembly approved the report on the activities of the "Olympic" president, the unified and audited budget, and the profit and loss statement, as well as the proposed budget.

Membership applications for the Kuwaiti Modern Pentathlon Club and the Kuwaiti Baseball Club were also accepted during the meeting.

Sheikh Mubarak Al-Faisal thanked the members of the Gen-

eral Assembly for their attendance and contribution to the success of the meeting, stating, "All the terms of the meeting were approved, and there was great cooperation from all members."

Al-Faisal added, "We are working hand in hand to develop the sports movement and to support our athletes who are qualifying for the 2024 Paris Olympics. We aim to raise the Kuwaiti flag in archery, rowing, swimming, sailing, athletics, and fencing at this major international event."



Photo by Mahmoud Jadeed
Sheikh Mubarak Al-Faisal, Ali Al-Marri and Muhammad Khalfan during the Kuwait Olympic Committee General Assembly meeting.

Kuwait to face South Korea in third round of Asian World Cup qualifying



A file photo of Kuwait national team.

Saudi Arabia, Japan and Australia grouped together

By Hassan Musa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUALA LUMPUR, June 27 Malaysia: The draw for the third round of the Asian qualifiers for the 2026 World Cup placed Kuwait in Group B, alongside South Korea, Iraq, Jordan, Oman, and Palestine. The draw was held at the Asian Football Confederation headquarters in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The qualifying matches will take place in September, October, November, March, and June, with two matches scheduled each month.

SOCCER

Kuwait will kick off its campaign on September 5 against Jordan in Amman, followed by a home game against Iraq on September 10. In the third round, it will travel to Muscat to face Oman on October 10, and then meet Palestine on October 15. The fifth round will see Kuwait hosting South Korea on November 14, and then Jordan on November 19. In the seventh round, Kuwait will play away against Iraq on March 20, 2025, and then host Oman on March 25. The team will face Palestine on June 5, 2025, and conclude the qualifiers against South

Asian WC Qualifying Draw

Group A: Iran, Qatar, Uzbekistan, UAE, North Korea, Kyrgyzstan
Group B: South Korea, Iraq,

Jordan, Oman, Palestine, Kuwait
Group C: Japan, Australia, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, China, Indonesia

Korea in Seoul on June 10.

Director of National Teams at the Football Association, Saud Al-Mujammad, acknowledged the difficulty of the draw. He stated, "We are in a tough group and must prepare thoroughly, as we will face very competitive and challenging matches. This stage demands a new approach in thinking and planning, and we must harness all efforts to support our na-

tional team."

Japan, Australia and Saudi Arabia will face each other in the third round of Asia's World Cup qualification for a third cycle in a row following Thursday's draw in Kuala Lumpur.

The three powerhouses, with 19 World Cup appearances between them, have been placed in Group C with Bahrain, China and Indonesia.



Georgia's goalkeeper Giorgi Mamardashvili saves a shot by Portugal's Nelson Semedo during a Group F match between Georgia and Portugal at the Euro 2024 soccer tournament in Gelsenkirchen, Germany. Georgia won 2-0. (AP) - See Page 15

SA reach T20 World Cup final

TAROUBA, Trinidad, June 27, (AP): A long, tortuous World Cup title drought is closer than ever to ending for South Africa after a nine-wicket win over first-time semifinalist Afghanistan at the global Twenty20 cricket tournament on Wednesday.

Marco Jansen and Kagiso Rabada set the foundations for the lopsided victory with destructive opening bursts of pace bowling to have Afghanistan reeling at 20-4 in the fourth over, and eventually all out for a paltry 56.

The South Africans lost just one wicket in pursuit of its first semifinal win at a global men's limited-overs tournament, with Reeza Hendricks hitting a six and a four on consecutive deliveries to lift South Africa to 60 for 1 in the ninth over.

CRICKET

Hendricks was unbeaten on 29 from 25 balls in an unbroken 55-run second-wicket stand with skipper Aiden Markram, who finished 23 not out.

"One more step - it's an exciting challenge for us," Markram said in a post-match TV interview. "We've never been there (in a final) before, and nothing to be scared of."

"It's an opportunity that we've never had and, and we'll be really excited about that opportunity." The South Africans lost six and tied one - against eventual champion Australia in 1999 - of their previous seven trips to the semifinals of a World Cup in either the one-day or T20 formats.

Markram said those stats belonged to the teams that played those match-

es, and his lineup was full of belief.

Afghanistan captain Rashid Khan won the toss and opted to bat in his team's first ever appearance in a World Cup semifinal. Everything went South Africa's way after that.

Jansen (3-16) took wickets in the first and third overs and Kagiso Rabada (2-14) opened with a double-wicket maiden as Afghanistan slumped to 20-4 after 3.4 overs.

The opening pair that had carried Afghanistan so well during the tournament was gone, exposing the middle and lower order to a South Africa bowling attack hitting form at the perfect stage.

Rahmanullah Gurbaz (0) faced three balls before he edged to slip and was out to Jansen in the first over. Ibrahim Zadran (2) was beaten by a Rabada inswinger and bowled on the first ball of the third over.

Anrich Nortje (2-7) chimed in with two wickets as the pacemen continued to rip through the Afghanistan innings before wrist spinner Tabraiz Shamsi took three wickets in 11 deliveries - all lbw decisions to balls keeping low - to finish off Afghanistan for 56 in 11.5 overs.

Azmatullah Omarzai top scored with 10, the only Afghan batter to reach double figures.

South Africa lost only opener Quinton de Kock - bowled by Fazal-haq Farooqi for five in the second over - in the run chase.

"We just wanted to come out in this game and hit our straps, the way we've been doing throughout the entire tournament," Rabada said of South Africa's bowling onslaught. "We just felt that we needed to continue in that vein."

Kuwait youth team prepares for European friendly tournaments

By Khaled El Anzi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 27: The Kuwait youth handball team is eagerly anticipating upcoming friendly competitions as they prepare for several friendly tournaments in Croatia, Hungary, and Slovenia next August. This is part of the long-term preparation plan established by the coaching staff and the national teams within the Handball Federation.

The team is continuing its daily training sessions at the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Complex in the Sabah Al-Salem suburb, under the guidance of coach Stefan Kuvecs and his national assistant, Meshal Al-Adwani.

Team manager Shaker Arti has confirmed that the players are showing significant physical and mental development from previous training sessions, indicating that their efforts are yielding positive results.

Arti stated, "Participation in European friendly tournaments is an integral part of our summer preparation plan. The goal is to enhance the technical and physical levels of the

players while gaining valuable experience by interacting with different European teams and playing styles."

He added that the federation is diligently working to overcome any obstacles faced by the "Little Blue" team, emphasizing their commitment to developing a strong generation of players to support the national teams in the future.

HANDBALL

Arti continued, noting that the players are highly motivated to represent "the team with honor. Their dedication in training and adherence to the instructions of the technical and administrative staff are clear evidence of this commitment."

Arti also commended the efforts of the administrative and technical staff, including the national teams' technical director, Faisal Siwan, and the team's coach, Stephan Kuvecs, along with his assistant, Al-Adwani. Their hard work since the conclusion of local activities has been crucial in preparing the team for the upcoming matches.



Kuwait youth handball team preparing for the European friendly tournaments.