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emergency number 112



Opinion

Your blessed tears are remembered by your people and loved ones

By Ahmed Al-Jarallah

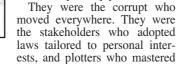
Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

YOUR Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, you are not only the Amir, you are also the father of Kuwait and its people who still remember the tears you shed in the National Assembly on the day of its opening session on Oct 18, 2022.

In the Amiri speech at the time, you laid down the foundations upon which the relationship between the National Assembly and the Council of Ministers should be based. Unfortunately, the concerned parties did not heed them.

Those tears indicated the extent of your concern for Kuwait and what transpired in recent years in terms of the frightening decline caused by certain practices, which continued for more than three decades -- when much ado about nothing prevailed over everything and empty talks produced nothing worth mentioning or remembering.

On that day, Your Highness, many people bet that getting rid of this situation was just a pipe dream, because there was a deep State that extended its tentacles to all State institutions. Some of them occupied top positions.



the art of deception in directing constitutional and legal interpretations according to their whims, making it dif-

Al-Jarallah

ficult to get out of the impasse.

Projects were tailored to their demands. They interfered in awarding tenders. They distorted the spirit of the judiciary by interfering in it. They used the State Audit Bureau as their tool and tampered with security, such that it would be at their service.

It is difficult for any ruler to change this situation, especially since the corrupt are among the people who say Kuwait is a State of constitution and law. The leadership is governed by this matter, but on the ground, they sabotage the very State of constitution.

Their bet has always been on setting minefields on the path of development and reforms in order to undermine the gains of any leader who attempts to rectify the situation.

However, fate has put you in front of all the mess witnessed by the people who have no despicable interests; believers of their motherland who want to see it far from corruption and depravity.

Your tears did not drop in vain. You remedied the situation with surgical precision to remove the tumor by suspending seven articles of the Constitution that were necessary for the State and institutions to start the process of healing.

Everyone who met Your Highness heard from you that you would apply justice to everyone, even to yourself and to the seniors before the juniors.

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HH Crown Prince to receive citizens

KUWAIT CITY, June 29, (KUNA): The Amiri Diwan on Saturday conveyed to the gracious citizens greetings from His High-ness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

The Amiri Diwan also announced that His Highness the Crown Prince would receive citizens on Monday from 7:30 a.m. until 9:30 p.m. at the Diwan of the gracious Al-Sabah Family at Bayan Palace.

Fire tamed at Zour refinery

KUWAIT CITY, June 29, (KUNA): A limited fire that broke out at noon on Saturday at a storage facility in Al-Zour refinery has been doused.

Official spokesperson of Kuwait Integrated Petroleum Industries Company (KIPIC), Ali Al-Ajmi, in a statement to KUNA, expressed gratitude to squads of Kuwait Fire Force for their speedy and effective response, backing KIPIC personnel in containing the blaze rapidly.

He confirmed that the flames caused no damage or injuries.

The fire did not affect production and exportation operations at the refinery, Al-Ajmi affirmed.



On Saturday, June 29 afternoon, the Kuwait Fire Force, under the leadership of Major General Khaled Abdullah Fahd, acting Chief of the Kuwait Fire Force, successfully controlled a ware-house fire at a temporary work site in the Shuaiba Industrial Area. The fire, involving insulation and plastic pipes, was extinguished without any casualties.

Kuwait railway future takes



KUWAIT CITY: The Kuwaiti Coast Guards and Army will carry out a drill with live ammunition in the Al-Sabbiyah and Boubyan areas from July 1-3, the army said in a statement on Saturday. The exercise will be conducted from 5:30

AM until 1:30 PM.

The military urged people to avoid approaching the specified locations during the set period and dates for their safety. (KUNA)

KUWAIT CITY: Remittances from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region are projected to rebound by 4.3% in 2024, following a decline the previous year attributed to reduced remittances to Egypt, the region's largest recipient, reports Al-Anba daily.

According to a World Bank seen by Bloomberg Middle East, remittances to the MENA region are expected to increase to \$58 billion in 2024, up from \$55 billion in the preceding year.

In 2021, remittances reached a seven-year peak at \$67 billion, rising from \$59 billion in 2020, before declining to \$65 billion in 2022. The World Bank further anticipates a 5.5% rise to \$61 billion in 2025, as stated in their report.

The decline in remittances during 2023, down 15% to \$55 billion, was predominantly due to a significant decrease in flows to Egypt. This decline was primarily linked to reduced transfers through official channels, driven by a notable disparity between official and parallel foreign exchange rates, where at one point the dollar surpassed EGP70.

Recent factors such as the devaluation of the Egyptian currency, higher interest rates, successful reviews with the International Monetary Fund, and increased investments from the United Arab Emirates have bolstered confidence in the potential resurgence of remittance flows.

Additionally, the average cost of sending \$200 in remittances to the MENA region decreased from 6.7% in Q4 2022 to 5.9% in Q4 2023

TEHRAN: The Iranian Electoral Commission declared on Saturday that a runoff would be held on Friday after neither of the two top candidates garnered the 50 plus one majority of votes in the first round of the snap polling held on Friday.

The second round of the polling will pit the reformist Masoud Pezeshkian against the fundamentalist Saeed Jalili. Both garnered the largest number of the ballots in the first round of the electoral process.

Mohsen Eslami, the commission's spokesperson, said at a news conference, that final results of the presidential election would be determined in the runoff on Friday.

He said Pezekshian won 10.315,991 votes, 42.6 percent of the total ballots, amounting to 24.353,185 -- short of the 50+ votes required to win the top post. (KUNA)

shape with consultancy bids

Kuwait-Muscat network stretches 2,177 km across GCC

By Mohammed Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 29: The Public Authority for Roads and Land Transport (PART) has affirmed that the consulting agreement tender

for detailed study and document preparation for the railway project is currently in the bidding phase, in preparation for the design commencement.

The Authority clarified that the tender was initiated on December 15, 2023, with several consulting firms submitting bids. The technical evaluations were conducted by the Authority, followed by submission to the Central Agency for Public Tenders.

However, due to the expiration of the board of directors' term at the Central Agency last Thursday, June 27, 2024, procedures

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Dr. Al-Mashaan leads efforts to overcome hurdles

Terminal 2 project gains momentum

KUWAIT CITY, June 29, (KUNA): Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan, Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs, emphasized Saturday the urgency of addressing and surmounting obstacles hindering the progress of the new passenger terminal project – Terminal 2. She highlighted the need for effective solutions to expedite construction. Following her meeting with Sheikh Hamoud

Al-Mubarak Humoud Al-Sabah, President of Civil Aviation, Dr. Al-Mashaan stated to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that efforts are ongoing to develop Kuwait International Airport's infrastructure and

enhance its operational capabilities.

The discussion also encompassed matters concerning the General Administration of Civil Aviation, the Ministry of Interior, and the General Fire Force, with a focus on governmental performance. Dr. Al-Mashaan emphasized the commitment of all stakeholders to resolve outstanding issues promptly.

This meeting forms part of a series of regular sessions aimed at ensuring the timely delivery of the new passenger terminal project, addressing any

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KRCS delivers 40 tons Kuwait repeats top IT ranking of flour to Gaza Strip

come.

KUWAIT CITY, June 29, (KUNA): GAZA, June 29, (Agencies): Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) is set to deliver 40 tons of flour in Gaza Strip, to help thousands of Palestinians. In a statement on Saturday, KRCS chairman Dr. Hilal Al-Sayer

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KUNA photo KRCS team set to deliver 40 tons of flour in Gaza Strip, to help thousands of Palestinians

MOSCOW, June 29, (KUNA): The State of Kuwait, represented by the Ministry of Justice, signed with

Russia on Friday two agreements for judicial and legal cooperation.

The accords were signed by the Kuwaiti Minister of Justice, Al-Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Dr. Mohammad Al-Wasmi and his Russian coun-

Konstantin terpart, Chuychenko, during the 12th International Legal Forum, hosted by the Russian city of Saint Petersburgh.

The Kuwaiti Ministry of Justice said in a



statement that signing the accords underlined the good relations tying the two friendly countries, indicating that they aim at establishing effective cooperation in combating crime.

One of the two accords includes procedural terms for criminals' extradition and prosecution regulations according to international norms.

The ministry statement added that the other agreement stipulates that convicts are given the right to spend their time behind bars in their home country.

Saint Petersburg Forum, founded in 2011, is one of the major platforms for global cultural, legal and political dialogue.

The current forum session, due to conclude today, kicked off on Wednesday.



Municipality photo Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs, Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan, during her meeting with the President of Civil Aviation, Sheikh Hamoud Al-Mubarak Hamoud Al-Sabah, and a number of government agencies.

Bid to modernize judicial system Kuwait, Russia boost legal

ties with new agreements The Communication and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA) announced that Kuwait has been ranked first in the Communications and Information Technology Sector Development Index (IDI) for 2024, issued by the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), for the second consecutive year. In a press statement, the Commis-

sion highlighted that the evolving index instills confidence in foreign investors, encouraging them to invest in Kuwait, create jobs, and transfer expertise. This is crucial for diversifying the country's sources of in-

The statement also mentioned that the IDI index measures the potential for safe Internet usage in terms of coverage and affordability. The

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



Expected weather for next 24 hrs: By Day: Very hot and relatively humid over coastal areas with light variable wind to light to moderate northwesterly wind, with speeds of 08-32 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.

By Night: Hot to rather hot Sta and relatively humid over coastal areas with light variable wind to light to moderate northwesterly wind, with speeds of 08-30 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.

Weather

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	47	35
Kuwait Airport	47	29
Abdaly	47	28
Jahra	48	31
Salmiyah	44	36
Nuwaisib	47	29
Wafra	47	28

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

Supporting local entrepreneur and SME community in Kuwait

stc hosts gathering for entrepreneurs under 'weyak' initiative

KUWAIT CITY, June 29: Kuwait Telecommunications Company – stc, a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers, enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, held a special gathering for entrepreneurs and SMEs as part of its 'weyak' initiative. This event builds on the various activities launched by stc, strategically focusing on empowering the private sector and nurturing SMEs to drive positive economic growth and societal advancement.

The gathering was held at Joe's Restaurant owned by the entrepreneur Abdulaziz Al-Nahes, bringing together over 70 entrepreneurs from diverse sectors in the presence of stc Kuwait CEO, Eng. Muataz Abdullah Aldharrab. The event provided a unique opportunity for networking and collaboration among some of the most influential figures in the business community, including Dr. Saad Al Barrak - former Minister of Oil, Dakhil Al Dakhil - CEO of Rasameel, Dr. Mohammad Al Sayegh - Aseer Time Group Owner, and Bader Aloqaili - CEO of Pick.

The highlight of the evening was a heartfelt speech by engineer Muataz Aldharrab, CEO of stc, who expressed profound gratitude to all attendees for their active participation. Aldharrab emphasized the critical role of the private sector and entrepreneurs in driving societal development and economic progress. He also highlighted stc's ongoing support towards the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Kuwait through various initiatives and activities. He also highlighted that through the 'weyak' initiative, stc aims to cultivate a thriving environment where local businesses can flourish and contribute significantly to the nation's growth.

The event comes as part of stc's broader strategy to support entrepreneurs under the 'wevak' umbrella. The initiative was designed to provide robust support to the en-

trepreneurial sector, with a particular focus on SMEs, ensuring that they are able to obtain the resources and opportunities needed to succeed in a competitive market. By inviting renowned entrepreneurs to speak about their personal and professional ex-periences, attendees would get a chance to listen to some of the challenges and advice from these experienced professionals that could assist them in successful launching and growing their own personal ventures.

In appreciation of the participants and attendees, stc extended its heartfelt appreciation for the level of enthusiasm and engagement witnessed during the gathering. The company highlighted that it is dedicated to strengthening relationships across various sectors and appreciates the invaluable contributions of the local entrepreneurial community. As part of the 'weyak' initiative, and other programs launched to support entrepreneurs and SMEs, stc will continue to organize and introduce platforms that can assist inspired individuals to pursue their dreams and unique opportunities.

As part of its ongoing efforts, stc also reaffirmed its full support for digital transformation initiatives and projects that will assist SMEs in efficiently managing their operations. Additionally, stc highlighted the different digital services and solutions the company offers, specially catering to SMEs to assist them in streamlining their operations to optimize their business operations. These initiatives, as well as others, reflect the company's dedication to fostering innovation and providing a unique and unparalleled experience for all its customers.

To find out more about stc's sponsorships, promotions, and events, follow stc's official social media platforms, visit one of stc's branches, download mystc mobile application, visit www.stc.com.kw or contact the customer service center by dialing 102 for around the clock assistance



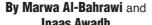
CEO Aldharrab welcoming attendees



A group photo of entrepreneurs who attended the meeting.

Workers union calls for flexible fingerprinting system in Health

Municipal Council panel to address key urban proposals



Inaas Awadh Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 29: Head of the Workers Union in the Ministry of Health Hussein Sabeel Al-Azmi has appealed to Minister of Health Dr. Ahmed Al-Awadhi to apply the flexible fingerprint attendance mechanism to all employees like other ministries and government agencies.

In a press statement, Al-Azmi pointed out that the flexible fingerprint attendance mechanism is easier for the employees and allows them to have a comfortable shift with balanced working





Distinguished presence of Dr. Saad Al-Barrak

Other Voices

Composite index quantifies level of peacefulness among nations

By Ahmed alsarraf

In May 2007, Australian business-man Steve Killea initiated the development of a composite index aimed at quantifying the level of peacefulness among countries.

This index, known as the Global Peace (GPI), Index comprises indicators, compassing both quantitative and qualitative pects, with scores ranging from 1 to 5. A lower score



indicates a higher

level of peace within a country. Killea garnered support and endorsement for the GPI from influential figures such as the Dalai Lama, Desmond Tutu, Muhammad Yunus, Mary Robinson, Jimmy Carter, and others. Their moral backing underscored the index's significance in promoting global peace and stability.

Annually, the GPI assesses each country across several critical dimensions and publishes a detailed report. This report is highly regarded by major countries and global entities, influencing investment decisions and diplomatic relations. As a result, the GPI has gained substantial respect and recognition worldwide.

Key factors examined in the GPI include involvement in domestic and international conflicts, casualties from conflicts, levels of internal civil unrest, relations with neighboring countries, social cohesion and trust within the population, percentage of displaced persons, political stability, respect for human rights, risk of terrorist activities, homicide rates, military expenditures, fatio of military personnel to the population, import and export of weapons, accessibility to firearms and military capabilities and development

In the 16th edition of the Global Peace Index for 2024, which evaluates 163 independent countries and regions based on their level of peacefulness, Tunisia emerged as the top-ranked country among the Maghreb nations and fifth overall in the Arab world. This recognition underscores Tunisia's strides towards maintaining peace and stability within its borders.

Yemen remained at the bottom of the rankings, reflecting ongoing challenges and conflicts within the country. Palestine was ranked 145th, while the occupying entity, likely referring to Israel, was positioned at 155th place.

A noteworthy highlight from the 2024 edition was Kuwait's achievement of topping the rankings within the Arab world, securing the 25th position globally.

This accolade represents a significant accomplishment for Kuwaiti governance, underscoring its commitment to peace and stability, and elevating its global standing with profound implications and importance.

Such rankings in the Global Peace Index are crucial as they provide valuable insights into each country's progress and challenges in maintaining peace, influencing international perceptions, policies, and strategic decisions.

After the recent events, particularly the tragic Mangaf fire resulting in innocent casualties due to negligence and corruption, it's commendable how His Excellency the Minister of the Interior responded swiftly.

However, it's crucial to recognize that global indicators are closely monitoring our actions. These indicators emphasize the importance of conscience, adherence to state laws, and above all, the implementation of justice.

In any legal process, it's fundamental to uphold the principle that every accused person is innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

This principle underscores our commitment to the rule of law, which is essential for maintaining societal order and justice. Senior officials, such as the First Deputy Prime Minister, must be keenly aware of these principles and ensure they are upheld in all circumstances.

The Public Prosecution plays a pivotal role in representing society and advocating for justice in accordance with international standards, including those outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which Kuwait has ratified. Violations of these standards not only tarnish our reputation as a nation and government but also diminish our credibility in honoring international conventions and treaties.

Beyond mere self-respect, our adherence to these principles demonstrates our commitment to justice and fairness for all individuals within our society. It's imperative that we continue to uphold these values rigorously, thereby safeguarding our integrity on the global stage and reinforcing our status as a responsible member of the international community.

e-mail: a.alsarraf@alqabas.com.kw hours to ensure they do not neglect their tasks. He affirmed this is in line with the principles of justice and integrity, and it will guarantee job satisfaction for all employees in the health sector.

He suggested applying the mechanism to all ministry employees on an experimental basis in the initial stage, and then to adopt it fully by taking into account the nature of the work of various health professions. He reiterated that its application will create a suitable work environment for the employees, as they could prove their attendance in a flexible manner.

Municipal Council meet: The Capital Governorate Committee in the Municipal Council, chaired by Dr. Hassan Kamal, will hold its first meeting for the third session on Sunday.

The committee will discuss the following:

Final approval of the decision issued by the council on April 7, 2022 to reorganize Blocks 4 and 7 in Qibla, Kuwait City; ■ Proposal of Municipal Coun-

cil Chairman Abdullah Al-Mahri to use the vacant land allocated to the Ministry of Education (Block Two in Abdullah Al-Salem suburb) as a public park;

Letter of an engineering firm regarding the invitation to the 12th meeting of the committee for the second round to discuss the development of the Liberation Tower and Safat Square and linking them to Mubarakiya, as well as the proposed electric tram surface in Kuwait City;

Request of the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy to allocate the site for a secondary power transmission station in Block Two, Daiya;

Letter of the mayor of Qurtubah regarding food trucks in the parking lots of the main park in Qurtubah;

Proposal of council member Dr. Hassan Kamal regarding the design and construction of longitudinal



Dr Ahmed Al-Awadhi

Int'l Friends Club honors wife of Lesotho envoy to Kuwait

Christine Khuraibet, a member of the International Friends Club, organized recently a farewell lunch for Napolita, the wife of the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Lesotho, to mark the conclusion of their diplomatic tenure in Ku-

wait, reports Al-Jarida daily. The event was attended by club members, including female ambassadors. ambassadors'

wives, and diplomats. During the gathering, Napolita expressed her gratitude for her time in Kuwait, describing her experience in the country as wonderful. She highlighted Kuwait's vastness, generosity, rich culture, and significant advancements, while extending her best wishes for continued success and prosperity to Kuwait and its people.

Narges Al-Shatti, the club's advisor, actively participated in the celebration and presented souvenirs to Napolita on behalf of all the members. In return, Napolita expressed her appreciation to everyone present, particularly acknowledging the organizer for arranging such a distinguished and memorable event.

PADA and MoH collaborate over Afia benefits to housewives

MoE receives complaints tied to excellent bonus

KUWAIT CITY, June 29: The US

Ambassador to Kuwait HE Karen

Sasahara has commended Kuwait's

efforts in combating human traffick-

ing, citing the US State Department's

recent report which indicates positive

developments in this regard, reports

envoy reaffirmed the commitment of

the United States to collaborate with

the Kuwaiti government on this vital

human trafficking, Kuwait main-

tained its position on the watch list,

remaining at the second level for the

According to the 2024 report on

In a statement to the daily, the US

Al-Qabas daily.

issue

KUWAIT CITY, June 29: The Ministry of Education has opened the door for employees in its headquarters, central directorates and educational districts to submit their complaints regarding the excellent performance bonus for the 2023, reports Al-Anba daily.

The ministry stressed that it will receive such complaints only through its website -- www.moe.edu.kw -- until Aug 11, 2024 including the weekends and holidays. It then reaffirmed its commitment to protect the rights of employees, asserting that each complaint will be reviewed thoroughly and acted on as per the regulations.

The Public Authority for Disabled Affairs (PADA) has coordinated with the Ministry of Health on adding Kuwaiti housewives receiving financial support from PADA to the beneficiaries of Law No. 114/2014 on the health insurance for retirees (Afia), reports Al-Anba daily.

PADA previously addressed the ministry, confirming its agreement on adding housewives to the Afia beneficiaries. It sent a letter in this regard to the ministry in response to the request of housewives to be added to Afia beneficiaries. It called on the ministry to approve the request in order to start taking the necessary measures.

The General Authority of Islamic Affairs, Endowments and Zakat in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has

parking lots for the Dasma Cooperative Society branch in Block Five.

Meanwhile, Director General of Kuwait Municipality Saud Al-Dabbous has informed the council about the issuance of Ministerial Resolu-

US ambassador commends Kuwait's efforts to combat human trafficking

third consecutive year.

This status was secured due to Kuwait's submission of a written plan that prevented it from dropping to the third level.

The report noted Kuwait's efforts in combating human trafficking, highlighting measures taken such as investigating potential trafficking cases, increasing prosecutions under the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Law, and providing shelter and protection for trafficking victims.

The US government, she said, appreciates these efforts and looks forward to continuing cooperation with Kuwait on this shared concern.

instructed mosque preachers to be firmly established in our true Islamic brief in their Friday sermons, so that religion, which considers protecting the duration of delivering the sermon oneself and preserving health to be along with the prayer does not exceed among the five necessities of preserv-10 minutes starting last Friday until the beginning of October out of the authority's concern for the safety of worshipers and address the difficulties of those who visit the houses of Allah Almighty, especially in the summer months when temperatures are high, reports Al-Rai daily.

The Emirates News Agency (WAM) quoted the authority as saying that: "Tasitir is an approach

tion No. 223/2024 on amending the advertisement regulations and its publication in the Official Gazette (Kuwait Al-Youm) Issue No. 1689 dated June 2, 2024.

This is regarding the proposal of

ing religion, life, money, offspring and mind. This measure is in line with our State's approach. Our wise leadership pays special attention to protecting the individuals' health, enacting related legislation and laws that enhance this aspect. The authority is keen on taking care of the mosques, providing them with all their needs, and creating a comfortable environment for worshipers."

Al-Mahri, his deputy Khaled Al-Mutairi, and council members Abdullatif Al-Daei, Alia Al-Farsi. Munira Al-Amir and Farah Al-Rumi to add Paragraph B to Clause Five of Article 20 on the list of announcements.

Al-Jarida photo

LOCAL



'Why MEW not focusing on using solar & wind energy?'

"THE Kuwaiti citizens wonder why Kuwait, which is a member of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), and has 7 percent of the world's crude oil reserves and one of the largest sovereign wealth funds in the world, is suffering due to 'programmed power cuts' in the summer when temperatures exceed 51 degrees Celsius (124 Fahrenheit)," columnist Prof. Dr. **Bahija Behbehani** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

"The Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy announced: 'A programmed power cut will be imposed on some areas when needed during peak hours, from 11 am to 5 pm for a period of one to two hours if neces-

a rsary.' "This is to avoid longer power outages. Power was cut off to several residential and the victims of these power cuts were mostly children who are enjoying their summer holi-

days at home



Dr. Behbehani

and the elderly most of whom are suffering from chronic diseases.

"The ministry justified the outage as a result of the inability of power generation stations to meet the increasing demand for electrical loads during peak hours, in addition to the high temperatures.

"When we, the citizens, ask and wonder about the truth of the government's need to resort to cutting off the electricity in this sudden and programmed manner, we know for sure that there is an "electricity crisis" in the country due to the extreme heat and citizens and residents resorting to using cooling and air conditioning devices in their homes which exceeds the capacity of the power stations to handle, especially since these power stations were built several decades ago when the population of the State of Kuwait was only 1.5 million.

"Currently the number of its citizens and residents is approximately 4.5 million individuals, and the power cuts are happening because of the hesitation to build new power stations to keep pace with the increase in consumption and increase in the invention of electronic devices that consume electricity.

"I do not know whether these old power stations are maintained periodically, or did the continuous change of governments in the country cause a lack of interest in maintaining the old power stations and not embarking on new power projects.

"The question is, why the Ministry of Electricity did not plan for the coming years to ensure the continuity of electricity uninterrupted?

"Renewable energy, particularly solar power, emerges as a sustainable solution capable of significantly addressing Kuwait's energy needs.

"Recent advancements have made solar energy more effective and costefficient, presenting ample opportunities for widespread adoption in homes and governmental institutions.

"Encouraging citizens and businesses to embrace solar energy can catalyze this transformation, supported by technical and financial assistance.

"Government leadership is crucial in initiating this shift towards sustainability. By implementing solar energy solutions in government buildings, schools, and universities, Kuwait can set a precedent for the private sector and raise awareness about the benefits of renewable energy.

"This strategic approach not only enhances energy security but also contributes to environmental protection for future generations.

"In essence, the electricity crisis in Kuwait should serve as a catalyst for reevaluating and updating energy strategies. By investing in renewable energy and fostering broad participation from all sectors of society, Kuwait can achieve sustainable energy security while safeguarding the environment.

"This holistic approach will be essential in navigating future challenges and ensuring a resilient energy infrastructure."

"To the Minister of Electricity ... I do not know His Excellency the current Minister of Electricity personally, but I know his father, since he was Undersecretary of the Ministry of Social Affairs, and then its minister. I know his sincerity and dedication to serving Kuwait and its people. I expect that this cub, God willing, is from that lion," columnist **Talal Al-Saeed** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"Your Excellency, the Minister: There is nothing but wellness that is not appropriate for us at all at this particular time. It is not acceptable to you, it is not supposed to be said, and the Kuwaiti citizen does not accept it.

"In this difficult time, we are in dire need of a comprehensive solution to the issue of power outages. Certain members of society cannot bear the heat even for only a quarter of an hour, such as infants and elderly women, as well as people who need elevators to reach their rooms. Electricity is no longer a luxury. It is an utmost necessity -- one of the most important necessities of life. "Your Excellency, the Minister the

"Your Excellency, the Minister, the power outage in 41 areas distributed across all regions on the map of the State of Kuwait is a matter that requires serious investigation, the results of which will be announced later. There is no room for good faith here.





Part of honoring non-commissioned officers with the rank of Corporal.

Acting Fire Force chief oversees officers' graduation

The acting chief of Kuwait Fire Force, Lieutenant General Khaled Fahad Al-Sabah, on Thursday oversaw the graduation of 76 non-commissioned officers

and staff corporals. The KFF said in a press release that Lieut. Gen. Khaled Fahad conveyed to the graduates greetings from the First Deputy Prime Minis-

ter, Minister of Defense and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yusuf Saud Al-Sabah, urging them to honor their oath and serve faithfully. Lieut. Gen. Khaled Fahad affirmed in his speech during the ceremony that the firefighters "sacrifice themselves for a humanitarian task that spares lives and properties." (KUNA)

KUNA photos

GTD deploys high-tech cameras to tackle rising traffic violations

Municipality issues warnings to 228 violating properties

KUWAIT CITY, June 29: The sixth generation camera system has been activated to capture images of violating motorists near traffic lights and intersections; while the Operations Unit at the General Traffic Department (GTD) in the Interior Ministry will register traffic violations, reports Al-Shahed daily quoting sources.

Sources explained that sixth generation cameras monitor violations like not wearing a seat belt and using the mobile phone by hand while driving, adding the Operations Unit is in charge of imposing fines on violators.

Sources disclosed that the Control Unit records about 100 traffic violations every hour; including using the mobile phone while driving, not focusing on the road and not wearing a seat belt.

Meanwhile, statistics from GTD revealed that the number of using the mobile phone while driving violations reached 186,000 last year.

It can be recalled that in September 2017, the ministry imposed fines on drivers who do not wear seat belts and those who use the mobile phone while driving. However, the lawmakers objected at the time and launched a campaign against the ministry; prompting it to retract the decision. Chaos on the roads resumed as drivers have not been committed to rules on seat belt and mobile phone and other traffic violations. The remarkable increase in the number of traffic violations indicates that many people are ignoring traffic regulations.

Health centers shut: Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi ordered closing a private dentistry center and banned the one-day cosmetic surgeries at a beauty parlor.

Minister al-Awadhi has referred the two centers to the department of medical responsibility after finding gross violations of standing medical regulations, according to a ministry's statement issued on Thursday.

The decision indicated that the dentistry center had promoted services without obtaining the necessary permit.

The ministry affirmed that inspections of health institutions would continue to ensure adherence to the medical regulations and citizens' health and wellbeing.



Al-Qabas photo

Lieut-Gen Al-Muzain during the visit. Lieut-Gen Al-Muzain 'inspects' new Ali Al-Sabah Military College project

KUWAIT CITY, June 29: Lieutenant General Pilot Bandar Salem Al-Muzain, Chief of General Staff of the Army, conducted a field inspection visit on Thursday, to the site of the new Ali Al-Sabah Military College project, reports Al-Qabas daily.

During the visit, Al-Muzain received a comprehensive briefing from Engineer bdul Razzag Al-Kandari, Project Services Supervisor in the Northern Region and head of the Ali Al-Sabah Military College project team. The briefing covered all aspects related to the establishment of the new college, situated on a 3.5 square kilometer area and comprising 39 buildings with a capacity of 1,200 officer candidates. The presentation highlighted the progress achieved, detailed the steps taken so far, and discussed the challenges overcome to maintain the project's schedule. Following the briefing, Al-Muzain conducted a thorough field tour of the project site, where he inspected various facilities under construction. He emphasized the importance of adhering to the highest quality standards in implementing these facilities to ensure they provide a conducive educational environment for future

students.

At the conclusion of his visit, Al-Muzain expressed his confidence that the new Ali Al-Sabah Military College will emerge as a distinguished educational institution, contributing significantly to the preparation and qualification of student officers and military cadres at the highest levels.

He commended the efforts of all person-

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"Why doesn't the Ministry of Electricity move towards using solar and wind energy, in cooperation with the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research, whose mandate includes: 'Discovering and preserving natural wealth resources, especially water and energy.'

"The Amiri Decree also assigned the institute: 'The task of providing research, scientific and technological consultations to both government and private institutions in the State of Kuwait'!"

Also:

"The recent electricity crisis in Kuwait highlighted major challenges in the energy sector, and clearly demonstrated the urgent need to reconsider current strategies and adopt innovative and sustainable solutions," columnist **Fahd Al-Azmi** wrote for **Al-Jarida** daily.

daily. "The crisis in Kuwait's electricity sector underscores a critical need for long-term strategic planning, particularly in the face of increasing demand driven by population growth, urban expansion, and rising temperatures.

"Importing energy has served as a temporary solution, but it is unsustainable in the long term. The viable path forward lies in building new generating stations, though this necessitates time—potentially up to two years.

The other matter is that you must start where others who came before you left off, that is before the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, and travel to France to complete previous negotiations that took place between the two governments to establish a nuclear electricity generation station that would eliminate the problem once and for all. The negotiations stopped at the issue of the nuclear station's continuous need for cooling water to ensure the continuation of its operation. This might have been difficult in the past -- before the State borders were specified, but now it is different, as it is easy to establish the station on one of the Kuwaiti islands like Boubyan on the opposite side of Mubarak Port on the shore of the Gulf. Thus, cooling is done through the sea

nian port of Bushehr. "Hurry and agree with the French before it is too late. Leave a mark on the history of Kuwait that generations will never forget. You are a young man who is supposed to have a great ambition that does not end when your term in the ministry ends. Kuwait deserves the best."

water as the case of the Iranian nuclear

station on the opposite side of the Ira-

- Compiled by PFX Fernandes & Mahmoud Ateyieh

Security personnel seize 30 kg hashish

'KGAC commits to fighting drug smuggling at all ports'

KUWAIT CITY, June 29: Director General of Kuwait General Administration of Customs (KGAC) Abdullah Al-Sharhan has affirmed that combating drugs is one of the most important priorities of KGAC; particularly in all customs ports -- land, air and sea, reports Al-Shahed daily.

In a speech on the occasion of International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, Al-Sharhan appreciated the Kuwaiti government's keenness to develop human and financial capabilities, and provide all the necessary equipment and devices to combat drugs and prevent its entry into the country. He stressed that KGAC is fully prepared to cooperate with various entities to stop the smuggling of drugs.

It is worth mentioning that in 1987, the United Nations General Assembly set June 26 as International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking due to the serious drugrelated dangers threatening the whole world.

30-kg hashish seized: In its ongoing efforts to combat drug trafficking and enhance security cooperation, the Ministry of Interior has made a significant break-through when personnel from the Directorate-General Drugs Control, in collaboration with the General Administration of the Coast Guard, arrested two suspects who



The duo with the seized drugs.

have a history of drug trafficking, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The daily said the men were caught in possession of approximately 30 kilos of narcotic hashish, which they intended to sell to consumers in the country.

The Ministry of Interior said the suspects will face legal consequences in line with the law, underscoring its commitment to safeguarding society from the harmful effects of drugs.

The daily added, security operations aimed at combating drug dealers and smugglers are ongoing, with a call for public cooperation. Citizens are encouraged to report any suspicious activities or information through the Emergency No. 112 or the hotline of the DGDC1884141.

228 warnings issued: The Public Relations Department in Kuwait Municipality disclosed that the inspection teams at Ahmadi Municipality branch recently conducted an intensive campaign to make sure that the owners of investment and commercial real estate properties are complying with the relevant regulations, reports Al-Anba daily.

It added that the campaigns conducted by the Safety Department in Mahboula, Mangaf and Fahaheel resulted in the issuance of 228 warnings to those who committed violations that endangered road users, affirming the owners of buildings responded to the warnings and removed the violations.

The Municipality urged the real estate owners and tenants of commercial buildings to comply with the regulations, stressing that the inspection campaigns will continue in order to record any violation and take legal action.

Bag with drugs found at PoJ: Security personnel at the Palace of Justice have found a bag containing heroin and drug paraphernalia in Hall 15, where criminal cases are being heard for the inmates from the Central Prison convicted of drug-related cases, reports Al-Jarida daily.

According to a security source an unidentified person had left the bag near the detainees' area within the hall and escaped from the scene.

The vigilance of the security officers stationed at the Palace of Justice, who routinely conduct searches of the premises before defendants are brought in, prevented the smuggling attempt aimed at supplying drugs to prisoners.

Upon discovering the narcotics and related items, the security personnel immediately seized them and documented the incident. A case has been registered and the Public Prosecution has

initiated an investigation into the matter. The security officers involved in finding the drugs have been

summoned to give their testimonies.

This incident underscores the ongoing challenges faced by law enforcement and judicial authorities in preventing illicit activities within court facilities, particularly those involving illegal substances being smuggled into prisons.

The swift response by security personnel highlights their commitment to maintaining security and preventing criminal activities within the Palace of Justice premises.

Mol arrest 2 lawyers over fake news: The Ministry of Interior has arrested two lawyers for publishing fake news about Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan on the social networking site 'X', reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a press statement, the ministry affirmed that the relevant law stipulates five years imprisonment for anyone proven to have spread false information.

Earlier, the minister announced that legal measures will be taken against a number of social media accounts that spread rumors and malicious news.

She said there is no truth in what is being circulated on social media about the incident that was fabricated against her.

80 media bodies referred to PP: The Ministry of Information has referred 80 media institutions to the Public Prosecution and withdrew the licenses of 90 electronic newspapers for committing violations, reports Al-Shahed daily.

The ministry explained such measures were taken as per the relevant laws on organizing publication and printing as part of the commitment to responsible freedom of the press and to prevent media chaos.

It said the committee tasked to uncover media violations is keen on observing the websites, social media accounts, newspapers and television channels in order to make sure no violations are committed. It also stressed the need to adhere to the principles of accuracy, honesty and credibility in reporting. nel involved in the project and reiterated the leadership's unwavering support to enhance the efficiency and readiness of the armed forces.

This inspection visit is part of a series of field visits undertaken by Al-Muzain to various military units and projects, aimed at monitoring progress and ensuring that all plans are executed efficiently and effectively to achieve their objectives.

Accompanying Al-Muzain during the visit were Major General Engineer Salah Saud Nasser, Assistant Chief of Staff for Supply and Logistics; Major General Khaled Shujaa Faihan, Commander of Ali Al-Sabah Military College; and Engineer Hussam Al-Atiqi, Director of the Projects Department at Military Facilities Engineering.



LOCAL

Cultural diversity celebrated

French Ambassador commends

Kuwaiti women's achievements

4

Kuwait faces severe shortage of national medical personnel, expert urges reforms

Health Ministry seeks 1,000 graduates annually

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 29: Director of the Psychiatry Depatment at the College of Medicine in Kuwait University Dr. Sulaiman Al-Khudhari sounded the alarm about the shortage of local medical personnel that was evident during the Corona crisis; clarifying this is a global phenomenon, but it is more severe in the Gulf region.

He said Kuwait ranks fourth in the Gulf in terms of the number of doctors



KUNA photo Minister of Social Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah inspects the new juvenile care complex in Al-Sulaibiya.

Al-Huwailah vows to enhance social care

Minister of Social Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah on Friday affirmed that efforts for developing social care would proceed.

Dr. Al-Huwailah, in a statement to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) during her inspection of the new juvenile care complex in Al-Sulaibiya district, said construction of this facility is a significant step forward for enhancing the quality of life for delinquent juveniles and re-merging them into the community, in an effective and constructive fashion.

The ministry is keen on providing all kinds

of care and support for the hosted youth, said Dr. Al-Huwailah, also the Minister of Family and Childhood Affairs and the Minister of State for Youth Affairs, indicating that such a well-equipped facility would provide this segment of the society with comprehensive services.

Such a developed center also provides a suitable environment to boost the efforts to alter their behaviors and encourage them to acquire useful hobbies, explained the minister in her remarks to KUNA. (KUNA)

compared to the population, with 22 doctors for every 10,000 people. He pointed out there are 17,000 doctors in Kuwait and only 4,000 of them are Kuwaitis, adding that the Health Ministry's annual need for medical manpower with various medical specializations is estimated at about 1,000 graduates.

In a panel discussion organized by the Women's Cultural and Social Society recently with the theme, 'The scholarship plan for medical specializations is compatible with the quality of education and meeting the needs of the labor market', Al-Khudhari revealed the Kuwait 2035 vision aims to increase the capacity of hospitals by not less than 7,000 beds, which means doubling number of doctors and other medical personnel.

He talked about the scholarship problems and the difference in conditions be-

tween universities; pointing out that the Ministry of Higher Education made a mistake in making the circular on the suspension of scholarships in all universities in Egypt and Jordan, which came in the wake of the forged certificates crisis.

He pointed out the suspension decision was taken after the Ministry of Health sent a letter, stating that the quality of graduates from these universities is not good. He added: "This letter was based on the opinion of consultants, not a study. Why do we focus on a specific group of countries in terms of scholarships?!

He presented a number of solutions to the shortage of medical personnel in the country; such as increasing the number of seats in the College of Medicine, organizing scholarships to Egypt and Jordan, opening the door for scholarships in other Arab and foreign countries, opening other medical colleges in Kuwait, negotiating to improve scholarship conditions and increasing seats in the universities included in the scholarship plan, a national unified examination for licensing, and ensuring a minimum level of medical knowledge.

On the other hand, former Dean of the College of Allied Medicine and member of the Kuwaiti Society for Quality Education Dr. Saud Al-Obaidi spoke about the college's failure in the special nursing education program that was added in 2022 and transferred to the Public Authority for Applied Education. He noted that there are more than 24,000 nurses in Kuwait; but the number of nationals among them is very small -- not exceeding four percent as their number is about 1,000.

Al-Obaidi also proposed a package of solutions, the most important of which is establishing a university hospital for the College of Medicine in Kuwait. He said Kuwait is the only Gulf country that has no university hospital.

He suggested increasing the spatial capacity of the college in order to enhance its ability to increase the number of students, professors and course. In this manner, the college will be able to implement its strategic vision, which includes establishing several bachelor's programs that serve the allied medicine sector, such as respiratory system, foot care, speech, hearing and clinical exercise physiology. Investors must be encouraged to establish colleges in the private sector that contribute to teaching specializations in allied medical sciences to meet the State's need for national medical professionals, he concluded. KUWAIT CITY, June 29: The French Ambassador to Kuwait HE Claire Le Flecher, has expressed her deep admiration for Kuwaiti women, their culture, creativity, and accomplishments across various domains, reports Al-Qabas daily.

She made the remarks during the third edition of the Women's Diwaniya hosted at her residence, attended by a diverse group of female leaders. "I greatly ad-

nire the culture and capabilities of Kuwaiti women, who have

played a pivotal role in the societal building and renaissance," Ambassador Le Flecher stated. "They have excelled in numerous sectors, achieving significant milestones both locally and internationally."

She further expressed her honor in hosting the Women's Diwaniya, which serves as a platform bringing together Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti women from diverse fields including business, politics, arts, culture, and fashion.

"This initiative aims to provide an inspiring and empowering platform for talented and influential women to connect, share their stories, and foster strong networks of solidarity," Le Fleischer emphasized. "Similar to traditional diwaniyas, our women's Diwaniya convenes weekly, every Wednesday, presented in a modern and innovative format."

Highlighting the broader objectives of the gathering, she noted, "Beyond networking, this forum is about creating a space for candid discussions, sharing challenges, and celebrating successes. It aims to cultivate a culture of empowerment and resilience, fostering both personal and professional growth to drive positive societal change."

Le Fleischer expressed her delight in seeing new participants join each gathering, envisioning that by nurturing these connections and promoting collaboration, the influence of Kuwaiti women across all sectors will continue to expand, inspiring future generations to follow their lead.

In response, attendees of the Diwaniya lauded its cultural diversity, underscoring Kuwait's inclusive embrace of all nationalities and cultures.

Sabah AI-Ahmad Center launches apprenticeship program for 2024

KUWAIT CITY, June 29: The Sabah Al-Ahmad Center for Giftedness and Creativity, part of the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences, announced the launch of the "Apprenticeship" program for 2024, under the theme 'Develop Your Practical Skills', reports Al-Qabas daily.

This initiative aims to train young Kuwaitis as professional trainers in technology, integrated sciences, and digital manufacturing.

Neda Al-Daihani, the center's general manager, stated in a press release, "Registration for the program begins on the 30th of this month and continues until July 13th. It is designed to familiarize trainers with the latest techniques and tools in technology, integrated sciences, and technological competitions. The program will feature intensive workshops aimed at enhancing practical skills and developing educational capabilities among trainers."

Al-Daihani outlined the center's strategy, emphasizing, "Our plan includes offering intensive apprenticeship and on-the-job training programs to elevate the technical knowledge and skills of trainers. This will enable them to deliver high-quality training using the latest methodologies and techniques."

She added that "this year's program aims to cultivate a generation of skilled trainers who will contribute actively to the field. By enhancing the efficiency, skills, and educational capabilities of participants in technology-related domains, we aim to prepare them effectively for future roles in training and education."

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More than 1,500 contestants participated

Charitable Society honors Qur'anic scholars at Al-Hashemi Competition

KUWAIT CITY, June 29: In a unique Qur'anic event, the Kuwaiti Charitable Society for the Service of the Holy Our'an and its Sciences (Hoffath) honored the winners of the first Al-Hashemi Competition for the Sciences of the Holy Qur'an organized by the society under the patronage of Minister of Justice. Endowments and Islamic Affairs Dr. Mohammad Al-Wasmi and in the presence of Undersecretary Dr. Badr Al-Mutairi, officials of the society, several Ministry of Endowments officials and representatives of Al-Hashemi Family -- sponsors of the competition, reports Al-Jarida daily. More than 1,500 contestants participated in one of the specialized competitions in Qur'anic sciences. The competition encourages young people not only to memorize and recite the Holy Qur'an; but also to fully understand it and the reasons for the revelation of the verses. At the end of the awarding ceremony, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the society Abdulaziz Al-Rifai presented a Qur'anic plaque to the undersecretary of the Ministry of Endow-

Ministry denies rumor of prayer schedule changes

KUWAIT CITY, June 29: The Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs has denied the rumor spread on social media that it will call for Dhuhe and Asr prayers only as a measure to rationalize power consumption, reports A- Shahed



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daily.

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

ments as an expression of appreciation for the ministry's unwavering support for Quranic work in general and for its contribution to the success of the competition.

Preferential treatment stirs public outcry

Controversy over equivalency for university admissions resurfaced

KUWAIT CITY, June 29: The controversy over discrepancies in the equivalency of high school certificates for university admissions in Kuwait has resurfaced, particularly focusing on allegations of preferential treatment towards graduates from foreign schools, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

This issue has gained prominence following the recent announcement of high school exam results for public school students, with implications for scholarships in medical specialties.

Parents have raised concerns about what they perceive as unfair treatment. They point out that while an American high school graduate achieving 93% is awarded a perfect score of 100% under the points system adopted by the Department of Special Education in the Ministry of Education, public school graduates do not receive similar treatment, despite their achievements in medicine.

The complaint highlights a change in the mechanism for equating American high school grades, where points are directly added and multiplied to reflect a 100% score, simplifying the equivalence process.

This contrasts with the stricter assessment criteria applied to local school graduates.

In response, educational sources have refuted the allegations, asserting that the equivalency mechanism follows international standards.

For instance, a foreign high school graduate earning an (A+) grade may receive a percentage between 97% and 100%, depending on the grading scale. Meanwhile, a (A-) grade might corre-

University opens doors for admission inquiries

KUWAIT CITY, June 29: Abdullah Al-Salem University has announced that it will welcome high school graduates and their families for inquiries related to admission and registration from Monday, July 1, 2024, to Thursday, July 4, 2024, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The University made this known through its official account on the "X" platform.

The reception will take place from 9:30 am to 1:30 pm at Khalidiya, Gate 3, Building 53, also known as the "Classes Building."

spond to 96%. This approach aligns with global practices where universities set specific percentage thresholds for admissions into various disciplines, including medicine.

Furthermore, these sources emphasize the necessity for foreign schools to maintain academic accreditation to ensure credibility in their grading systems. They also highlight ongoing coordination between universities and the Ministry of Higher Education to uphold rigorous standards in determining admission criteria.

In conclusion, the debate underscores the complexities inherent in aligning diverse educational systems within Kuwait's higher education framework. The challenge lies in balancing fairness for all students while upholding academic integrity and international equivalency standards.

LOCAL



Al Mithin and Algharabally with Zain and PACI officials

Partnership enhances customer service efficiency

PACI, Zain sign collaboration agreement

KUWAIT CITY, June 29: The Pub-lic Authority for Civil Information (PACI) and Mobile Telecommunications Company - Zain announced the signing of a collaboration agreement. This partnership will integrate PA-CI's Geographic Information Systems (GIS) portal and 'Kuwait Finder' services with Zain's systems, allowing the company to significantly improve its customer service efficiency across multiple levels.

The announcement was made at a signing ceremony held at PACI headquarters, attended by PACI Acting General Manager Mansour Al Mithin, Zain Kuwait CEO Nawaf Algharabally, Zain Kuwait Chief Government Affairs and Business Development Officer Malek Jaber Al Sabah, along with other PACI officials and Zain executives

PACI Acting General Manager Mansour Al Mithin welcomed Zain to the list of organizations benefiting from PACI's GIS services, which are provided to over 300 government and private organizations in Kuwait. The GIS portal offers capabilities and data that can be integrated with each organization's systems, enhancing the services they provide to their customers and users

Al Mithin explained that PACI

Mansour Al Mithin and Nawaf Algharabally after signing the agreement.

makes processed data available through the GIS portal, which is compiled and updated via various projects such as photography/videography, spatial drone scanning, and other initiatives aimed at creating an advanced, highly accurate foundational map to serve Kuwait's developmental projects and empower the nation's business sector.

He emphasized the importance of these projects in supporting PACI's digital transformation efforts, particularly those related to logging building addresses. This has positively impacted the 'Kuwait Finder' app's data, strengthening the trust of its 2.5 million users and over 50 organizations that have integrated the app's interface into their own platforms.

Zain Kuwait CEO Nawaf Algharabally expressed his excitement about the collaboration with PACI, calling it a successful example of a strategic partnership between the public and private sectors. He noted that PACI's GIS data would significantly enhance Zain's Business Intelligence systems, improving service levels for Kuwait's largest customer base.

Algharabally mentioned that this partnership would pave the way for further collaborations with PACI. Zain plans to use PACI's geographic data and detailed 3D models for network planning projects, which will improve customer experience and operational efficiency, thanks to PACI's comprehensive scans of all areas in Kuwait.

He affirmed Zain's commitment to leveraging strategic partnerships with major public and private sector organizations to achieve full digital transformation and enhance the company's service offerings. The company strives to exceed customer expectations and deliver world-class services to the biggest family of subscribers in Kuwait.

The signing ceremony also included discussions on future collaborations between Zain and PACI in a number of other related areas to deliver enhanced services to citizens and residents in Kuwait

Continued from Page 1

Kuwait Fund strengthens int'l ties at OPEC forum in Vienna

Delegation explores avenues for collaborative action

Minister of Social Affairs discusses with

KUWAIT CITY, June 29: The Kuwait Fund for Development concluded its participation in the Third **Development Forum of the OPEC** for International Fund for Agricultural Development in Vienna, Austria, which was held on June 25-26 under the theme 'Cooperation for Impact', reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The forum aimed to strengthen cooperation in supporting international economic development. It saw extensive participation from world leaders, ministers, heads of development institutions, international bodies, and private sector stakeholders discussing development strategies, financing projects, and opportunities to advance sustainable development and achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals.



Minister of Social Affairs with Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs for Human Rights Affairs.

Leading the Kuwait Fund's delegation was Acting Director General Walid AlBahr. Discussions over the two days focused on enhancing institutional capabilities, accelerating investment in smart infrastructure, developing human capital, and advancKUWAIT CITY, June 29, (KUNA): Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs, and the Minister of State for Youth Affairs, Dr. Amathal Al-Huwaila discussed Thursday with Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs for Human Rights Affairs Ambassador Sheikha Jawaher Ibrahim Duaij Al-Sabah cooperation for boosting human rights.

In a press statement, the Social Affairs Ministry said the meeting addressed a number of key issues related to women, the family, childhood, and people with disabilities. They mulled the State of Kuwait's human rights commitments as per the international conventions and their mechanisms.

ing global sustainable development efforts, including urgent issues like climate change.

During the forum, the Kuwaiti Fund delegation also participated in the Arab Funds Coordination Group meeting and engaged in bilateral meetings.



TENDER ADVERTISMENT

Aramco Gulf Operations Company Limited ("AGOC") and Kuwait Gulf Oil Company (K.S.C) ("KGOC"), (AI Khafji Joint Operations) invites intending bidders to participate for the Tender No.: GT852CB24 - Recreational and Cultural Activity Services for KJO

Each intending bidder may purchase the tender documents upon payment of Saudi Rivals Five Hundred (SR 500) or Kuwaiti Dinars Forty (KD 40) only which is non-refundable by visiting our Contracts Department at Al- Khafji, Saudi Arabia, or KGOC's Kuwait Office located in Al- Ahmadi, Tender & Contracts Section. The bidder may visit our KJO website: www.kjo.com.sa and follows the path; E- Services Tendering Contractors Ongoing Tenders to review part of tender documents, before purchasing.

The sale of Tender Documents will be effective from June 26. 2024. until 10:00 AM. July 11, 2024.

Your blessed

Continued from Page 1

Perhaps, some were surprised by this move; because they did not know who is Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad whose words match his action. Your Highness, you lead by example as you appointed an appropriate person to the Crown Prince position, in addition to the premiership of the Council of Ministers or any major position. You chose what is best for Kuwait and its future.

Kuwait has started to witness the fruits of these measures. Today, there are no people milking the State and sucking its blood as it happened in the past. They worked with all their might to keep it backward, so

that they would have the pleasure of continuing to shackle the people through laws that served only their interests.

Today, these people are wondering: What is next? They bet that those quivering ran out of arrows. Thus, they sharp-ened their teeth and knives, but they lost their bet even before it began.

Therefore, we say to them: Kuwait has witnessed and will continue to witness many things, as long as "good is upon us." A good indicator of this is the announcement of major projects free of corruption.

These projects will be implemented through the government's agreement with countries or large companies. No local agent shall milk it and change its value several times,

Minister of Justice and Minister of Endowments and Islamic Affairs Dr. Mohammad Al-Wasmi reiterated Thursday Kuwait's keenness to upgrade the judicial system to keep pace global changes.

He made this statement to KUNA after chairing the plenary session of the 12th edition of the St. Petersburg International Legal Forum hosted by Russia during the period June 26-28.

Al-Wasmi stressed the importance of Kuwait's participation in the three-day forum which discusses a wide range of key topics related to the judicial system, new jurisprudence issues and latest legislative updates as well as the use of technology to modernize the judicial system.

Terminal 2

Kuwait, Russia

Continued from Page 1

challenges with external partners to meet required standards. Dr. Al-Mashaan underscored close collaboration with the Civil Aviation Authority to overcome obstacles and maintain progress in this pivotal project, integral to Kuwait's national infrastructure development and economic enhancement.

while the law is applied on everyone. As for fighting corrup-tion, the seniors' files were opened to before that of the juniors and those involved will soon face the music.

Also, today, there is nothing to protect those who spread rumors or anyone who dares to harm the authority of the Amir in any way. This is due to the fact that accountability is the theme that spares no one; even those in the ruling house and even from some of the adventurers within it, when people imagined that every influential person was the ruler. All this has ended.

Here are the doors of the offices of ministers opening to the people, even the doors of senior officials. The people are certain that once the government announces that the unemployment rate will be zero in the near future, they are confident that any official will not fail to implement your directives, especially since you promised to monitor all officials. The people are standing in front of you. They believe that you will do them justice.

All these achievements will be written in history. When I told you, Your Highness, I wish I was younger so that I could work with more vigor for the sake of Kuwait; the people are convinced that life is not about the number of years, but the achievements. May Almighty Allah bless your life and this tremendous effort. Today, the people feel that they are in a fortified State, that the birth of the second Kuwaiti State has begun, and that your blessed tears were assets from which your people draw strength and determina-tion to build the best leadership. We have said that "good is upon us." This is our promise to you, Your Highness.

Kuwait railway

Continued from Page 1

were temporarily halted until the appointment of the new board in June, after which they resumed.

Originating from a proposal by the late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad in 2009, the GCC railway project concept was approved and subsequently underwent feasibility studies to ensure alignment across participating Gulf countries.

Initially overseen by the Partnership Authority under the Ministry of Transport, a feasibility study was conducted in 2012, updated in 2016, and included specifications aimed at ensuring compatibility and non-conflict during implementation.

The railway route spans 2,177 kilometers from Kuwait to Muscat, passing through all Gulf Cooperation Council nations.

The initial phase, approved by the Municipal Council on January 15, 2021, spans 265 kilometers in Kuwait, divided into two segments for expedited implementation.

The first segment covers 111 kilometers from Nuwaiseeb to Shaddadiya, southwest of Kuwait Airport T2, featuring four main passenger stations and facilities for maintenance and freight handling.

Passenger trains will operate at speeds up to 200 kilome-ters per hour, while freight trains will run at 120 kilometers per hour, powered by diesel, with a 200-meter right-of-way.

Kuwait repeats

Continued from Page 1

report noted that 99.7 percent of individuals and 99.4 percent of families in Kuwait have access to the Internet through subscriptions with Internet providers or telecommunications companies.

Furthermore, the index comprises two pillars and ten indicators. The Commission serves as a liaison between data and international organizations specializing in the communications and information technology sector.

KRCS delivers

Continued from Page 1

said the project is executed in cooperation with Jordan National Red Crescent Society, to ease the suffering of Palestinians, mainly children and the elderly who face death every day due to lack of food.

He noted that the Society will continue aiding Palestinians in the face of the deteriorating conditions in Gaza.

Kuwait had sent tons of humanitarian aid to Gaza, as well as dozens of ambulance vehicles, since the beginning of the Israeli occupation attacks on October 7.

The bid proposal shall be delivered by hand-delivery or thru courier service to the Contracts Department in Al-Khafji Joint Operations, Al-Khafji, Saudi Arabia on or before the closing date 14:00 Hours, Monday, July 22, 2024 of the time stipulated in the tender document.

For more Information please cntact

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Mr. Fahed Abushaar Cluster Director of the St. Regis Kuwait, Sheraton Kuwait and Four Points by Sheraton Kuwait

We are delighted to commemorate a milestone that holds a special place in the hearts of the people of Kuwait and marks a pivotal moment in the history of hospitality the anniversary of the first Sheraton hotel opening outside the United States of America. This historic event, in 1966, marked the dawn of a new era in Kuwait's hospitality industry, blending rich traditions with luxurious services and establishing a benchmark for excellence.

As the first international five-star hotel in Kuwait and the first hotel managed by Marriott International in the Middle East and Africa, the Sheraton Kuwait has proudly hosted guests from around the globe. Over the decades, it has been the preferred venue for countless international, regional and local conferences, playing host to many significant historical events and decisions. Renowned for its grandeur, the hotel continues to be a premier destination for social events, celebrations and weddings,



which have graced its magnificent halls across the span of generations.

For over half a century, the St. Regis Kuwait, Sheraton Kuwait and Four Points by Sheraton Kuwait hotels, have earned a distinguished reputation as the premier hotel of choice for providing our esteemed guests with the highest quality of service. Our hotels remain at the forefront of the hospitality sector, both regionally and globally, adhering to a vision of continuous improvement. The recent introduction of the luxurious St. Regis brand exemplifies our commitment to maintaining the highest standards of exquisite luxury within the hotel industry in Kuwait. On this auspicious occasion, Mr. Fahed Abushaar, Cluster Director of the St. Regis Kuwait, Sheraton

Kuwait and Four Points by Sheraton Kuwait expresses immense pride as the hotel celebrates a remarkable milestone of 58 years of achievements and success. This milestone would not have been possible without the unwavering support of our revered hotel owners and their commitment towards implementing the latest innovations across our properties. Mr. Abushaar extends his profound appreciation and heartfelt gratitude for the steadfast support and loyalty of all esteemed guests who have trusted our hotels as their preferred choice of stay. He also emphasized the continuous dedication of the entire team that uphold the highest standards of hospitality, while honoring Kuwait's noble customs and traditions, enabling us to continue leading hospitality in Kuwait.

INTERNATIONAL

6

World News Roundup

Europe

Drone strike kills 5 Germany's far-right party opens confab

BERLIN, June 29, (AP): The far-right Alternative for Germany opened a convention Saturday after a strong performance in the recent European election, as opponents held large-scale protests and some demonstrators tried to block roads or clashed with police.

Alternative for Germany, or AfD, took 15.9% of the vote to finish second in the European Parliament election on June 9, despite a series of scandals and setbacks in recent months. A particularly strong showing in the formerly communist east has bolstered its hopes of emerging as the strongest party in three state elections in that region in September.

At the regular two-day convention in the western city of Essen, co-leaders Alice Weidel and Tino Chrupalla are expected to seek another term in office.



A heavy police presence was in place in the city, where local authorities had tried to find a way to prevent the AfD event but lost their case in court. Up to 100,000 people in total were expected at a string of counterdemonstrations and other events over the weekend, German news agency dpa reported. On Friday evening, some 5,000 people participated in a peaceful anti-AfD rave titled

Weidel

"Bass against Hatred," police said. Early Saturday morning, a group of demonstrators tried to get through a barrier and was pushed back by police using pepper spray and batons.

There were also incidents in which masked demonstrators attacked officers, according to police, who reported "several" arrests.

Protesters staged sit-ins on streets and crossings near the convention hall. Several AfD lawmakers said they had been picked up by police from their hotel and escorted to the venue, while other delegates were able to walk there without problems, dpa reported.

'5 dead in drone strike': A Ukrainian drone strike killed at least five people in Russia's Kursk region, local officials said Saturday, while rescuers in the Ukrainian city of Dnipro dug through rubble after a Russian attack ripped through a nine-story residential building, leaving one dead.

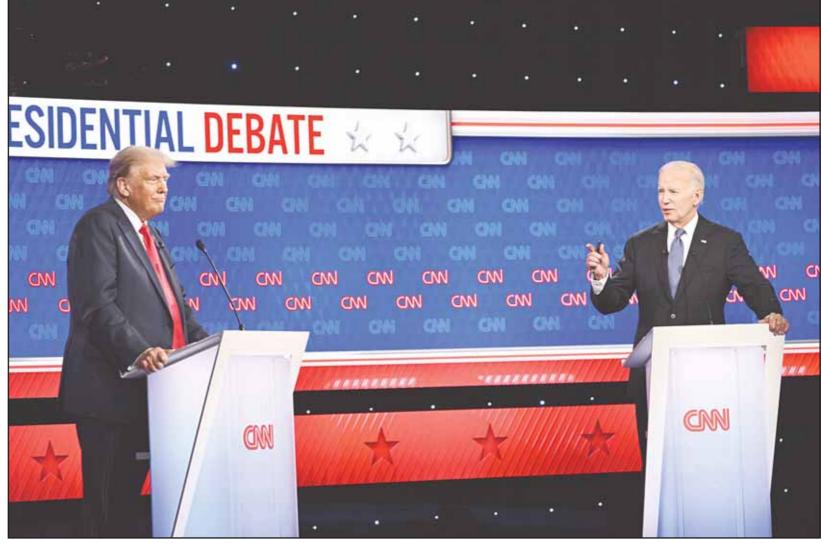
Two children were among the victims of the Ukranian attack in the village of Gorodishche on the Russian-Ukrainian border, Gov. Alexey Smirnov said on social media.

In Dnipro, at least one person died and 12 were injured, including a 7-month-old girl, after a Russian strike destroyed the top four floors of the apartment bloc Friday evening, regional head Serhii Lysak said.

The attacks came as Russia continues to stretch out Ukrainian forces in several areas along the 1,000-kilometer (600-mile) front. Moscow has stepped up airstrikes in a bid to drain Ukraine's resources, often targeting energy facilities and other vital infrastructure.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said the country had lost about 80% of its thermal power and one-third of its hydroelectric power in Russian strikes.

Russia shelling of villages kills 4: Russian shelling of front-line villages in eastern Ukraine killed four people while rescuers in the city of Dnipro dug through rubble after a Russian attack ripped through a nine-story residential building, leaving one dead, officials said Saturday. The attacks came as Russia continues to stretch out Ukrainian forces in several areas along the 1,000-kilometer (600-mile) front. Moscow has stepped up airstrikes in a bid to drain Ukraine's resources, often targeting energy facilities and other vital infrastructure. The shelling of the front-line village of Niu-York in the Donetsk region also left five injured, said Gov Vadym Filashkin. He said that Russian forces had shelled populated areas 13 times over the past 24 hours.



This image provided by CNN shows US President Joe Biden (right) and former president Donald Trump taking the stage at CNN's Atlanta studio for the first presidential debate of the 2024 election on June 27. (Xinhua)

Politics

Trump gloats over president's performance

Biden concedes CNN debate fumbles

WASHINGTON, June 29, (AP): US President Joe Biden worked forcefully Friday to quell Democratic anxieties over his unsteady showing in his debate with former President Donald Trump, as elected members of his party closed ranks around him in an effort to shut down talk of replacing him atop the ticket.

Biden's halting delivery and meandering comments, particularly early in the debate, fueled concerns from even members of his own party that at age 81 he's not up for the task of leading the country for another four years. It created a crisis moment for Biden's campaign and his presidency, as members of his party flirted with potential replacements, and donors and supporters couldn't contain their concern about his showing against Trump.

Biden appeared to acknowledge

and surrogates on board. Democratic lawmakers on Friday acknowledged Biden's poor showing, but tried to stop talk of replacing him as their standardbearer, and instead shift the focus to Trump's attacks and falsehoods.

"Well, the president didn't have a good night, but neither did Donald Trump with lie after lie and his dark vision for America," North Carolina Gov. Roy Cooper told The Associated Press on Friday, hours before he introduced the president in Raleigh. "We cannot send Donald Trump back to the White House. He's an existential threat to our nation.

Campaign

Former President Barack Obama backed up his former vice president, posting on X that "Bad debate nights happen." Alluding to his own poor showing in the first debate of his ree"This race will be decided by you. By us," she said. "Who sits in the White House next year will be determined by what we together do in these next 130 days.'

Also:

CHESAPEAKE, Virginia: Former US president Donald Trump gloated Friday over President Joe Biden's often halting performance at the first debate ahead of the November election, saying Democrats have no better choices while calling the Democratic incumbent "the most incompetent president" in US history.

Trump spoke to thousands of supporters Friday at a rally in Chesapeake, Virginia, a day after Biden's disappointing performance sparked concerns among his allies and other Democrats who were hoping for a more vigorous candidate to secure and improve his chances at reelection. Biden repeatedly stumbled, paused and could not complete sentences, prompting some people to wonder whether they could replace him ahead of November.



Energy, (right) and Britain's Prince William, the Prince of Wales, speak as they have a tour of the Innovation Showcase, at the Breakthrough Energy Summit, in London on June 27. The Breakthrough Energy Summit brings together leaders in technology, policy, science, academia, and business to collaborate on innovative cli-

In Dnipro, at least one person died and 12 were injured, including a 7-month-old girl, after a Russian strike destroyed the top four floors of the apartment bloc Friday evening, regional head Serhii Lysak said.

10 Ukrainians return to Kyiv: Ten Ukrainians who had been held prisoner for years were released from Russian captivity Friday with the mediation of the Vatican, Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said.

Part of the group arrived overnight by helicopter at Kyiv International Airport, which has been closed since Russia launched its invasion of Ukraine. It was the first time in over two years the airport received passengers. The rest of the group arrived by bus.

Some of the released civilians had been captured before Russia's invasion. It's a rare occasion when people detained after 2014, when Russia illegally annexed the Ukrainian peninsula of Crimea, were released.

Among the freed was Nariman Dzhelyal, deputy head of the Mejlis, a representative body of Crimean Tatars that was relocated to Kyiv after Russia seized the peninsula. He was taken from Crimea, where he lived despite the annexation, one year before the war.

Princess Anne leaves hospital: Princess Anne has left the hospital and returned to her southwestern England estate after an accident thought to involve a horse left her with a concussion.

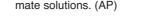
The king's 73-year-old sister had been to Southmead Hospital as a precautionary measure and is expected to make a full recovery after she was injured Sunday while walking at her Gatcombe Park estate. Her husband, Vice Admiral Sir Tim Laurence, applauded the doctors and nurses for their care in a statement Friday.

"I would like to extend my warmest thanks to all the team at Southmead Hospital for their care, expertise and kindness during my wife's short stay," Laurence said. The cause of Anne's injuries wasn't clear, but doctors said her injuries were consistent with an impact from a horse's head or legs.

Episode a 'stitch-up' – Farage: Anti-immigration British politician Nigel Farage on Friday criticized a worker for his Reform UK party who suggested migrants crossing the English Channel in boats should be used for "target practice."

But Farage later suggested that the episode had been a "stitch-up" by Reform's opponents.

Party activist Andrew Parker was heard suggesting army recruits with guns should be posted to "just shoot" migrants landing on beaches, in recordings made by an undercover reporter from Channel 4. He also used a racial slur about Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, who is of Indian descent.





America

4 dead in crash on Long Island: A minivan slammed into a Long Island nail salon Friday, killing four and injuring nine

people inside the business at the time, a Suffolk County fire official said. The vehicle came to a stop at the back of

the Hawaii Nail & Spa store in Deer Park about 4:40 p.m.

"There were people trapped," assistant Chief Dominic Albanese of the Deer Park Fire Department told reporters at the scene. "We extricated them and transported them to area hospitals."

The driver was semiconscious and taken to a hospital, Albanese said.

It was not immediately clear whether the crash was accidental or intentional, officials said. Suffolk County Police Department major case unit detectives were investigating, a police spokesperson said.

Photos from the scene showed a gaping hole in the storefront, which is in a strip mall.

Eric Perez told Newsday he was loading groceries into his car across from the accident scene when he heard a speeding car and

then a noise that "sounded like shattering." "It was a sound that I never heard be-

fore," he said. (AP)

4 prison guards charged: Four Missouri prison guards were charged Friday with murder, and a fifth with accessory to involuntary manslaughter, in the December death of a Black man who was pepper sprayed, had his face covered with a mask and was left in a position that caused him to suffocate while in custody at a correctional facility, according to a complaint filed Friday.

A group of guards making up the Department of Corrections Emergency Response Team was sweeping one of the housing units for contraband on Dec 8, 2023, when Othel Moore Jr., 38, was pepper sprayed twice, then put in a spit hood, leg wrap and restraint chair, according to a news release from Cole County Prosecuting Attorney Locke Thompson.

Moore was then moved to a separate housing unit, where he was left in a locked cell in the hood, wrap and chair for 30 minutes, according to Thompson and probable

the criticism during a rally in Raleigh, North Carolina, saying "I don't debate as well as I used to." But he added, "I know how to do this job. I know how to get things done." Speaking for 18 minutes, Biden appeared far more animated than he had the night before as he excoriated Trump for his "lies" and for waging a campaign aimed at "revenge and retribution.

'The choice in this election is simple," Biden said. "Donald Trump will destroy our democracy. I will defend it."

Alluding

He added, alluding to his candidacy, "When you get knocked down, you get back up.

First lady Jill Biden, at a Friday evening fundraiser in New York City, said her husband told her after the debate, "I don't know what happened. I didn't feel that great." But she seconded the president in stressing that he tells the truth and he bounces back from adversity.

Even before the debate, Biden's age had been a liability with voters, and Thursday night's faceoff appeared to reinforce the public's deep-seated concerns before perhaps the largest audience he will garner in the four months until Election Day.

Privately, his campaign worked to tamp down concerns and keep donors

Driver gets 60 yrs: A Texas jury on Friday found a driver guilty of intoxication



Demonstrators and police confront each other in Essen, Germany on June 29. A few hours before the start of the far right AfD national party conference, demonstrators clashed with the police for the first time on Saturday morning. (AP)

lection campaign in 2012, Obama continued, "Trust me, I know. But this election is still a choice between someone who has fought for ordinary folks his entire life and someone who only cares about himself."

He added: "Last night didn't change that, and it's why so much is at stake in November." Rep Ritchie Torres, D-NY, allowed he "had to take a few more antidepressants than usual" after Biden's debate showing. But he added that "a Donald Trump presidency would cause me far greater discomfort than a Joe Biden debate performance."

Biden's campaign billed the Raleigh event as the largest-yet rally of his reelection bid in the state Trump carried by the narrowest margin in 2020. He then traveled to New York for a weekend of big-dollar fundraisers that his campaign now needs more than ever.

Biden's campaign announced that it raised \$14 million on debate day and the morning after, while Trump's campaign said it raised more than \$8 million from the start of the debate through the end of the night.

Vice President Kamala Harris, whom the Biden campaign sent out to defend his performance, tried to reassure Biden supporters at a rally in Las Vegas on Friday, saying, "This race will not be decided by one night in

manslaughter over the deaths of eight peo-

ple who were struck by an SUV that plowed

into a crowded bus stop outside a migrant

George Alvarez, 35, was found guilty of

eight counts of intoxication manslaughter

at the end of a weeklong trial. He was also

shelter on the US-Mexico border.

"The question every voter should be asking themselves today is not whether Joe Biden can survive a 90-minute debate performance, but whether America can survive four more years of crooked Joe Biden in the White House," Trump said.

Trump repeated several of the false claims he made on Thursday, including about abortions later in pregnancy, and again referred to rioters who have been charged with storming the Capitol to try to overturn his 2020 loss as "hostages." He applauded a US Supreme Court ruling that came out earlier on Friday, limiting a federal obstruction law that has been used to charge Trump and hundreds of Capitol riot defendants. And he called for their release.

"Free the J6 hostages now. They should free them now for what they've gone through," he said, adding that the ruling "was a great thing for people that have been so horribly treated.'

Trump has long suggested the people charged in the riot have been unfairly prosecuted and continues to promote lies and unproven theories about voter fraud.

convicted on 10 counts of aggravated assault with a deadly weapon and sentenced by a judge to serve 60 years in prison.

'You're never truly satisfied with whatever outcome you get, because eight people are still deceased and 10 got their lives changed forever. But I'm satisfied with the way things turned out," Cameron County District Attorney Luis Sáenz said. (AP)

Michigan deputy fatally shot: A sheriff's deputy was fatally shot during a rural traffic stop, becoming the second Michigan deputy to be killed on the job in less than a week. Police said the suspect was later shot and killed when he exchanged gunfire with state troopers. The Hillsdale County Sheriff's deputy

who was shot Thursday afternoon died at a hospital, Michigan State Police said. Sheriff Scott Hodshire identified the slain officer as Deputy William Henry Butler Jr., 51.

Butler "was a great police officer, a retired veteran of the Armed forces and a great friend to all," the Hillsdale Sheriff's Office said in a statement. Sheriff Hodshire told WTVG-TV that Butler was married with five children.

The suspect, 34-year-old Eric Michael Fiddler, refused to identify himself during the traffic stop and fought with deputies trying to remove him from the car, police said, according to a MLive.com report. Fiddler pulled a handgun from his waistband, shot Butler and fled as deputies returned fire. (AP)

June.

cause statements. Thompson said multiple people heard him saying he couldn't breathe. (AP)

INTERNATIONAL

Lat/Am

Venezuelans testify Gen wanted to take over as prez - Arce

LA PAZ, Bolivia, June 29, (AP): Bolivian President Luis Arce said Friday a former general planned to "take over" the government and become president in a failed coup, and he denied that the Andean nation was in an economic crisis.

In an interview with The Associated Press, the embattled leader denied once again that Wednesday's attack on the government palace was a "self-coup' designed to garner him political points.

"I didn't escape. I stayed to defend democracy," Arce said.

Arce washed his hands of claims by relatives of the 21 people detained by the government that they were innocent of attempting a coup and had been tricked by ex-Gen Juan Jose Zúñiga.



"It's a problem of those who were involved, it's not the government's problem," Arce told

Arce said also his government has been "politically attacked" by his one-time ally turned rival, former president Evo Morales, saying the infighting has snarled legislative activities and hamstrung his government confronting economic problems.

Zúñiga

Despite that, he said, Bolivia's economy is growing and his administration is working to "diversify" means of producing, investing in things like lithium and industrializing. Bolivia has the largest reserves of lithium - a metal known as "white gold" and considered essential in the green transition - in the world that has gone largely untapped, in part due to government policy.

Action

Arce said the government "has taken action" to address intermittent gasoline and dollar shortages and other hurdles ailing the South American nation's economy

"Bolivia has an economy that's growing. An econ-omy in crisis doesn't grow," he said.

He said it was "completely normal" for Bolivians to run to stockpile food in supermarkets and make a run on ATMs upon seeing an emerging coup in the capital, instead of following his call to take to the streets in support of the government.

He said Bolivians were traumatized by the political turmoil in 2019 that led Morales to resign as president and flee and also caused 37 deaths.

"Where there is a political situation, this rupture, a coup d'état, of course people will be scared that there won't be food ... so they'll go get money to go stock up," Arce said.

He added that the government was investigating if the attack was organized by the country's political opposition. That same day, Arce's governmental minister, Eduardo del Castillo, said the government claimed that there were "snipers who did not arrive in time to the Murillo square" where the coup was staged.

Also:

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina: Frustrated by the limits of the laboriously slow International Criminal Court and determined that the security officers who allegedly killed their loved ones not enjoy absolute impunity, Venezuelans have brought their crimes-againsthumanity case to a federal court 3,000 miles from home - in Argentina. In a first for Venezuela under the repressive rule of President Nicolás Maduro, a federal court in Buenos Aires concluded two days of testimony from Venezuelan victims on Friday as part of an investigation into probable human rights abuses they claim were committed by security forces in 2014, the year after Maduro took power. Earlier in the year, Argentine prosecutors moved to revive a criminal complaint lodged in 2023 by the Clooney Foundation for Justice on behalf of survivors and the family members of those killed in what lawyers called a "systematic plan" by the state to crush dissent. Prosecutors declared that the crimes committed by high-ranking members of the Venezuelan National Guard were of "extreme seriousness" and required an immediate investigation.



In this file photo provided by the Indian Army, tanks pull back from the banks of Pangong Tso lake region, in Ladakh along the India-China border on Feb 10, 2021. Five Indian soldiers were killed when a military tank they were travelling in sank while crossing a river in the remote region of Ladakh that borders China, Defense Minister Rajnath Singh said on June 29. (AP)

Indian military tank sinks while crossing river in region bordering China, killing 5 soldiers

Five Indian soldiers were killed when a military tank they were travelling in sank while crossing a river in the remote region of Ladakh that borders China, officials said Saturday.

The tank sank early Saturday due to sudden increase in the water levels of Shyok River during a military training activity, according to an Indian army command center statement. It said the accident took place in Saser Brangsa near the Line of Actual

Control that divides India and China in the Ladakh region. Defense Minister Rajnath Singh called it an "unfortunate accident."

"We will never forget exemplary service of our gallant soldiers to the nation. My heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families. The nation stands firm with them during this hour of grief," Singh wrote on the social platform X.

The Indian and Chinese militaries have been

locked in a standoff in Ladakh since May 2020, when they clashed along their land border in the region, with 20 Indian and four Chinese soldiers killed.

The skirmish turned into a long-running standoff in the rugged mountainous area, where each side has stationed tens of thousands of military personnel. New Delhi and Beijing have held a series of diplomatic and military talks to resolve their worst military conflict in decades. (AP)

Asia



29, (AP): Mongolia's governing party won parliamentary elections Friday but by only a slim margin as the opposition made major gains, according to tallies by the party and news media based on near-complete results.

Preliminary results released early Saturday indicated the governing Mongolia People's Party won 68 seats in the 126-seat body, "meaning we have won the election," Prime Minister Oyun-Erdene Luvsannamsrai said.

Expanded The results were a setback for Luvs-

annamsrai and his party, which won 62 of the-then 76 parliament seats in the

US looks to lock in its defense partnerships with Asian allies

GIMHAE AIR BASE, South Korea, June 29, (AP): The United States wrapped up its first multidomain exercise with Japan and South Korea in the East China Sea on Saturday, a step forward in Washington's efforts to strengthen and lock in its security partnerships with key Asian allies in the face of growing threats from North Korea and China.

The three-day Freedom Edge increased the sophistication of previcated enough to integrate operations with the U.S. so that if, for example, South Korea were to detect a target, it could quickly relay details so Japanese or American counterparts could respond, said Ridzwan Rahmat, a Singapore-based analyst with the defense intelligence company Janes.

"That's the kind of interoperability that is involved in a typical war scenario," Rahmat said. "For trilateral exercises like this the intention



Zhao Leji, chairman of the National People's Congress (NPC) Stand-ing Committee, meets with Peruvian President Dina Ercilia Boluarte Zegarra in Beijing, capital of China, June 28. (Xinhua)

Several people flew from Venezuela for the first pre-trial hearing, which began Thursday in Argentina - a nation that has grappled with its own legacy of war crimes and has become committed to pursuing war criminals operating beyond its borders.

"Those testifying are people who have sought justice in Venezuela for a very long time, and have reached the end of where they can go," said Yasmine Chubin, a legal advocate at the Clooney Foundation, a nonprofit founded by George and Amal Clooney that provides free legal support to victims of human rights abuses. "They're continuing to fight to hold those responsible to account, and that led to us filing this case." Security forces used harsh tactics to clamp down on mass anti-government protests - arresting, torturing and killing those suspected of dissent. At least 43 people, including security officials and protesters, were killed in that 2014 crackdown.

MEXICO CITY: Mexico's incoming President Claudia Sheinbaum announced five additional members of her future cabinet, presenting a group of scientists and former colleagues including Luz Elena González, an expert in sustainable development, as the next secretary of energy. Sheinbaum highlighted González's experience in

renewable energy and in handling finances, an area that will prove useful in the department's relationship with state-run companies like oil giant Pemex and the Federal Electricity Commission. Previous to her appointment, González was in charge of Mexico City's finances.

Sheinbaum also appointed Raquel Buenrostro as secretary of public administration. Buenrostro, who served for more than two decades in government tax, treasury and economic agencies, was described by the future president as an "incorruptible woman" with 28 years of experience in public administration.

David Kershenobich, a renowned researcher, will be the next secretary of health. Jesús Antonio Esteva Medina, secretary of infrastructure of Mexico City, will be in charge of the department of communications and transportation.

Edna Elena Vega Rangel, who also previously worked for the Mexico City government, will head the secretary of agrarian, territorial, and urban development.

The day after the June 2 election, Sheinbaum confirmed that Finance Minister Rogelio Ramírez de la O had accepted to continue in his role, in an effort to calm investors after the country faced a sudden meltdown in the stock and currency markets.



Africa

'Parliament to open July 18': South African President Cyril Ramaphosa said Friday that Parliament will open for its next term on July 18 as he remains locked in negotiations with other parties to form a Cabinet well before then amid rifts in the new governing coalition.

The talks to seal the final details of a multi-party government and appoint a Cabinet have been going on for two weeks and have been marked by disagreements between Ramaphosa's African National Congress and the Democratic Alliance, the second biggest party, over how to divide up ministerial positions and portfolios.

Correspondence between the two former political foes has been leaked, showing the tensions.

In one of the letters, Ramaphosa wrote to DA leader John Steenhuisen accusing his party of "moving the goalposts" by increasing its demand from six Cabinet positions to eight, and thereby jeopardizing the coali-tion agreement. The DA says the ANC had reneged on a promise to allow it to take control of the important Department of Trade and Industry.

Ramaphosa and Steenhuisen have also had face-to-face meetings in recent days. The issues underline the warnings from

analysts that a coalition bringing the ANC and DA together to govern Africa's most industrialized country would be complicated. The ANC had been the ruling party and the DA the main opposition and its fiercest critic for more than 20 years before the May 29 election that created an unprecedented situation for South African politics. They have starkly different ideologies.

The ANC lost its dominance and the parliamentary majority it had held ever since the end of the apartheid system of white minority rule in 1994 in last month's election and has been forced to share power for the first time. It won 40% of the vote and the DA 21%. (AP)

'Burkina Faso needs aid': Burkina Faso faces an unprecedented crisis with 6.3 million people needing protection from deadly violence and aid to get back on their feet, UN humanitarians said on Friday.

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said it and its partners "are doing everything we can

2020 election. They will have a much less dominant position in the expanded parliament.

Official results had not been announced, due to the difficulties of gathering results from far-flung corners of the nation

Tallies by Mongolian media indicated the opposition Democratic Party won 42 seats - a big jump from 2020 as opposition parties capitalized on voter discontent and cut into the governing party's majority. The center-right HUN Party and two smaller parties looked set to take the remaining 16

"Through this election, people gave their evaluation on the past policy mistakes of the ruling party," said Democratic Party leader Gantumur Luvsannyam. Luvsannamsrai thanked even those who didn't vote for his party, saying that for the first time five to six parties had been elected to the parliament was a "new page" in Mongolian democracy.

"Having diverse and contrasting opinions is the essence of democracy. Your criticisms will be reflected in our actions," he said.

Julian Dierkes, a Mongolia expert at the University of British Columbia, said the Democratic Party's strong performance showed a desire for a change in personnel, but not in policy.

He called the result surprising given

to support the government's efforts to meet people's immediate needs and, crucially, to help crisis-affected people get back on their feet

Burkina Faso, on the south-central fringe

of the Sahel and one of the poorest countries in the world, has been hit with deadly terror attacks since the mid-2010s.

OCHA said that by working through the UN Humanitarian Response Plan, aid



Mongolian Prime Minister Oyun-Erdene Luvsannamsrai applauds after speaking at a press conference on the results of the parliamentary elections held at the Mongolian People's Party headquarters in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia on June 29. Mongolia's governing party won parliamentary elections on June 28 but by only a slim margin as the opposition made major gains, according to tallies by

the party and news media based on near-complete results. (AP)

ous exercises with simultaneous air and naval drills geared toward improving joint ballistic-missile defense, anti-submarine warfare, surveillance and other skills and capabilities.

The exercise, which is expected to expand in years to come, was also intended to improve the countries' abilities to share missile warnings - increasingly important as North Korea tests ever-more sophisticated systems.

Outside of Australia, Japan and South Korea are the only US partners in the region with militaries sophisti-

internal problems within the Democratic Party and its unimpressive campaign.

Also:

MANILA, Philippines: Philippine troops killed at least 10 suspected communist guerrillas in a clash in a remote northern area in the latest blow to a decades-old insurgency that has weakened considerably, with only about a thousand guerrillas remaining, military and security officials said Friday.

Army troops caught up with about 20 New People's Army guerrillas who were withdrawing from an earlier clash with government forces last week, sparking a firefight Wednesday that killed 10 rebels, including three commanders, near a village in Panis to develop the interoperability between the three armed forces so that they can fight better as a cohesive fighting force.

Such exercises also carry the risk of increasing tensions, with China regularly denouncing drills in what it considers its sphere of influence, and North Korea already slamming the arrival of the USS Theodore Roosevelt carrier group in the port of Busan home to South Korea's navy headquarters and its Gimhae Air Base - in preparation for Freedom Edge as "provocative" and "dangerous."

tabangan town in Nueva Ecija province, the army said.

Thirteen rifles and a pistol were recovered from the area of the fighting, which was near a key dam, it said. Troops were pursuing about 10 other guerrillas who withdrew from the remote area, regional army spokesperson Maj. Jimson Masangkay said by telephone.

Gen. Norwin Joseph Brig. Pasamonte, an army infantry brigade commander, commended the troops but expressed sadness over the rebel deaths. "The government did not fail in appealing to them to surrender and return to normal life," Pasamonte said in a statement, adding that the deaths should help convince the remaining guerrillas to give up.

organizations have assisted more than 730,000 people across Burkina Faso this vear. "While this is a good start, this represents just 19 percent of the 3.8 million people we are aiming to assist.'

The office said this year's 935 million US dollar plan is only 17 percent funded at 157 million dollars. (Xinhua)

African ministers unveil policy: African ministers launched the Regional Maritime Transport Policy for Eastern, Southern and Northern Africa to boost maritime security.

Salim Mvurya, Kenya's cabinet secretary for the Ministry of Mining, Blue Economy and Maritime Affairs, told a forum in Nairobi, the capital of Kenya, that the policy provides procedures to address emerging maritime security threats such as illicit drugs, piracy and armed robbery at sea by enhancing surveillance.

"The policy will help to foster a secure and safe maritime environment through regional collaboration and sustainable practices," Mvurya said during the third meeting of ministers responsible for shipping and maritime affairs of countries in eastern, southern and northern Africa.

According to Mvurya, the safety of the shipping sector is a key priority, given that ocean freight facilitates global trade by han-dling over 90 percent of worldwide commerce through the transportation of goods and resources. (Xinhua)

oil soars

The price of Kuwaiti oil went up 80 cents to USD 87.94 pb on Friday, compared to USD 87.14 pb the day before, said Kuwait Petroleum Corpora-tion (KPC) Saturday.

On a global scale, the price of the Brent crude futures' contracts went up two cents to USD 86.41 pb, while the West Texas Intermediate crude went down 20 cents to USD 81.54 pb. (KUNA)

Market Movements 28-06-2024

Change Closing pts Change Closing pts DUBAI DFMG +21.04 4,030.00 PAKISTAN - KSE 100 -191.49 78,373.13 - Nikkei 225 BRITAIN - FTSE 100 JAPAN +241.54 39.583.08 -15.56 8.164.12 PHILIPPINES -PSEi +21.33 6,411.91 EUROPE - Euro Stoxx 50 -8.58 4,894.02

Agency said in a preliminary report.

Finance ministers bolster OPEC Fund's capabilities

Kuwait's oil exports to Japan dip

Kuwait's crude oil exports to Japan in May declined 15.4 percent from a year earlier to 5.44 million barrels, or 175,000 barrels per day (bpd), down for the eighth consecutive month, government data showed Friday. Kuwait was Japan's third oil provider last month, supplying 8.3 percent

of the Asian nation's total crude imports, compared with 8.5 percent in

the same month of 2023, the Japanese Natural Resources and Energy

Agency said in a preliminary report. Japan's overall imports of crude oil slid 13.8 percent year-on-year to 2.11 million bpd in May, down for the sixth month in a row. Shipments from the Middle East accounted for 95.3 percent of the total, down 1.7 percentage points from the year before. The UAE remained in the top spot, but imports from the country fell 8.2 percent from a year earlier to 974,000 bpd, followed

by Saudi Arabia with 758,000 bpd, down 19.8 percent. (KUNA)

OPEC Fund expands financing reach to \$605 million

KUWAIT CITY, June 29: The finance ministers of the OPEC Fund for International Development have taken significant steps to bolster the Fund's capabilities and expand its portfolio through new financing amounting to \$605 million, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

This decision was reached at the 45th ministerial meeting of OPEC member states' finance ministers, where discussions centered on the Fund's future policies and programs

Dr. Abdul Hamid Al Khalifa, the Fund's President, highlighted its ambitious goals for sustainable development during the meeting.

He underscored the Fund's commitment to supporting global development objectives and emphasized the strong relations between the Fund and its host country, Austria

Al-Khalifa also announced plans to expand the Fund's headquarters in Austria to enhance its visibility and operational effectiveness.

According to a statement released by the Fund, the new financing includes loans

earmarked for key development initiatives such as global food security, environmental protection, climate projects, and vital infrastructure. Specifically, loans totaling \$487.5 million will be provided to the public sectors

of eleven countries --

Bangladesh: \$36 million, Bhutan: \$50 million, China: \$56.5 million, Guinea-Bissau: \$15 million, India: \$100 million, Lesotho: \$56 million, Morocco: \$100 million, Rwanda: \$20 million, Somalia: \$36 million,

Tanzania: \$50 million and Turkey: \$20 million.

Additionally, the ministers decided to extend loans to the private sector in various countries. For instance, Bosnia and Herzegovina will receive 12.5 million Euros (approximately \$13.35 million) to support small and medium-sized enterprises, including those led by women.

This move underscores the OPEC Fund's ongoing commitment to fostering sustainable development and supporting economic growth across its member states and beyond

Boursa Kuwait sees modest recovery on final trading day

Stock exchange market value drops by KD 387 mln

KUWAIT CITY, June 29: By the end of the week, the market value of the Kuwait Stock Exchange fell sharply by 387 million dinars to 41.173 billion dinars, down from approximately 41.558 billion dinars, reports Al-Sevassah daily.

This decline was driven by selling pressures that dominated the movements of the main indicators. The Premier Market Index closed the week at 7,576.25 points, marking a 1.01% decrease from the previous

week, with a loss of 77.33 points. Similarly, the General Market Index also decreased by 1.01% ending at 6,967.1 points after a loss of 71.38 points. The Main Market Index concludKuwait's struggles with high borrowing costs

GCC real estate sector faces challenges and opportunities

KUWAIT CITY, June 29: The real estate sector in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries is navigating various challenges and opportunities as it strives to attract foreign investment and achieve growth potential, reports Al-Qabas daily. The following is the overview of the current landscape

across some of the key GCC nations: Kuwait's real estate sector faced considerable challenges in 2023, marked by high borrowing costs and slow reforms. Transaction volumes saw a notable decline across residential and commercial sectors, with both sales and renting levels of activity across all sectors.

Following volatility around the 2022 FIFA World Cup, Qatar's real estate market has stabilized, showing signs of recovery in early 2024. Transaction volumes and values have seen positive growth, indicating a more stable and attractive environment.

Bahrain's real estate market continues to perform steadily, driven by strategic buyers focusing on mid-range properties and an increasing demand for luxury waterfront homes. This stability supports ongoing growth in the sector.

After facing challenges during and immediately after the COVID-19 pandemic, Oman is experiencing renewed

interest in its real estate potential. New projects are attract-

ing both residents and investors, signaling a positive outlook

OAPEC advances sustainable fuel production

Secretary General of Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC) Jamal Al-Loughani affirmed Thursday the importance of cooperating with countries that have great expertise

operating with countries that have great expertise in energy to reduce carbon emission. This came in Al-Loughani's statement to KUNA at the end of the Symposium on pathways to re-duce carbon emission in petroleum downstream industries, organized by OPAEC in collaboration with Saudi Ministry of Energy and Japan Coop-eration Center for Petroleum and Sustainable En-ergy (LCCP) in Biyadh ergy (JCCP) in Riyadh. Al-Loughani said that such seminars are an

opportunity to exchange ideas and recommen-

dations and present innovative solutions that contribute to reducing carbon emissions for the downstream petroleum industries, in addition to enhancing cooperation between participating institutions and keep pace with global trends towards climate change. The symposium held discussion that explored

options for reducing carbon emissions in the petroleum industries and reviewed projects being implemented to enhance the role of the petroleum industry in the field of producing sustainable, lowcarbon fuels, improving energy efficiency, as well as opportunities for using renewable energy and hydrogen. (KUNA)

Business

Other Voices

Nation looks to privatize oil services

Kuwait proposes new sovereign wealth funds for mega projects

By Kamel Al-Harami Independent Oil Analyst

The time has come to focus on the upcoming mega projects that need funds separate from our annual fiscal budget. This requires creating dedicated funds to finance our future domestic infrastructure projects.

Our new sovereign wealth funds must be made similar to that of Singapore's GIC and Te-

masek and Abu Dhabi's Al-Mubadala funds. Even though Kuwait's sovereign wealth fund is the oldest, dating back to the mid-1950s,

it is now necessary to separate huge projects in the annual budget. Previously, Kuwait relied on its own income, and resources were sufficient. However, with our current deficits in our oil income, it has become necessary to free the budget for running our daily operations.

We believe the funds should come from two main sources. Firstly, they should be generated through the privatization of noncore oil companies, specifically those involved in service sectors that do not impact the nation's wealth, crude oil production, or any volume-related commitments. This approach aims to facilitate and support the development of new mega projects using internal resources. Secondly, the funds must come from within the state by privatizing certain oil service companies that do not align with our core business activities. It is equally important to adhere to our constitution, ensuring clarity and lack of ambiguity. The funds must come exclusively from the sale of state-owned assets. We stress that only non-core oil services should be considered for privatization, similar to the privately-owned gas stations for cars. We have to expand such non-core activities including services like fueling services at the airport, home delivery of gas cylinders, and operations at the gas factory. This also encompasses the administrative functions of the Kuwait Oil Tanker Company's marine oil tanker agency, focusing on paperwork, documentation, and human resources management. Another example is the Ku-

wait Lube Oil Company, which can be sold to existing domestic companies. These small non-core entities are already being transferred between hands swiftly and with minimal costs and administrative activities. Private companies can efficiently manage these transitions, ensuring completion within less than a year.

Another significant non-core activity that has been operating at a loss for many years is the Kuwait Foreign Oil Investments Company. It is imperative to sell this entity immediately, without hesitation, to prevent further financial losses.

We now shift focus to the large oil servicing companies involved in refining, transportation, and petrochemical sectors, which were initially semi-private or fully privately owned. These include the Kuwait National Petroleum Company, Kuwait Oil Tankers Company, and Petrochemical Industries Company. These entities possess extensive experience and familiarity with the private sector.

These companies should be sold, and the cash generated should be used to form the foundation of using Kuwait's sovereign wealth fund for funding our mega projects. These projects include the development of Mubarak Port, proposed railway stations, metro expansions, and other domestic initiatives such as renewable energy-based electricity generation. The funds should come from our sovereign foreign investments and the proceeds from the sale of oil servicing companies, estimated to be around \$700 billion.



ed at 5,938.57 points, reflecting a weekly decline of 1.04% or 62.19 points.

Overall, the main market index registered a 1.71% decrease, equivalent to 100.1 points, settling at 5,746.51 points.

During the week, the market saw increased trading activity compared to the previous week due to fewer holiday sessions. Transactions surged by 116.29% to 59.61 thousand, while trading volumes rose by 67.39% to 695.19 million shares. The total trade value reached 192.94 million dinars, marking a 50.59% increase.

The market downturn was influenced by declines across 10 sectors, notably basic materials, which fell by 7.30%. The consumer services and insurance sectors saw minor gains of 0.68% and 0.46% respectively, while the healthcare sector remained stable.

al markets snowing negative trends

As the largest economy in the GCC, Saudi Arabia is actively implementing its Vision 2030 strategy, which includes ambitious goals to increase home ownership among citizens and attract international investors.

The introduction of the premium residency visa is aimed at opening the market to global investors. Despite initial gains, the real estate market is still in the early stages of this transformation.

The UAE, particularly Dubai, has shown robust activity in the real estate market, recording significant transaction volumes in the residential sector in early 2024. This momentum indicates a positive start to the year, reflecting increas-

individual stocks. Among "Ma'aden" and "Bayan" experienced the largest declines and gains respectively. Gulf Bank led in trading volume with 75.79 million shares traded, while "KFH" topped in liquidity with 36.75 million dinars, despite a slight decrease of 0.56%.

Overall, while challenges such as high borrowing costs and slow reforms persist in some GCC countries, there are also signs of stability and growth opportunities across various real estate sectors Each nation's strategic initiatives, like Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, are pivotal in shaping the future trajectory of their real estate markets and enhancing their attractiveness to global investors On the final trading day, the Kuwait

for the market.

Stock Exchange showed a modest recovery with the general index rising by 39.9 points (0.5%) to 6,967 points. The main market index increased by 35.6 points (0.6%) to 5,938 points, and the Premier Market Index rose by 43 points (0.5%) to 7,576.25 points. Sec-

tor performance varied, with technology leading the gains by 3.24% while basic materials saw a decline of 7.69%. Overall, 62 stocks rose during the

week led by "Tamdeen Investment Company," while 47 stocks, including "Boubyan Petrochemicals," declined. Sixteen stocks remained stable.

It perhaps is time for our future infrastructure to reap the benefits and enjoy the returns from our long-term investments in foreign markets, to be seen and celebrated by our citizens with pride.

email: naftikuwaiti@yahoo.com

Company celebrates five-decade legacy in real estate

Markaz affirms leadership in global real estate sector

KUWAIT CITY, June 29: As the global real estate landscape continues to evolve, Kuwait Financial Centre "Markaz" proudly reaffirms its prominent position as a leader in the international real estate sector. The company has executed over 95 projects worth over USD 2.3 billion since the beginning of its real estate activity spanning various markets and property types in the US and Europe. Markaz continues to demonstrate excellence in delivering value to investors through a blend of expertise, strategic partnerships, and innovative approaches.

"Our five-decade legacy positions Markaz as a trusted advisor, leveraging our global network to identify and capitalize on value-accretive opportunities," said Sami Shabshab, President of Mar-Gulf Management Inc., the international real estate arm of Markaz. "We maintain a dynamic investment strategy, constantly evaluating market trends to identify the sectors with the most compelling opportunities. We remain fundamentally optimistic on the long-term prospects of the logistics sector, even amidst a more challenging macroeconomic backdrop".

Shabshab elaborated: "The ongoing growth of e-commerce, coupled with the strategic realignment of global supply chains and the resulting surge in warehousing needs, presents a compelling investment opportunity. This confluence of trends creates a 'tripartite



Sami Shabshab

demand structure', characterized by robust and sustained demand, outpacing a relatively constrained supply, a dynamic that is likely to persist for the foreseeable future.

Recognizing the evolving lending environment, Markaz is strategically expanding its focus on structured debt solutions. By providing tailored financing solutions, Markaz unlocks value in complex situations, creating attractive investment opportunities previously inaccessible to traditional lenders. This approach complements Markaz's existing capabilities in acquisitions, development, and asset management, offering a comprehensive suite of real estate investment strategies.

Markaz is committed to further strengthening its network of strategic partners. These partnerships amplify expertise, unlock access to new deal flow, and enhance Markaz's ability to capitalize on emerging opportunities. Building on its successful track record, Markaz seeks to collaborate with best-in-class developers, inves-



Abdullatif Al-Nusif

tors, financial institutions, and government entities. Leveraging these valuable relationships, the company has gained access to prime opportunities and forged alliances that drive growth and innovation in the industry.

Over the past 12 months, the company has executed strategic real estate exits, generating positive returns for its investors amid a backdrop of global economic volatility. "Our meticulous planning, diligent execution, and unwavering focus on value maximization have resulted in solid internal rates of return (IRR) on these transactions," said Sami Shabshab. "We are proud of our ability to strategically time exits to optimize returns for our clients, as demonstrated by our recent successful exits from key industrial assets, generating a total exit value of USD 235.5 million."

Abdullatif W. Al-Nusif, Managing Director of Wealth Management & Business Development at Markaz stated: "Markaz sets itself apart with a relentless focus on client relationships and value creation. Our deep-rooted expertise in the US and European markets, bolstered by strategic alliances, allows us to navigate market fluctuations effectively and consistently deliver solid returns. The wealth management team collaborates closely with the international real estate team to identify lucrative opportunities that align with clients' goals, thereby optimizing their investment portfolios, driven by innovative investment solutions honed over fifty years. This synergy underscores Markaz's commitment to crafting tailored solutions that effectively meet client needs.'

Markaz has been active in the US real estate market since launching its first syndicated transaction there in 1977. Since 1988, Markaz has been conducting its real estate transactions through Mar-Gulf, its international real estate arm. Over these highly-active thirty-six years, Markaz has been involved in the ownership and development of real estate properties across industrial, storage, retail, residential, and office segments.

Looking ahead, Markaz remains committed to leveraging its strong network of partners and the expertise of its team to drive sustained results and innovation in the international real estate market.

With a focus on collaboration, creativity, and client-centricity, Markaz is poised to capitalize on emerging opportunities, and shape the future of global real estate.

Kuwait businesses seek fair pricing amid storage crisis

KUWAIT CITY, June 29: Business owners in Kuwait are facing significant challenges due to the acute shortage of suitable storage spaces and warehouses, exacerbated by exploitative practices that have seen rents double or more in permissible storage areas, reports Al-Qabas daily. This issue, long-standing and

worsening each year, recently came to a head following the Mangaf fire incident. The infrastructure for warehouses and available land has not kept pace with the growth of Kuwait's business environment and increasing project demands.

Mohammed Jassim Al-Wazzan, Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors of Meezan Holding Company, criticized the government's response, calling for a grace period of one to two years. During this time, he suggested establishing public warehouses for essential commodities, set at reasonable prices to prevent exploitation.

Riyadh Al-Baghli, General Manager of House Living Real Estate Development Company, emphasized that the fundamental solution lies in the government's provision of new, affordable lands dedicated to warehouse use. He proposed that if direct government investment is not feasible, partnering with private companies could be a viable approach to expand storage infrastructure without burdening the state.

Omar Al Nasser, General Manager of Tawazun Real Estate Company, stressed the urgent need for storage facilities in urban areas to meet rising demand. He highlighted that current offerings in Kuwait fall short of international standards, describing existing spaces as inadequate for meeting market needs.

Fahd Al-Arbash, President of the Kuwait Federation for Restaurants, Cafes and Food Equipment, pointed out the practical difficulties faced by small business owners needing smaller storage spaces, contrasting this with the current requirement for large-scale facilities. He called for revised regulations allowing storage in investment areas under controlled conditions, advocating fair pricing to prevent exploitation.

The overall sentiment among stakeholders is clear: there is an urgent need for comprehensive reforms in Kuwait's storage policies and infrastructure development. Addressing these issues effectively could alleviate financial burdens on businesses, ensure fair pricing for consumers, and bolster the economy while enhancing regulatory oversight to prevent exploitative practices.

BUSINESS

9

WB approves \$750 mln loan to boost Philippine recovery

The World Bank said on Sat-urday that it has approved a 750-million-U.S. dollar loan to strengthen the Philippine economy's recovery.

The Philippines Second Sus-tainable Recovery Develop-ment Policy Loan supports re-forms that increase investment in public service sectors, attract private investment in public infrastructure, particularly in domestic shipping, promote renewable energy, protect the en-vironment and improve climate resilience World Bank Senior Economist

Ralph van Doorn said the Philippine economy remains resilient despite ongoing global and do-mestic challenges. "The reforms supported by this lending program, if implemented, will encourage private investment, in-novation, and sustained growth," he said.

Through these reforms, Van Doorn said the Philippines can transition faster to a greener economy and achieve its environmental and climate objectives.

Given the Philippines' archipe-lagic nature, he added that marine transport is critical for trade and connecting its numerous islands and destinations, enabling efficient movement of goods and products. (Xinhua)

Czech central bank again cuts a key interest rate

The Czech Republic's central bank on Thursday cut its key inter-est rate for the fifth time in a row as inflation remains low and the economy is showing signs of recovery. The cut, which had been predicted by analysts, brought the interest rate down by a half-percentage point, to 4.75%.

The bank started to trim borrowing costs by a quarter-point on Dec. 21, the first cut since June 22, 2022. Further cuts of half a percentage point each time followed on Feb. 8, March 20 and May 2. Inflation declined to 10.7% in 2023 from 15.1% in 2022, according to the Czech Statistics Office, and dropped to the bank's target of 2.0% year-on-year in February, re-maining unchanged in March. It increased to 2.9% in April

before dropping to 2.6% in May. The Czech economy was up by 0.2% year-on-year in the first quarter of 2024, and increased by 0.3% compared with the last three months of the previous year, the figures released by Statistics Office on May 31 said. That came after the Czech economy contracted by 0.2% in

the last three months of 2023 compared with a year earlier. Central banks around the

world are leaning toward lowering borrowing costs as they judge whether toxic inflation has been sufficiently tamed. (AP)

Bahrain confab focuses on exploring latest trends, innovative approaches within CSR

Gulf Bank wins Best Sustainable Workplace Development Award

MANAMA, June 29: Gulf Bank participated in the Second Gulf International Conference on Corporate Social Responsibility 2024 in Bahrain, organized by the Bahrain CSR Society. The event, held under the theme "Strategic Practices for a Better Tomorrow" was held on June 26 and 27, 2024, and was attended by His Excellency the Minister of Social Development in the Kingdom of Bahrain, Osama bin Ahmed bin Khalaf Al Asfoor.

At the conference, the Gulf International Corporate Social Responsibility Awards 2024 were announced. Gulf Bank was honored with the esteemed "Best in Sustainable Development in the Workplace" award in recognition of its exceptional initiatives.

The conference focused on exploring the latest trends and innovative approaches within CSR, with the aim of fostering positive changes in both society and the environment. Through workshops, participants gained valuable insights and tools aimed at improving CSR programs and promoting sustainability principles

Ms. Nada Razzouqi, Deputy General Manager of Human Resources at Gulf Bank, expressed her happiness

FERENCE AND AWARD 2024 In the Hor ble Presence of Mr. Osama Social Dev

Najla Al-Issa and Nada Al-Razzouqi receiving the award.

and appreciation for Gulf Bank's achievement in winning the "Best in Sustainable Development in the Workplace" award. She praised the Bahrain CSR Societyfor organizing such an impactful event.

Ms.Razzouqi highlighted Gulf Bank's commitment to sustainability, noting its success in increasing female leadership from 10% to 30% over the last decade. She also emphasized Gulf Bank's pioneering role in eliminating gender discrimination in job benefits, and its early adoption of the UN Women's Empowerment



Principles in Kuwait.

She underscored that empowering women, youth, and individuals with disabilities is a fundamental part of Gulf Bank's five-year strategy. She noted the ongoing efforts to further enhance these initiatives, which have contributed to Gulf Bank being recognized as a leading employer in the Kuwaiti financial sector among citizens

Gulf Bank's vision is to be the leading Kuwaiti Bank of the Future. The Bank is constantly engaging and empowering its employees as part of



Najla Al-Issa and Nada Razzouqi in a group photo with representatives of the Kuwaiti authorities participating in the conference.

Nada Razzougi:

A new recognition of Gulf Bank's role in embedding sustainability principles within the bank and beyond.

This reinforces our commitment to upholdour pioneering role in promoting sustainability principles and creating a workplace environment known for its diversity and inclusivity. Gulf Bank is a leading employer in the Kuwaiti financial

ee's role in delivering customer ex-

cellence and serving the community at large. With its extensive network of branches and innovative digital



Najla Al-Issa and Nada Razzougi.

services, Gulf Bank is able to give its customers the choice of how and where to conduct their banking transactions, all while ensuring a simple and seamless banking experience.

Gulf Bank is committed to maintaining robust developments in sustainability at environmental, social and governance levels through diverse sustainability initiatives, strategically selected to benefit the Bank both internally and externally. Gulf Bank supports Kuwait Vision 2035 "New Kuwait" and works with various parties to achieve it.

US 'growth' for Q1 revised up slightly

WASHINGTON, June 29, (AP): The American economy expanded at a 1.4% annual pace from January through March, the slowest quarterly growth since spring 2022, the government said Thursday in a slight upgrade from its previous estimate. Consumer spending grew at just a 1.5% rate, down from an initial estimate of 2%, in a sign that high interest rates may be taking a toll on the economy.

The Commerce Department had previously estimated that the gross domestic product - the economy's total output of goods and services - advanced at a 1.3% rate last quarter.

The first quarter's GDP growth marked a sharp pullback from a strong 3.4% pace during the final three months of 2023. Still, Thursday's report showed that the January-March slowdown was caused mainly two factors - a surge in imports and a drop in business inventories - that can bounce around from quarter to quarter and don't necessarily reflect the underlying health of the economy. Imports shaved 0.82 percentage point off first-quarter growth. Lower inventories subtracted 0.42 percentage point. Picking up the slack was business investment, which the government said rose at a 4.4% annual pace last quarter, up from its previous estimate of 3.2%. Higher investment in factories and other nonresidential buildings and in software and other types of intellectual property helped boost the increase. After growing at a solid annual pace of more than 3% in the second half of 2023, consumer spending decelerated sharply last quarter. Spending on appliances, furniture and other goods fell by a 2.3% annual rate, while spending on travel, restaurant meals and other services rose at a 3.3% rate. Chris Zaccarelli, chief investment officer for the Independent Advisor Alliance, called the downshift in consumer spending "a cause for concern. Consumers account for around 70% of U.S. economic activity "The economy remained resilient in the first quarter," said Gregory Daco, chief economist at the tax and consulting firm EY. But "private-sector demand growth was cooling, led by more consumer prudence. Importantly though, the economy is not retrenching, with business investment retaining moderate momentum.²

China ramps up financial support for SMEs to spur economic vitality

Data-driven approach to lending adopted by many banks

EU's competition boss signals AI scrutiny for Microsoft-OpenAI deal and Google

LONDON, June 29, (AP): The Eu- more broadly. It's using the bloc's The stepped-up scrutiny high-

sector among citizens. an inclusive and diversified workplace in recognition of every employ-

economic vitality.

There has been a notable increase in the cap for inclusive micro and small loans from 10 million yuan (about 1.4 million U.S. dollars) to 20 million yuan per borrower, and refinancing initiatives for agricultural and small businesses have seen interest rate reductions, further alleviating financial burdens on these crucial economic entities.

BEIJING, June 29, (Xin-

hua): China has signifi-

cantly enhanced financial

support measures aimed

at small and medium-sized

enterprises (SMEs) to boost

At the end of May, the outstanding inclusive micro and small loans amounted to 31.56 trillion yuan, marking a 19.3 percent year-on-year increase

In April, China set up a re-lending program worth 500 billion yuan to promote technological innovation and industrial upgrades, with 100 billion yuan specially designated to help boost the growth of tech firms.

An initial list of nearly 7,000 qualified enterprises under the program was sent to banks recently.

"We immediately reviewed the credit and business needs of relevant clients upon receiving the list," said Zhang Xiaorui, deputy head of the Shandong branch of the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (ICBC). The bank has established green channels and streamlined services to ensure businesses receive the funds timely.

One such beneficiary, an electro-

and vulnerability to risks. To address this problem, Chinese lenders have leveraged digital technologies to reduce risks and offer tailored services to SMEs.

east China's Shandong Province,

completed the process for its 1-mil-

lion-yuan loan within one day, effec-

tively easing its cash flow pressures.

cessing affordable financing often

stem from their insufficient collateral

The challenges SMEs face in ac-

Despite lacking tangible assets suitable for traditional collateral, a manufacturer of high-performance engineering plastics in east China's Zhejiang Province recently secured a 2 million yuan credit line from Zhejiang E-Commerce Bank. The bank made the decision to grant the loan after using advanced data analytics to evaluate industry chain dynamics and operational risks.

According to Chen Kai, vice general manager of the bank's industry finance department, nearly 30 percent of the credit recipients were involved in pioneering scientific research and technological development.

This data-driven lending approach has been adopted by many other banks in China. The Export-Import Bank of China has used big data on trade to tailor online products for micro and small businesses engaged in international trade. The ICBC and the Bank of China have launched technology finance centers to bolster support for technology-driven SMEs.

Apart from bank loans, China also encourages SMEs to take advantage of direct financing channels, including the capital market and venture capital (VC) investment.

The government recently released mechanical company in Yantai in a string of policies to bolster VC in-

ropean Union is escalating its scrutiny of the artificial intelligence industry, including taking a fresh look into Microsoft's multibillion-dollar partnership with OpenAI, a top EU official said Friday.

The European Commission, the bloc's executive arm, started reviewing the deal last year to see whether it broke EU merger rules but dropped it after concluding Microsoft hadn't gained control of OpenAI, Margrethe Vestager, the commission's executive vice-president for competition policy, said in a speech.

"Microsoft has invested \$13 billion in OpenAI over the years," she said "But we have to make sure that partnerships like this do not become a disguise for one partner getting a controlling influence over the other.'

She signalled that the commission would take another tack to examine the deal, and the industry

vestment, with specific measures to support the growth of SMEs through patent industrialization. Such equity financing is better suited to spur innovation activities during the highrisk research and development phase, said Zhou Guanping, a researcher at China Everbright Group.

The Beijing Stock Exchange, established in November 2021, is also dedicated to serving innovative antitrust rules, which target abusive behavior by companies that have a dominant market position.

The commission sent information requests in March to big AI players including Microsoft, Google, Facebook and TikTok, reviewed those replies and is "now sending a follow-up request for information on the agreement between Microsoft and OpenAI," Vestager said.

The EU wants "to understand whether certain exclusivity clauses could have a negative effect on competitors," she said.

A Microsoft spokesman said, "We appreciate the European Commission's thorough review and its conclusion that Microsoft's investment and partnership with OpenAI does not give Microsoft control over the company. We stand ready to respond to any additional questions the European Commission may have.'

OpenAI didn't respond immediately to a request for comment.

SMEs.

Among the 249 listed companies on the exchange, SMEs account for over 80 percent, underscoring the pivotal role of public equity markets in fostering innovation and expansion among SMEs. The total capitalization of the exchange has surpassed 330 billion yuan.

In addition to enhanced financing channels for SMEs, experts have also

lights how European Union regulators have been pacesetters for the global push to rein in big tech companies, including the major AI players. The EU's led the field with its AI Act, which is set to take effect soon and is the world's first comprehensive set of regulations for AI.

Vestager said the bloc was also concerned about consumer choices for foundation models, which is the technology that underpins generative AI systems like chatbots.

She said EU regulators have sent information requests "to better understand the effects of Google's arrangement with Samsung" to pre-install Gemini Nano on some devices from the South Korean tech company. Gemini Nano is the smallest version of Google's Gemini AI foundation model.

"And we have a number of other preliminary antitrust investigations ongoing into various practices in AIrelated markets," she added.

called for more efforts to ensure that the financing is more sound and sustainable

Hou Liming, a researcher at the Renmin University of China, said that work should be done to further reduce the liquidity pressure of SMEs due to delinquent receivables, promote their digitalization, and launch more insurance products targeting SME risks.

Prices for physical goods actually fell 0.4% from April to May

Fed's preferred inflation gauge shows price pressures easing further

WASHINGTON, June 29, (AP): A measure of prices that is closely tracked by the Federal Reserve suggests that inflation pressures in the U.S. economy are continuing to ease.

Friday's Commerce Department report showed that consumer prices were flat from April to May, the mildest such performance in more than four years. Measured from a year earlier, prices rose 2.6% last month, slightly less than in April.

Excluding volatile food and energy prices, so-called core inflation rose 0.1% from April to May, the smallest increase since the spring of 2020, when the pandemic erupted and shut down the economy. And compared with a year earlier, core prices were up 2.6% in May, the lowest increase in more than three

years. Prices for physical goods actually fell 0.4% from April to May. Gasoline prices, for example, dropped 3.4%, furniture prices 1% and the prices of recreational goods and vehicles 1.6%. On the other hand, prices for services, which include items like restaurant meals and airline fares, ticked up 0.2%.

The latest figures will likely be welcomed by the Fed's policymakers, who have said they need to feel confident that inflation is slowing sustainably toward their 2% target before they'd start cutting interest rates. Rate cuts by the Fed, which most economists think could start in September, would lead eventually to lower borrowing rates for consumers and businesses.

"If the trend we saw this month

continues consistently for another two months, the Fed may finally have the confidence necessary for a rate cut in September," Olu Šonola, head of U.S. economic research at Fitch Ratings, wrote in a research note.

The Fed raised its benchmark rate 11 times in 2022 and 2023 in its drive to curb the worst streak of inflation in four decades. Inflation did cool substantially from its peak in 2022. Still, average prices remain far above where they were before the pandemic, a source of frustration for many Americans and a potential threat to President Joe Biden's reelection bid.

During Thursday night's presidential debate, Donald Trump attacked Biden's record on inflation. The presumptive Republican nominee asserted that Biden inherited low rates of inflation when he entered office in January 2021 but that prices "blew up under his leadership."

While inflation was in fact ultralow at the start of the Biden presidency, that was largely because the nation was still recovering from the brutal Covid recession, which flattened the economy. Once the economy began surging back to life with unexpected speed, causing severe shortages of goods and labor, inflation soared.

Friday's price figures added to signs that inflation pressures are continuing to ease, though more slowly than they did last year.

The Fed tends to favor the inflation gauge that the government issued Friday - the personal consumption expenditures price index - over the better-known consumer price index. The PCE index tries to account for changes in how people shop when inflation jumps. It can capture, for example, when consumers switch from pricey national brands to cheaper store brands.

Like the PCE index, the latest consumer price index showed that inflation eased in May for a second straight month. It reinforced hopes that the acceleration of prices that occurred early this year has passed.

The much higher borrowing costs that followed the Fed's rate hikes, which sent its key rate to a 23-year high, were widely expected to tip the nation into recession. Instead, the economy has kept growing, and employers have kept hiring.

Lately, though, the economy's momentum has appeared to flag,

with higher rates seeming to weaken the ability of some consumers to keep spending freely. On Thursday, the government reported that the economy expanded at a 1.4% annual pace from January through March, the slowest quarterly growth since 2022. Consumer spending, the main engine of the economy, grew at a tepid 1.5% annual rate.

Friday's report also showed that consumer spending and incomes both picked up in May, encouraging signs for the economy. Adjusted for inflation, spending by consumers - the principal driver of the U.S. economy - rose 0.3% last month after having dropped 0.1% in April.

After-tax income, also adjusted for inflation, rose 0.5%. That was the biggest gain since September 2020.

What's On

Service allows sending and receiving money instantly and conveniently

NBK introduces WAMD instant payment service on its mobile banking app

KUWAIT CITY, June 29: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) always seeks to enhance its digital services provided customers via the NBK Mobile Banking App. In this context, the bank announced introducing Instant Payment Service (WAMD) through the app starting from 30th of June 2024, for smooth and hassle-free money transfers.

The service comes within K-Net's implementation of a new domestic account to account instant payments scheme in Kuwait under the authority and supervision of the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK). payments system

The instant (WAMD) (WAMD) pro-vides added value and quality to the national payment infrastructure capabilities. It also serves as a safe and advanced payment option that caters to the needs of different customer

Al Mutawa

digital transformation in Kuwait by increasing the volume of electronic financial transactions

segments,

while advancing

By introducing this service on its Mobile Banking App, NBK aims to gain a high level of performance for more customer satisfaction, as well as providing a reliable and secured service (users need a verification code during registration to the service).

The instant payment service to be provided on the NBK Mobile Banking App offers an easy way to transfer money as all customers need is a valid mobile number of the beneficiary to send the money. It also provides straightforward transactions, as customers need to input the beneficiary's mobile number, transfer amount, purpose, as well as any other notes, and

You Only Need the Mobile Number to Send and Receive Money With the New WAMD Service



agree to the terms and conditions be-

To avail the WAMD service via the NBK Mobile Banking App, customer needs to register to the service and link one bank account with it, to be able to send, receive and request money.

Commenting on service launch, Abdullah Al Mutawa. Head of Funds Transfer & Wealth Management Operations at National Bank of Kuwait said: "NBK is a trailblazer in adopting the most advanced services that bolster its leadership in providing the latest digital banking solutions in instant payments in Kuwait.

"We make unwavering efforts to keep pace with customers' everevolving needs and to live up to their growing expectations. We also strive to meet their preferences within our commitment to provide top-notch and highly advanced products and services," he added.

WAMD service

fore executing the transaction.

Through the NBK Mobile Banking App, NBK aims to offer customers a secure platform to conveniently manage their finances at any given moment. This service facilitates a wide range of banking activities, including opening new accounts, monitoring transactions on accounts and credit cards, accessing accumulated NBK Miles and NBK Rewards Program points, settling credit card dues, making payments for electronic bills, locating the nearest NBK Branches, ATMs, and CDMs across Kuwait, submitting requests for account statements, updating personal information, as well as toll-free numbers to call when they are abroad to reach

the bank for any help/inquiry. Customers can easily download the NBK Mobile Banking App, which is currently available on various platforms including the App Store, Google Play, and Huawei AppGallery.

Weyay Bank introduces 'WAMD' by KNET for

Bank simplifies money transfers with new digital service

easier & more convenient online transactions

KUWAIT CITY, June 29: Weyay Bank announces its easiest and most convenient way to send and receive money "WAMD" through KNET under the authority and supervision of the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK). This feature allows customers to seamlessly send and receive money using only the recipient's mobile number, without the need to provide any bank account details.

"We are always striving to enhance the banking experience for our customers.Being the first digital bank in Kuwait, we have been the pioneer to quickly adapt our mobile app to this instant payment feature," said Amal Al-Duwaisan, Head of Weyay Bank. "WAMD" is a game-changer, making money transfers

Weyay more convenient. secure, and accessible than ever before." We are also fully aware of our customers' tendency to value convenience and security more than anything else when Al-Duwaisan it comes to their

financial online transactions. Considering the new feature "WAMD", it is a testament to our commitment to delivering innovative solutions that cater to the evolving needs of our customers.

The new feature leverages the latest advancements in financial technology to provide a seamless and user-friend-



Weyay Bank launches 'WAMD' by KNET

ly money transfer solution. Customers can now register with "WAMD" through the Weyay app in one step that requires a customer's review and confirmation of their contact details, i.e. name and mobile number, to be able to start sending, receiving, and refunding money simply by entering the recipient's mobile number, eliminating the need to remember or share sensitive bank account information.

What makes "WAMD" a more convenient way to receive money from others is that customers can request money through a single tap in the Weyay app instead of generating payment links.

Bank partners with 'Wiyak'

Integrating "WAMD" into the Weyay app not only does streamline the money transfer process, but also enhances the overall security of financial transactions by eliminating the risk of unauthorized access or misuse.

The new feature is now available for all Weyay app users, empowering them to make instant payments anytime, anywhere.

With its up-to-date features, userfriendly app interface, and commitment to digital banking excellence, Weyay Bank is poised to redefine the future of banking. Download the Weyay Bank app to experience the convenience of online transactions nowadays.

Bank announces new offers and campaigns for customers

ABK launches family banking package in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, June 29: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) has recently launched the first family package of its kind in Kuwait's banking sector that is designed to fulfill all family members' needs

The new package reflects ABK's proficiency in innovating products that meet cus-



ing needs and its persistence in attracting new customers and offering them high quality services which strengthen its competitive position in the





ABK's family banking package

Commenting on this occasion, Johair Marafi, General Manager of Retail Banking at ABK, said, "This introduction stems from our keenness to customize banking services that address each family member's need, including domestic labor. We aspire to be customers' number one choice for conducting banking transactions under one roof.

ing needs of all segments in Kuwaiti society.

She further mentioned that the Family Banking package affirms ABK's high level of innovation as well as reflects its commitment and continuous efforts to surprise customers with products, services and banking solutions that offer exclusive benefits which offer convenience and comfort.

Marafi continued, "Attracting a diverse pool of customers from diverse segments and age groups is a priority for ABK. We therefore strive to launch several worthwhile offers and promotional campaigns to reward them with exclusive benefits in cooperation with various business s in Kuwait ' ' She pointed out that the Bank continues to remain up to date with the latest developments in order to develop the best banking products and solutions in the market. Concluding her statement, Marafi invited everyone to follow ABK's official website and pages on social media platforms to learn more about all the offers, campaigns and latest products launched throughout the vear.

KIB introduces free round-trip airport limo rides for 'Visa Infinite' credit card holders

KUWAIT CITY, June 29: As part of its ongoing commitment to providing exceptional value and exclusive benefits to its elite segment, Kuwait International Bank (KIB) has announced an exclusive new offer for its Visa Infinite Credit Card premium customers. KIB is offering free round-trip airport limousine rides, fully covered by the Bank, through its trusted partner Wiyak

Commenting on the offer, Khalid Al Hulaibi, Segments Manager at KIB, said: "Our Bank continually strives to reward its premium Visa Infinite credit card holders and enhance the value proposition for KIB's Black segment. This exclusive offer is our way of showing appreciation for their loyalty and providing them with the highest level of convenience and comfort. We understand that our customers lead busy lives and deserve to travel with ease and luxury. This new benefit ensures that from the moment they leave their homes to the time they return, their journey is as smooth and enjoyable as possible."



a wide range of exclusive benefits designed to enhance their travel and shopping experiences. These include up to 5% cash back on all purchases, free domestic and international transfers, comprehensive travel insurance for cardholders and their families, a 50% discount on safe deposit boxes, and up to 15% discount on all Wiyak chauffeured rides and rentals. Furthermore, the Visa Lounge Key feature grants access to over 1,000 lounges worldwide, with the possibility to invite a guest for free, providing a comfortable and quiet space to relax. Cardholders can also benefit from up to 8% discount on Booking.com, 12% cash back on Agoda. com bookings, and 20% discounts at Jumeirah Resorts. It is worth noting that KIB continues to reward its customers through the year-long seasonal campaigns and other offers that enhance their banking experience as well as meet their daily needs and aspirations. The Bank remains committed to providing innovative banking solutions and exceptional customer service, living up to its main slogan 'Bank for Life'

Johair Marafi Kuwait.

Amongst its numerous benefits, the Family Banking package provides free delivery of banking documents, an exclusive package from STC for two family members, six additional free prepaid cards, one additional free credit card, one free safety box, and one free establishment of permanent transfer order once per year.

Marafi elaborated that earning customer satisfaction requires hard work around the clock, indicating that ABK strives to continuously develop its products to fulfil the evolv-

Visa Infinite credit cardholders can now enjoy the convenience and luxury Khalid Al Hulaibi, Segments Manager at KIB.

of a complimentary limo ride to and from the airport. To take advantage of this offer, customers simply need to call or WhatsApp Wiyak at 22211221 to book their ride at least 24 hours prior to their departure date.

In addition to this new offer, KIB Visa Infinite credit cardholders enjoy



DAFZ Malabar Gold & Diamonds office inauguration

Key figures inaugurate supply chain office

Malabar Gold & Diamonds enhances international operations with new supply chain office in Dubai Airport Free Zone (DAFZ)

KUWAIT CITY, June 29: Malabar Gold & Diamonds, the sixth-largest jewellery retailer, has opened its new state-of-the-art supply chain office in Dubai Airport Free Zone (DAFZ). Ms. Amna Lootah, Director General, Dubai Airport Free Zone (DAFZ) inaugurated the new office in the presence of Mr. M P Ahammed, Chairman, Malabar Group; Mr. K P Abdul Salam, Vice Chairman, Malabar Group; Mr. Shamlal Ahamed, Managing Director - International Operations; Mr. Asher O, Managing Director - India Operations; Mr. Mayinkutty C, Senior Director, Ma-labar Group; Mr. Faisal A K, Head of Manufacturing, Malabar Gold & Diamonds; Mr. Aparesh Chatterjee, Head - Merchandising & SCM (Diamond & Studded); Mr. Arif Abdulhamid AlKhoori, Senior Vice President – Customer Care, DAFZ; other key officials from DAFZ, Malabar Gold & Diamonds' management team members and well-wishers. The new officewill serve as the cornerstone of the brand's international studded supply chain operations.

'We've successfully operated out of DAFZ since 2020, benefitting from its numerous strategic advantages, including access to world-class infrastructure, unparalleled convenience, and seamless connectivity to both GCC and global markets. Additionally, the tax incentives offered by DAFZ significantly enhance our financial and operational efficiency. Moreover, our commitment to responsibility and sustainability aligns well with DAFZ's eco-friendly initiatives and support for sustainable business practices,' said Mr

MP Ahammed, Chairman of Malabar Group.

Spanning 6,000 square feet, the new office will bolster DAFZ's pivotal role in supporting Malabar Gold & Diamonds' current and future international operations. DAFZ's state-of-the-art infrastructure and facilities enable streamlined logistics operations for the brand, improving its overall supply chain efficiency.

The new office will house approximately 80 management team members and will also include a product development centre with a state-of-the-art design studio, emphasizing the brand's focus on innovation in its designs. Malabar Gold & Diamonds has over 350 showrooms in 13 countries, as well as multiple offices, design centres, wholesale units, and factories in India, the Middle East, the Far East, the USA, the UK, Canada, and Australia.

KFH awards cash prizes to 'Al-Rabeh' draw winners

KUWAIT CITY, June 29: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) announced the winners of the Al-Rabeh draw with 20 customers winning cash prizes worth KD1,500 each for the 24th and 25th week of 2024.

The winners of KD 1,500 each are: Nasser Al-Hamdan, Nawal Al-Daihani, Ebraheem Al-Saeedi, Khaled Al-Azmi, Ayedh Al-Ajmi, Maaioof Al-Ferdan, Mahdi Al-Ajmi, Hamad Al-Hussaini, Ammar Al-Ammari, Naseem Draghma, Prashik Parvekar, Abdulqader Al-Khamees, Abdullah Al-Hunayan, Saleh Al-Sabih, Esmael Al-Saleh, Saad Al-Ajmi, Alia Al-Fadhli, Hajed Al-Rasheedi, Aabed Al-Rasheedi, Hussain Giyori.

The AlRabeh campaign provides prizes and draws that offer customers several chances of winning "weekly, monthly and quarterly". The campaign crowns 536 winners throughout the year.

The draw took place under the supervision of a representative from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

The campaign is part of KFH's ongoing efforts to offer exceptional products and services that meet customers' aspirations, enhance the Bank's leadership in the local and global markets, as well as reflect its excellence in offering innovative banking solutions as per the highest quality standards.

The Al-Rabeh account is a salary account available to customers wishing to transfer their salaries and manage their personal accounts. Customers can open Al-Rabeh account in any of KFH branches in Kuwait, or through the Bank's online channels. The account can be opened in the Kuwaiti Dinar and is targeted for customers wishing to transfer their salaries and manage

their personal accounts. Salary transfer is a prerequisite for customers to enter the draw provided that the transfer of salary to Al-Rabeh account is constant.

Regarding the terms and conditions of the prizes and draws, a customer is able to deposit 3 salaries during the 3 months prior to the draw, and the minimum balance of the account should not be less than KD 50 at the end of each month during the 3 months prior to the draw. Ten draws take place on a weekly basis for amount of K.D 1,500 for 10 winners each, 1 KG of KFH gold will be drawn monthly for one winner and K.D 25,000 for one winner every quarter, reaching a total number of 536 winners during the year.

KFH is keen to further meet customers' requirements and aspirations and their increasing needs as well as offer innovative and modern services, therefore achieving customer satisfaction, which is one of the fundamentals at KFH. The Bank has achieved a qualitative shift in the level of financial services by utilizing technology.



The campaign visual

Martin Mull, hip comic and actor from 'Roseanne,' dies at 80

LOS ANGELES, June 29, (AP): Martin Mull, whose droll, esoteric comedy and acting made him a hip sensation in the 1970s and later a beloved guest star on sitcoms including "Roseanne" and "Arrested Development," has died, his daughter said Friday.

Mull's daughter, TV writer and comic artist Maggie Mull, said her father died at home on Thursday after "a valiant fight against a long illness.

Mull, who was also a guitarist and painter, came to national fame with a recurring role on the Norman Lear-created satirical soap opera "Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman," and the starring role in its spinoff, "Fernwood Tonight."

"He was known for excelling at every creative discipline imagina-ble and also for doing Red Roof Inn commercials," Maggie Mull said in an Instagram post. "He would find that joke funny. He was never not funny. My dad will be deeply missed by his wife and daughter, by his friends and coworkers, by fellow artists and comedians and musicians, and-the sign of a truly exceptional person-by many, many dogs."

Known for his blonde hair and well-trimmed mustache. Mull was born in Chicago, raised in Ohio and Connecticut and studied art in Rhode Island and Rome.

His first foray into show business was as a songwriter, penning the

Variety

1970 semi-hit "A Girl Named Johnny Cash" for singer Jane Morgan. He would combine music and comedy in an act that he brought to hip Hollywood clubs in the 1970s.

"In 1976 I was a guitar player and sit-down comic appearing at the Roxy on the Sunset Strip when Norman Lear walked in and heard me," Mull told The Associated Press in 1980.

"He cast me as the wife beater on 'Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman.' Four months later I was spun off on my own show."

His time on the Strip was memorialized in the 1973 country rock classic "Lonesome L.A. Cowboy" where the Riders of the Purple Sage give him a shoutout along with music luminaries Kris Kristofferson and Rita Coolidge.

Sensibilities

"I know Kris and Rita and Marty Mull are hangin' at the Troubadour," the song says.

On "Fernwood Tonight" (sometimes styled as "Fernwood 2 Night"), he played Barth Gimble, the host of a local talk show in a midwestern town and twin to his "Mary Hartman" character. Fred Willard, a frequent collaborator with very similar comic

sensibilities, played his sidekick. It was later revamped as "America 2 Night" and set in Southern California.

He would get to be a real talk show host as a substitute for Johnny Carson on "The Tonight Show.'

Mull often played slightly sleazy, somewhat slimy and often smarmy characters as he did as Teri Garr's boss and Michael Keaton's foe in 1983's "Mr. Mom." He played Colonel Mustard in the 1985 movie adaptation of the board game "Clue," which, like many things Mull appeared in, has become a cult classic.

The 1980s also brought what many thought was his best work, "A History of White People in America," a mockumentary that first aired on Cinemax. Mull co-created the show and starred as a "60 Minutes" style investigative reporter investigating all things milquetoast and mundane. Willard was again a co-star.

He wrote and starred in 1988's "Rented Lips" alongside Robert Downey Jr., whose father, Robert Sr., directed.

His co-star Jennifer Tilly said in an X post Friday that Mull was 'such a witty charismatic and kind person.'

In the 1990s he was best known for his recurring role on several seasons on "Roseanne," in which he played a warmer, less sleazy boss to the title character, an openly gay man whose partner was played by Willard, who died in 2020.







This image released by Warner Bros. Pictures shows Kevin Costner in a scene from 'Horizon: An American Saga-Chapter I.' (AP)

Film



SANTA FE, N.M.: A court ruling on Friday put an involuntary manslaughter case against Alec Baldwin on track for trial in early July as a judge denied a request to dismiss the case on complaints that key evidence was damaged by the FBI during forensic testing.

Judge Mary Marlowe Sommer sided with prosecutors in rejecting a motion to dismiss the case. Defense attorneys had argued

that the gun in the fatal shooting was heavily damaged during FBI forensic testing before it could be examined for possible modifications or problems that might exonerate the actor-producer.

The ruling removes one of the last hurdles before prosecutors can bring the case to trial with jury selection scheduled for July 9 in Santa Fe.

At trial, attorneys plan to call on witnesses from a court-approved list of more than 60 people. They include film director Joel Souza, who was wounded in the shooting as well as assistant director Dave Halls, who earlier pleaded no contest to negligent use of a deadly weapon, and an array of first responders, investigators, firearms experts and close-range witnesses to the shooting.

Baldwin isn't listed but has the right to testify at his own trial.

During a rehearsal on the set of the Western film "Rust" in 2021, Baldwin pointed a gun at cinematographer Halyna Hutchins when the revolver went off, killing her and injuring director Souza as the bullet became lodged in his shoulder. Baldwin has maintained that he pulled back the gun's hammer but not the trigger and has pleaded not guilty.

The FBI conducted an accidental discharge test on the gun by striking it from several angles with a rawhide mallet, eventually breaking the gun. Prosecutors plan to present evidence at trial that they say shows the firearm "could not have fired absent a pull of the trigger" and was working properly before the shooting.

Baldwin has twice been charged in Hutchins' death. Prosecutors dismissed an earlier charge, then refiled it after receiving a new analysis of the revolver that Baldwin pointed at Hutchins. (AP)

NEW YORK: Eagles singer **Don** Henley filed a lawsuit in New

Costner delivers a spectacularly unsubtle epic

'Horizon,' bold overstuffed Western saga

By Mark Kennedy

There's a scene deep into Kevin Costner's new Western when he and a woman are fleeing bad guys on horseback. They pause at a jaw-dropping vista and he turns to her: "You just gotta keep going," he tells her.

That should be the slogan of "Horizon: An American Saga - Chapter 1," the initial three-hour salvo in what could morph into a four-part epic about the West that could tax even the biggest cowboy fan.

Give Costner - co-writer, director, producer - his due. This is a labor of love he's been thinking about since the 1980s and he has skin in the game: He took out a mortgage on his 10-acre home in Santa Barbara, California. Well, one of his homes, at least. He's not a total idiot.

"Chapter 1" - "Chapter 2" is to be released in August and parts three and four depend on if folks keep going - is a sprawling, often unwieldy placesetter, introducing dozens of characters in different parts of the West who, one has to assume, will interact at some point. If they survive, that is.

It's a spectacularly unsubtle movie, from the opening moment when a group of ants on a hill of dirt are crushed by a surveyor's wooden stake. If there's any doubt what we must feel, listen to John Debney's ponderous, pretentious score, with its criminal overuse of cellos.

Costner scrambles the plot - crafted by him and Jon Baird - almost immediately by offering a climactic battle scene within the first half hour, one in which a small white settlement in Arizona's San Pedro Valley (thanks, southern Utah!) is sneak-attacked by Apaches during an innocent dance.

It's a slaughter and it lasts way too long - savagery on one side, noble victims on the other. Mothers are struck by arrows while carrying their babes, unarmed musicians killed without a thought. "Ready son?" asks a dad to his teenage son, handing him a rifle and facing certain death. "I think so, dad," comes the plucky reply. In the aftermath, a mother cradles the corpse of her son and talks to it.

This slaughter shoots off a few story strands some survivors (like spunky new widow Sienna Miller and her daughter) find shelter at a US Army camp led by an achingly honorable lieutenant, played by Sam Worthington. Another story arc sees bounty hunters go in search of the Apaches who attacked the settlement, seeking profit and revenge.

"Horizon" also shows the internal divisions within the Apaches, with the chief's hothead son and new father (Owen Crow Shoe) ready to keep fighting. "Their sons will hunt you," the chief warns. "I won't sing for your victory today." We learn that the white settlement violated agreements meant to calm the West.

Savager

Costner's universe is both fatalistic and inevitable. Both sides may be right and wrong, but there will always be another round of savagery. "There's no one on Earth going to stop these wagons from coming," an exasperated Army officer says at one point.

After an hour, Costner himself arrives, a quiet, strong loner who enters a Wyoming Territory settlement with the hope of a nice drink and some lady company and yet who leaves on the run, protecting a sex worker (Abbey Lee) and a boy in her care from psychotic horsemen who wish them harm.

Two hours into the movie comes another whole set of characters, with Costner's menu now completely out of whack. It's a wagon train led by Luke Wilson (never a cowboy, ever) who is facing some class issues - a well-off, oblivious couple are among the working-class muscle - and some Peeping Toms. It's all too much, but add to it a dash of anti-Chinese xenophobia, some budding romances and horrific scalping.

Director of photography J. Michael Muro doesn't romanticize anything, grinding the action in the smoke, heat and chicken-pecked dust of the West, so much so that you might taste grit in your teeth at some points. It helps that Costner has positioned

everyone on the top of a picturesque hillside, showing off their profiles.

Part of the problem of "Chapter 1" is that in addition to overstuffing it with too many characters, the editing is pretty bad. Viewers will struggle with some violent cuts in which Costner has jumped the action forward months within the same chapter without any clues.

Yet Costner is still an impressive director with a eye for the natural beauty of the American West and a soft spot for loners. Yes, "Horizon: An American Saga - Chapter 1" is a huge swing that cannot really stand on its own. But we owe it to him to ride beside him a little more. Let's see if he can stick the landing.

"Horizon: An American Saga - Chapter 1," a Warner Bros. release in theaters Friday, is rated R for "violence and some nudity and sexuality." Running time: 180 minutes. One and a half stars out of four.

Also:

LOS ANGELES: After nearly 30 years of fits and starts, the fourth Beverly Hills Cop movie is finally upon us. Eddie Murphy reprises his role as Axel Foley in "Beverly Hills Cop: Axel F," which debuts on Netflix on Wednesday. Judge Reinhold and John Ashton also return but they get some fresh blood in a detective played by Joseph Gordon-Levitt and Captain (Kevin Bacon). Taylour Paige also joins the ensemble as Axel's daughter. The original "Beverly Hills Cop" which launched Murphy to stardom in 1984 is also streaming on Netflix now.

Meanwhile, Emma Roberts is "living her best Florida life" when she remembers her lifetime dream of being an astronaut in "Space Cadet." Unbeknownst to her, a friend ("Hacks" castmate Poppy Liu) embellishes her resume and she's accepted into a competitive NASA training program. It aspires to be a kind of "Legally Blonde" meets "Private Benjamin" (who wouldn't dream of such heights) and will be available to stream on Prime Video starting Thursday. (AP)

York on Friday seeking the return of his handwritten notes and song lyrics from the band's hit "Hotel California" album.

The civil complaint filed in Manhattan federal court comes after prosecutors in March abruptly dropped criminal charges midway through a trial against three collectibles experts accused of scheming to sell the documents.



The Eagles co-founder has maintained the pages were stolen and had vowed to pursue a lawsuit when the criminal case was dropped against rare books dealer Glenn Horowitz, former Rock & Roll Hall of Fame curator Craig Inciardi and rock memorabilia seller Edward Kosinski.

"Hotel California," released by the Eagles in 1977, is the third-

biggest selling album of all time in the US.

"These 100 pages of personal lyric sheets belong to Mr. Henley and his family, and he has never authorized defendants or anyone else to peddle them for profit," Daniel Petrocelli, Henley's lawyer, said in an emailed statement Friday. According to the lawsuit, the

handwritten pages remain in the

custody of Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg's office, which declined to comment Friday on the litigation.

Lawyers for Kosinski and Inciardi dismissed the legal action as baseless, noting the criminal case was dropped after it was determined that Henley misled prosecutors by withholding critical information. (AP)

NEWS/FEATURES

People & Places

Television

Eyes BET Awards

Harmon making big moves as producer

BURBANK, Calif., June 29, (AP): If Dionne Harmon never found an old script on New Edition's biopic, the R&B group's story might still be sitting on a shelf instead of becoming a highly-rated miniseries for BET

Same can be said for other projects like "The Bobby Brown Story" and the Soul Train-inspired series "American Soul." She might not have a household name, but she's known in Hollywood for working on big projects and major events including the Oscars, Emmys and Golden Globes. Harmon has worked on multiple Super Bowl halftime shows, becoming the first Black woman to produce the show

Next up, she'll be a producer at the BET Awards on



Sunday at 8 p.m. Eastern. The show will air live from the Peacock Theater in Los Angeles.

The Emmy winner is one of the few Black women to hold a top position in the entertainment industry. She is president of Jesse Collins Entertainment, one of television's most requested production companies. Harmon reports directly to CEO Jesse Collins, who is her fiancé. "I've been grinding to build

Harmon

my toolbox just to be ready for these moments," said Harmon, a Harvard University graduate who has worked at JCE since 2012.

She started at JCE as an assistant, a position she was reluctant to take until Collins introduced her to other employees who had gradually rose into high-ranking positions at the company

Harmon accepted the job. Collins guaranteed he'd teach her everything he knew about the business, allowing her to shadow him in meetings and on phone calls.

'This is a place where you put your roots in and they grow," she said. "On the surface, it looked like a step backwards. I had to talk down my ego, which didn't want me to take that step. ... But this was the best decision I've ever made.

Success

Harmon's big break came through the 2017 project "The New Edition Story."

After seeing the tremendous success of TLC's bi-opic "CrazySexyCool: The TLC Story" in 2013, she realized there were more opportunities to explore.

Harmon found an old script about New Edition's story written by Abdul Williams that had been sitting around for years, took it to Collins and convinced him to pitch the idea to Stephen Hill, BET's president of programming at the time. The series became a massive hit on the network, but she didn't receive producer credits.

However, Harmon did well enough to earn a promotion to director of development - without a staff that resulted into more projects. She led the reworked format for "Hip Hop Squares" that evolved into the creation of three spin-off shows such as CMT's "Nashville Squares," BET's "Celebrity Squares" and "Hollywood Squares" for CBS with Drew Barrymore. She also played a key role in the development and production of the critically acclaimed competition show "Rhythm + Flow" on Netflix, which has now expanded to France, Italy and Brazil.

Erykah Badu said Harmon was instrumental in her return for three consecutive years as nost an roaucei of the Soul Train Awards starting in 2015. The singer called Harmon a "no-nonsense, deliberate producer." Under her leadership, Harmon helped JCE's staff grow from 11 full-time employees to 25. She also spearheaded the company's efforts to work directly with brands on content production on large-scale events with Nike, Ford, Pepsi and TikTok. "She's very passionate, creative and knows how to navigate a very complicated world known as Holly-wood," Collins said. "She really leads with integrity first. That has really helped her grow. Once you build a reputation of trust and you're creative, all the doors open up for you."



Members of the band Seventeen perform during the Glastonbury Festival in Worthy Farm, Somerset, England, Friday, June 28. (AP)

Film





'Disciple' celebrates musician-actor-activist's legacy

Van Zandt reflects on rock star life

NEW YORK, June 29, (AP): Steve Van Zandt still looks every bit the rock star.

But underneath his purple head-scarf, paisley shirt and snakeskin boots, Van Zandt says he still hates being the center of attention.

"I'm a bit of a contradiction and paradox," he says, sheepishly laughing after an interviewer notes the musician-actor-activist might be in the wrong lines of work.

Perhaps it should be no surprise that Van Zandt, 73, had to be coaxed into participating in a documentary about his remarkable life and career. The result is "Stevie Van Zandt: Disciple" - which airs on HBO and streams on Max - and covers not only s a guitar-jamming singer songwriter, but also as a music producer, playing Silvio Dante on "The Sopranos," and his lesser-known roles as an activist, radio host, music educator, and entrepreneur. The man affectionately called "Little Steven" by fans says he feels mostly gratitude about the film. "It's an honor that somebody cared enough about my life to make a movie about it. And I'm happy that the work is going to be seen," Van Zandt told The Associated Press. " My other emotion is anxiety ... it's a little embarrassing and awkward." Director Bill Teck, a lifelong fan of Van Zandt's music, says he started inquiring about a documentary on his life and career in 2006. but received a hard no. After following up every few years, Van Zandt finally agreed in 2018, but he didn't even want to be interviewed. Teck eventually convinced him audiences wanted to hear Van Zandt's version of how his career in rock evolved starting with his teen years playing in New Jersey bands, where he met his lifelong friend and collaborator, Bruce Springsteen.

He recalled the impact bands like the Beatles and Rolling Stones had on him and other Jersey musicians that encouraged them to keep perform-ing. "Suddenly we had a place. We had a little hope," he says.

The film includes interviews with rock legends - Paul McCartney, Springsteen, Bono, Bill Wyman, Eddie Vedder and more - all raving about Van Zandt's skills as a producer and writer, but also as a pioneer in rock 'n' roll. "It seemed like every rock star in the firmament was eager to speak about Stevie," Teck says.

Music is central to the documentary, but Teck also spends time on Van Zandt's activism, especially his integral part in forming the Artited Against Apartheid in the

Influence

"Steve is a guy that will say rock

in there and maybe destiny ... has something in mind that, you couldn't have anticipated."

Van Zandt says he was a friend and confidante to Springsteen and one of the few who was honest with him, even when they had artistic differences. Later in the documentary, he draws parallels when his character, Silvio Dante, became the underboss and consiglieri to mob boss Tony Soprano in "The Sopranos.

"Once that role ... started to be written that way, I'm like, 'Oh, I understand these dynamics very well.

I've lived my whole life with this.' So that really helped me, as a first-time actor, to know exactly the dynamics of that relationshin-

Harmon became one of the few Black women to co-produce the Oscars. And after co-executive producing the 2022 Super Bowl halftime show featuring Dr. Dre, Snoop Dogg, Mary J. Blige and others, she was elevated to president at JCE, overseeing creative strategy and financial growth.

Life is grand for Harmon both professionally and personally. Collins proposed to her last year. She said their relationship is a "perfect partnership" and that they both manage work-life balance well.

Harmon often thinks back to her decision to remove her ego and join JCE more than a decade ago. She would joke with her mom that if she married or met anybody, that it would be at the airport or work.

Harmon says Collins is "a great guy" - but at the start, he was just her boss.

Also:

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

Oscar-nominated actor Taraji P. Henson will host the BET Awards for a third time.

"If we didn't have a BET, how would the little ones know all this greatness exists? How will we be able to inspire each other if we didn't see each other," Henson told The Associated Press. "And so this is a safe space for us where we get to lift each other up - where sometimes in this industry, we don't get to see ourselves lifted and celebrated in this way.'

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

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

Performers will include Hill and her son YG Marley, Ice Spice, Tyla, Childish Gambino, Chlöe, Coco Jones, Keke Palmer, Marsha Ambrosius and Summer Walker.

Megan Thee Stallion will serve as the show's opening act.

Smith is slated to perform a new song. The Grammy and Oscar winner is still emerging from the infamous Oscars slap two years ago, with the successful launch of "Bad Boys: Ride or Die" helping boost his comeback.

Weave Friedman

Variety

ROME: The Venice Film Festival announced Friday that it will award the prestigious Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement this year to actress Sigourney Weaver.

The 74-year-old Weaver is renowned for her roles in two of cinema's most iconic science fiction franchises: the "Alien" series, spanning four films from 1979 to 1997, and the "Avatar" films, released in 2009 and 2022.

Despite never winning an Oscar, Weaver has been nominated for three Academy Awards. She received two nominations for Best Actress in a Leading Role: the first for "Aliens" in 1987, and the second for "Gorillas in the Mist" in 1989, a biographical film about Dian Fossey, a scientist who studied mountain gorillas in Africa. In the same year, she was also nominated for Best Actress in a Supporting Role for the romantic comedy "Working Girl."

Commenting on the honor, Weaver said in a statement, "To be given this award is a privilege I share with all the filmmakers and collaborators I have worked with throughout the years." (Xinhua)

AUSTIN, Texas: Singer, songwriter, satirist and novelist **Kinky Friedman**, who led the alt-country band Texas Jewboys, toured with Bob Dylan, sang with Willie Nelson, and dabbled in politics with campaigns for Texas governor and other statewide offices, has died.

Friedman, 79, died Thursday at his family's Texas ranch near San Antonio, close friend Kent Perkins told The Associated Press. Friedman had suffered from Parkinson's disease for several years, Perkins said.

"He died peacefully. He smoked a cigar, went to bed and never woke up," said **Per-kins**, who was working as an actor when he met Friedman at a party 50 years ago when both were signed to Columbia records and movie contracts.

"We were the only two people with tuxedos and cowboys hats. Two Texans gravitating toward each other," Perkins said. "He was the last free person on earth. (AP)

NEW YORK: Bill Cobbs, the veteran character actor who became a ubiquitous and sage screen presence as an older man, has died. He was 90.

Cobbs died Tuesday at his home in the Inland Empire, California, surrounded by family and friends, his publicist Chuck I. Jones said. Natural causes is the likely

"We were not capable of doing anything else. We were truly freaks, misfits and outcasts," Van Zandt says. "We were not enamored with the options society was giving us.'

cause of death. Jones said.

A Cleveland native, Cobbs acted in such films as "The Hudsucker Proxy," "The Bodyguard" and "Night at the Museum."

and roll is the greatest tool for social change that there is," Teck says. Van Zandt's involvement also helped influence the US Senate to override President Ronald Reagan's veto of legislation imposing sanctions on South Africa. "It was a very rare, complete victory," Van Zandt says. "I'm very proud of it." "Disciple" also covers the painful period when Van Zandt split with Springsteen and quit the E Street Band just as it was gaining global

pening in South Africa.

popularity. He says he hopes to inspire people by all he accomplished after he thought his life was over including solo music, producing for other artists, and political activism - before eventually rejoining his E Street pals years later.

"The first dream doesn't work out. Whatever. Hang in there a little bit. If you can avoid being an alcoholic or drug addict and feeling too sorry for yourself and committing suicide - all of which I considered - hang

He made his first big-screen appearance in a fleeting role in 1974's "The Taking of Pelham One Two Three." He became a lifelong actor with some 200 film and TV



US actor and director Viggo Mortensen receives the President's Award from festival president Jiri Bartoska, (back left), during the opening ceremony of the 58th Karlovy Vary International Film Festival in Karlovy Vary, Czech Republic, Friday, June 28. (AP)

the only one really capable of bring-1980s. Van Zandt recruited artists, ing the bad news occasionally, beincluding Springsteen, Bob Dylan, Ringo Starr and Run-DMC to sing cause you're the only one not afraid of them, you know?" on his anthem, "Sun City," which brought attention to what was hap-

The documentary and Van Zandt's 2021 memoir provided an opportunity to look back and see professional struggles in a new light. "You don't appreciate the teenage years because you're trying to get into the bars. You don't appreciate the bar band because you're trying to get into the business and then the business... you want to just get bigger and bigger and have a hit," Van Zandt says.

"Looking back now ... I realize that those are some of the most fun, enjoyable years of my life."

Van Zandt calls performing "fun and a wonderful way to make a living" but says he gets the most satisfaction from writing, producing and directing music and television behind the scenes.

As for his unconventional wardrobe, he suggests it's a product of nostalgia. "I think I'm permanently in 1967. That was my favorite year, my favorite era. I love the psychedelic era," the singer says, describing it as a "liberating, creative time."

There wasn't all of these incredible problems we face now. So it's a little bit of a mental sanctuary in a funny way.³

credits. The lion share of those came in his 50s, 60s, and 70s, as filmmakers and TV producers turned to him again and again to imbue small but pivotal parts with a wizened and worn soulfulness.

Wendell Pierce, who acted alongside Cobbs in "I'll Fly Away" and "The Gregory Hines Show," remembered Cobbs as "a father figure, a griot, an iconic artist that mentored me by the way he led his life as an actor," he wrote on the social media platform X. (AP)

LOS ANGELES: Fans of Marilyn Monroe have won a battle to preserve her mark on Los Angeles and are a step closer to seeing a towering statue of the silver screen icon remain in Palm Springs.

The Los Angeles home where Monroe briefly lived and died has been declared a historic cultural monument, while a Palm Springs planning commission decision boosted chances that a 26-foot (8-meter) statue called "Forever Marilyn" will stay in place.

The Los Angeles City Council voted for the historic designation Wednesday after a lengthy battle over whether the home in the tony Brentwood neighborhood would be demolished, the Los Angeles Times reported.

The current owners live next door and wanted to raze the house in order to expand their estate. The council, however, was unanimous in moving to save it. (AP)

Conjunctivitis typically resolves without treatment

Most children with pink eye get unnecessary antibiotics: study

NEW YORK, June 29, (AP): Doctors are prescribing antibiotics to most kids and teens who have pink eye, despite guidelines that discourage their use, researchers reported Thursday.

More than two-thirds of US children and teens who saw a doctor for pink eye left with a prescription for antibiotic eye drops, their research found. The American Academy of Ophthal-mology recommends that doctors do not routinely give out antibiotics for what's also called conjunctivitis. which usually clears up on its own.

Antibiotics don't work at all on viruses - the most common cause of pink eye. And even mild eye infections from bacteria will resolve on their own in most cases, the medical group says.

Pink eye is highly contagious and causes red, swollen and sometimes itchy eyes. Often, a chilled, wet towel and artificial tears are enough to ease symptoms.

For their study, researchers used

No evidence of infectious, live virus: study

Heat treatment kills bird flu virus in cow's milk

shorter amount of time - worked, said the Food and

A study in April found that there was no evidence

of infectious, live virus in store-bought samples of

pasteurized milk, though they did contain dead rem-

nants of it. Some later small studies that attempted to

simulate pasteurization showed mixed results.

NEW YORK, June 29, (AP): A new study that recreated commercial pasteurization in a government lab provides reassurance that heat treatment kills bird flu virus in cow's milk, US officials said Friday.

When the bird flu known as H5N1 was first detected in US dairy cows earlier this year, there were no studies of whether heat treatment killed the virus in cows milk. But officials were comforted by studies that showed the pasteurization of eggs - which involves heating at a lower temperature and for a

a nationwide database of insurance claims from 2021. Nearly 45,000 ointments. children received care for pink eye at a doctor's office, eye clinic or emerreturn visits to the doctor for pink eye gency room and 69% were prescribed were rare, under 4%, according to the

The new study was done at a federal research center in Athens, Georgia, using custom equipment that tried to more completely recreate commercial pas-

Drug Administration's Donald Prater.

antibiotics, which come in drops and study published Thursday in the journal

JAMA Ophthalmology. Doctor's offices gave antibiotics the

most, to 72% of patients, compared to ERs at 57% and eye clinics at 34%.

teurization

rus was inactivated even before it hit the 161-degree, 15-or-more-seconds "flash pasteurization" stage that is considered the key step in making milk safe. "This information really fills an important gap in our understanding of how commercial pasteurization inactivates the virus," Prater said.

It also allowed sampling at different stages in the

process. The milk goes through several heating steps

before being flash-heated, and the study found the vi-

That could be because eye clinics have the tools to figure out what is actually causing the pink eye and treat accordingly, said Dr. Rupa Wong, a pediatric eye doctor at Honolulu Eye

No return date until ground testing concludes

Clinic and spokesperson for the ophthalmology group.

Dr. Daniel Shapiro, a pediatric emergency doctor and co-author of the study, said he understands why parents might be alarmed when their child has an infection.

"The eye looks red and nasty and so it's pretty striking and scary," said Shapiro, of the University of California. San Francisco.

But antibiotics shouldn't be overused if they aren't going to help, he said.

The study didn't dig into the specifics of why the antibiotics were prescribed or the outcome. But the fact that return visits were rare in either case suggests that patients are not at higher risk of complications or serious problems if they don't get a prescription, Wong said.

"There are more supportive measures we can take to make your child feel comfortable without resorting to antibiotic eye drops," Wong said.

Designing next-gen enzymes

Al plus gene editing set to NASA astronauts extend ISS stay as Boeing capsule 'faces' issues shift biotech into high gear

By Marc Zimmer Connecticut College

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

During her chemistry Nobel Prize lecture in 2018, Frances Arnold said, "Today we can for all practical purposes read, write and edit any sequence of DNA, but we cannot compose it." That isn't true anymore.

Since then, science and technology have progressed so much that artificial intelligence has learned to compose DNA, and with genetically modified bacteria, scientists are on their way to designing and making bespoke proteins

The goal is that with AI's designing talents and gene editing's engineering abilities, scientists can modify bacteria to act as mini factories producing new proteins that can reduce greenhouse gases, digest plastics or act as speciesspecific pesticides.

As a chemistry professor and computational chemist who studies molecular science and environmental chemistry, I believe that advances in AI and gene editing make this a realistic possibility

Proteins

All living things contain genetic materials - DNA and RNA - that provide the hereditary information needed to replicate themselves and make proteins. Proteins constitute 75% of human dry weight. They make up muscles, enzymes, hormones, blood, hair and carti lage. Understanding proteins means understanding much of biology. The order of nucleotide bases in DNA, or RNA in some viruses, encodes this information, and genomic sequencing technologies identify the order of these bases. The Human Genome Project was an international effort that sequenced the entire human genome from 1990 to 2003. Thanks to rapidly improving technologies, it took seven years to sequence the first 1% of the genome and another seven years for the remaining 99%. By 2003, scientists had the complete sequence of the 3 billion nucleotide base pairs coding for 20,000 to 25,000 genes in the human genome.

Each protein's shape is critical to its function and is determined by the sequence of its amino acids, which is in turn determined by the gene's nucleotide sequence. Misfolded proteins have the wrong shape and can cause illnesses such as neurodegenerative diseases, cystic fibrosis and Type 2 diabetes. Understanding these diseases and devel-

oping treatments requires knowledge of protein shapes.

Technique

Before 2016, the only way to determine the shape of a protein was through X-ray crystallography, a laboratory technique that uses the diffraction of X-rays by single crystals to determine the precise arrangement of atoms and molecules in three dimensions in a molecule. At that time, the structure of about 200,000 proteins had been determined by crystallography, costing billions of dollars.

AlphaFold, a machine learning program, used these crystal structures as a training set to determine the shape of the proteins from their nucleotide sequences. And in less than a year, the program calculated the protein structures of all 214 million genes that have been sequenced and published. The protein structures AlphaFold determined have all been released in a freely available database.

To effectively address noninfectious diseases and design new drugs, scientists need more detailed knowledge of how proteins, especially enzymes, bind small molecules. Enzymes are protein catalysts that enable and regulate biochemical reactions

manuelle Charpentier received the Nobel Prize in chemistry "for the development of a method (CRISPR) for genome editing." With CRISPR, gene editing, which once took years and was species specific, costly and laborious, can now be done in days and for a fraction of the cost.

Whether they were treated or not,

AI and genetic engineering are advancing rapidly. What was once complicated and expensive is now routine. Looking ahead, the dream is of bespoke proteins designed and produced by a combination of machine learning and CRISPR-modified bacteria.

AI would design the proteins, and bacteria altered using CRISPR would produce the proteins. Enzymes produced this way could potentially breathe in carbon dioxide and methane while exhaling organic feedstocks, or break down plastics into substitutes for concrete.

I believe that these ambitions are not unrealistic, given that genetically modified organisms already account for 2% of the US economy in agriculture and pharmaceuticals.

Strategy

Two groups have made functioning enzymes from scratch that were designed by differing AI systems. David Baker's Institute for Protein Design at the University of Washington devised a new deep-learning-based protein design strategy it named "family-wide hallucination," which they used to make a unique light-emitting enzyme.

Biotech startup EvolutionaryScale developed a large language model that the company said can design proteins. Meanwhile, biotech startup Profluent has used an AI trained from the sum of all CRISPR-Cas knowledge to design new functioning genome editors. If AI can learn to make new CRISPR systems as well as bioluminescent enzymes that work and have never been seen on Earth, there is hope that pairing CRISPR with AI can be used to design other new bespoke enzymes. Although the CRISPR-AI combination is still in its infancy, once it matures it is likely to be highly beneficial and could even help the world tackle climate change. It's important to remember, however, that the more powerful a technology is, the greater the risks it poses. Also, humans have not been very successful at engineering nature due to the complexity and interconnectedness of natural systems, which often leads to unintended consequences. (AP)

CALIFORNIA, June 29, (AP): Two NASA astronauts will stay longer at the International Space Station as engineers troubleshoot problems on Boeing's new space capsule that cropped up on the trip there.

NASA on Friday did not set a return date until testing on the ground was complete and said the astronauts were safe.

"We're not in any rush to come home," said NASA's commercial crew program manager Steve Stich. Propulsion (cross head)

Veteran NASA test pilots Butch Wilmore and Suni Williams blasted off aboard Boeing's Starliner capsule for the orbiting laboratory on June 5. It was the first astronaut launch for Boeing after years of delays and setbacks.

The test flight was expected to last a week or so, enough time for Wilmore and Williams to check out the capsule while docked at the station. But problems with the capsule's propulsion system, used to maneuver the spacecraft, prompted NASA and Boeing to delay the flight home several times while they analyzed the trouble.

They also wanted to avoid conflicting with spacewalks by station astronauts. But a spacewalk this week was canceled after water leaked from an astronaut's spacesuit. The issue hasn't been resolved and the planned spacewalk next week was postponed. As Starliner closed in on the space



In this photo provided by NASA, Boeing Crew Flight Test astronauts Suni Williams and Butch Wilmore, (center), pose with Expedition 71 Flight Engineers Mike Barratt, (left), and Tracy Dyson, both NASA astronauts, in their spacesuits aboard the International Space Station's Quest airlock on June 24, 2024. (AP)

station a day after launch, last-minute thruster failures almost derailed the docking. Five of the capsule's 28 thrusters went down during docking; all but one thruster was restarted.

Starliner already had one small helium leak when it rocketed into orbit and several more leaks sprung up during the flight. Helium is used to pressurize fuel for the thrusters. Boeing said this week that the two problems aren't a concern for the return trip.

In delaying the astronauts' return,

NASA and Boeing said they needed more time to collect information about the thruster trouble and leaks while the capsule was docked. Both are in the service module, a unit attached to the capsule that burns up during reentry.

NASA initially said the Starliner could stay docked at the space station for up to 45 days due to battery limits. But in-flight tests have shown that limit can be extended, Stich said. Officials said they won't set a re-

turn date while they do ground tests

posed to be the ALOS-3.

13

However, understanding the functions of most proteins and correcting their malfunctions remained a chal-

AlphaFold3, released May 8, 2024, can predict protein shapes and the locations where small molecules can bind to these proteins. In rational drug design, drugs are designed to bind proteins involved in a pathway related to the disease being treated. The small molecule drugs bind to the protein binding site and modulate its activity, thereby influ-encing the disease path. By being able to predict protein binding sites, Alpha-Fold3 will enhance researchers' drug development capabilities. Around 2015, the development of

CRISPR technology revolutionized gene editing. CRISPR can be used to find a specific part of a gene, change or delete it, make the cell express more or less of its gene product, or even add an utterly foreign gene in its place. In 2020, Jennifer Doudna and Em-

Japan delays H3 rocket launch due to weather

TOKYO, June 29, (Agencies): Japan's space agency said Friday its planned launch this weekend of a satellite on its new flagship H3 rocket will be postponed until Monday due to expected bad weather.

The Japan Aerospace Explora-tion Agency, or JAXA, said it is postponing the launch because of rain and thunder predicted for Saturday night when the rocket was to be moved to the launch site at the Tanegashima Space Center on a southwestern Japanese island.

The launch was initially scheduled for Sunday.

The rocket will be carrying an Advanced Land Observation Satellite, ALOS-4, tasked primarily with Earth observation and data collection for disaster response and mapmaking, as well as with monitoring military activity, such as missile launches, with an infrared sensor developed by the Defense Ministry. The ALOS-4 is a successor to the current ALOS-2 and can observe a much wider area. Japan will operate both for the time being. The launch will be the H3's third,

after a successful launch on Feb. 17 that followed a shocking failed debut flight a year earlier when the rocket had to be destroyed with its payload - a satellite that was sup-

Japan sees a stable, commercially competitive space transport capability as key to the country's space program and national

security.v JAXA and its main contractor Mitsubishi Heavy Industries have been developing H3 as a successor to its current mainstay, H-2A, which is set to retire after two more flights. MHI will eventually take over H3 production and launches from JAXA and hopes to make it commercially viable by cutting the launch cost to about half of the H-2A.



'Winning 20 gold medals is a very achievable goal'

Host nation France looking forward to medals boost

PARIS, June 29, (Xinhua): A top-five finish in the medal table. The ambitious target announced by President Emmanuel Macron for France's delegation at the 2024 Parvis Olympics appears within reach due to the host nation's advantage and its recent investment in elite athlete development.

Historically, France, one of the birthplaces of the modern Olympic movement, saw its best Olympic performances over a century ago.

In 1900, when Paris hosted the Olympics for the first time, France topped the medal table. In 1924, when Paris hosted again, France finished third. Since then, apart from a third-place finish at the 1948 Games, France has not broken into the top five.

With the Olympics returning to Paris 100 years later, French athletes hope to use this opportunity to reclaim a higher position in the medal standings.

Past Olympic statistics show that host nations often see a significant boost in their medal counts. At the 2008 Beijing Olympics, China's medal tally increased by over 50 percent compared to previous Games. At the 2012 London Olympics, Britain's total medals grew by nearly 40 percent. And at the most recent Tokyo Olympics, Japan's medal count increased by over 40 percent. Even Brazil, with a smaller improvement, saw more than a 10 percent

increase in total medals at the 2016 Rio Olympics.

"Our goal, set in coordination with the sports minister, is to be in the top five in the medal table," a French Olympic Committee representative told Xinhua. "In the last Olympics, we won only 10 gold and 33 medals in total. In Paris, we must leverage the home advantage to achieve the best results for the French delegation in recent years." France's ambitions are far from mere rhetoric, as they have taken action to increase their medal count.

In 2019, the country established the National Sports Agency (ANS) outside the government sports department and the French Olympic Committee. The primary goal of this agency is to integrate resources from the government, the Olympic Committee, various sports federations and different sectors of society to enhance support for elite French athletes in terms of logistics and funding.

Furthermore, France's National Institute of Sport, Expertise and Performance (INSEP), which oversees the training and preparation of multiple French national teams, has received unprecedented funding in recent Olympic cycles.

In addition to increasing the income levels of elite athletes to allow them to focus solely on their training, several French national teams have hired a significant number of high-quality overseas coaches and improved training facilities. The aim is to provide these medal hopefuls with world-class coaching and the best possible training conditions.

"Winning 20 gold medals is a very achievable goal. With a bit of luck, we might even exceed that target," said French Olympic Committee President David Lappartient in a recent interview with French media.

According to estimates by the French Olympic Committee, the French delegation is expected to send between 550 and 600 athletes to the Paris Games.

OLYMPICS

Traditional strongholds such as judo, fencing and sailing will remain key areas for France. The French judo team, led by Olympic champions Teddy Riner and Clarisse Agbegnenou, is particularly strong, with French media predicting they could win five to ten medals.

In fencing, Tokyo Olympic men's epee champion Romain Cannone remains a top contender, while the women's sabre team, led by world number one Manon Brunet, is another key medal hope. The fencing team is expected to win five to nine medals.

In swimming, Leon Marchand has shone at the past

two World Championships, and at 22, he is a strong contender for gold in the 200m and 400m individual medleys. Notably, Marchand's coach is the legendary Bob Bowman, who once coached Michael Phelps.

In team sports, France's medal hopes are even broader. Beyond the well-known football team, the men's basketball team, led by NBA top draft pick Victor Wembanvama, has the potential to win at least a bronze medal. The men's volleyball team, defending Olympic champion, also remains a strong medal contender despite recent inconsistent performances.

Additionally, the women's 3x3 basketball team and both the men's and women's handball teams have podium potential.

Newly-introduced Olympic sports like climbing and breakdancing also offer medal prospects for French climbers Oriane Bertone and Mickaël Mawem, as well as B-boy Dany Dann and B-Girl Syssy.

"Competing in the Olympics in your own country, in front of your family, is an incredible honor. I believe this honor will inspire our athletes to achieve better results. We will also organize a large French cheering squad to ensure the athletes feel the support of their home crowd," said the French Olympic Committee representative.

Integral part of Red Bull team

Mobil 1 Oils contribute to Verstappen win

KUWAIT CITY, June 29: Kuwait Auto-motive Imports Co. W.L.L. (Al Shaya & Al Sagar), the authorized dealer of Mobil lubricants in Kuwait, takes pride in the success of the Oracle Red Bull Racing team and Max Verstappen's victory in the Spanish Grand Prix - the tenth round of the 2023-2024 World Championship held at the Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya in Montmeló.

This ongoing success of Mobil 1 Oils in Formula 1 races highlights its technological superiority and effectiveness in enhancing the performance of sports cars.

Mobil 1: A Strong Partnership Fuels Red Bull Racing's Victories:

Driven by an unwavering commitment to innovation and quality, Mobil 1 has become an integral part of Red Bull Racing's triumphs on the world's Grand Prix circuits. The remarkable achievements of Red Bull Racing driver Max Verstappen serve as a testament to the effectiveness of Mobil 1 lubricants. Verstappen clinched his third consecutive victory at the Spanish Grand Prix, masterfully controlling the race and securing his 61st career win.



This exceptional performance saw Ver-stappen retain the Spanish Grand Prix title for the third time in a row, solidifying his dominance over his rivals, including McLaren driver Lando Norris who finished second, 2.2 seconds behind.

Mobil 1 is a strategic partner of the Red Bull Racing team, playing a pivotal role in enhancing the performance of the team's cars, and empowering them to achieve even greater milestones in the world of Formula

I racing. (Al Shaya& Al Sagar) and Mobil Celebrate Innovation and Success:

Mr. Ashish Tandon, General Manager of Kuwait Automotive Imports Co. W.L.L. (Al Shaya & Al Sagar), praised the achievements of Mobil 1 at the Spanish Grand Prix, reaffirming the leading brand's commitment to innovation and development to improve

MOTOR RACING

vehicle performance. He added: "Mobil 1's victory in Formula 1 races demonstrates its technological superiority and effectiveness in enhancing the performance of sports cars, proving Mobil 1's worth as the best engine oil in the world."

Mr. Jayan, Lubricants Division Manager, attests to Mobil's unwavering commitment to excellence. "For over a century and a half, Mobil has harnessed its expertise and innovation to craft engine oils that deliver superior protection and unparalleled performance. Their passion for progress fuels their success in everything they do.'

Mobil 1 stands out as a premium brand of engine oils for cars and motorcycles. These high-performance lubricants are designed to boost engine performance and deliver exceptional protection.

Their commitment to premium products has fueled their success, as evidenced by customer confidence in their quality. With a focus on continuous innovation and excellence, Mobil 1 sets its sights on even greater

Holloway qualifies for Olympics with 4th-fastest time in history



Grant Holloway wins the men's 110-meter hurdles final during the U.S. Track and Field Olympic Team Trials Friday, June 28, 2024, in Eugene, Ore. (AP)

Winger aims for fifth Olympic appearance in javelin

Warriors blocking Wiggins from playing in Paris: Barrett

'Hawks finalizing talks to trade Murray to Pelicans'

ATLANTA, June 29, (AP): The Atlanta Hawks are finalizing talks to trade highscoring Dejounte Murray to the New Orleans Pelicans for a package expected to include two first-round draft picks, according to people with knowledge of the discussions.

The people spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because the trade had not been finalized Friday night.

The Hawks are expected to receive forward-center Larry Nance Jr. and point guard Dyson Daniels in the deal, as well as first-round picks in 2025 and 2029.

The Hawks made swing player Zaccharie Risacher of France the No. 1 overall pick in the NBA draft on Wednesday night before trading AJ Griffin to Houston on Thursday to obtain a second-round pick used to obtain rights to guard/forward Nikola Djurisic of Serbia. The trade of Murray signals the Hawks' offseason overhaul may just be beginning.

"We're always going to look for ways to improve the team," general man-ager Landry Fields said Friday in Risacher's first Atlanta news conference. Fields would not talk more of any possible interest in

BASKETBALL

trading veteran players.

The backcourt combination of Trae Young and Murray produced points but no playoff success. The Hawks finished 10th in the Eastern Conference at 36-46 this season and haven't won a playoff series since advancing to the Eastern Conference finals in 2021

The 2025 first rounder in the trade talks was ac-

quired by New Orleans from the Los Angeles Lakers as part of the 2019 Anthony Davis trade, Details of the 2029 first

rounder were not final. The 27-year-old Murray averaged a career-high 22.5 points with 6.4 assists this season. He has averaged 15.4 points in seven seasons, including five with San Antonio.

Meanwhile, Canadian Olympic basketball team general manager Rowan Barrett said Friday that Golden State is blocking Andrew Wiggins from competing in Paris, while the Warriors countered it was a mutual decision be-

tween the team and Wiggins Wiggins was among the 20 players who received invitations to camp to determine the Olympic team. "For us, Andrew was

er asked Grant Holloway what he thought of his latest win at U.S. track trials, America's best hurdler made it clear there are bigger things to come. "If you're not training to win

an Olympic gold medal," Hol-loway said, "then what the heck are you doing?"

EUGENE, June 29, (AP):

When the track announc-

That mantra has stayed planted in the 26-year-old's brain over the past three years, ever since an upset loss at the Tokyo Games left him with everything in this sport, except its biggest prize.

On Friday, the three-time world champion earned a trip back to the Olympics, winning the trials with the fourth-fastest time in history, 12.86 seconds, despite clipping the eighth of 10 hurdles in a not-sosubtle reminder of how fickle this event can be.

Holloway's 110 hurdles was up there, too, though he's well aware that making the games and bringing home Olympic gold are two different things.

In Tokyo three years ago, he



James Carter competes in the men's triple jump during the U.S. Track and Field Olympic Team Trials in Eugene, Ore. (AP)

cleared all 10 hurdles but faded late and lost by 0.05 to Jamaica's Hansle Parchment, who runs in his country's national championship this weekend. Holloway called it one of the worst races he'd ever run and one of Parchment's best.

Friday's race marked Holloway's third sub-13 run of the season - the second-fastest of his career. Freddie Crittenden was 0.07 seconds behind and Daniel Roberts finished third in 12.96, making this the first race in history with three sub-13 times.

Could an American sweep in the short hurdles - a la what Brianna Rollins, Nia Ali and Kristi Castlin pulled off for the U.S. in the women's race in 2016 - be in the offing this summer?

"We've already put it out there," Holloway said. "I think me, Daniel and Freddie have probably already thought about it once we came through that finish line."

ATHLETICS

Olympic silver medalist Rai Benjamin stayed on pace for a return to the games, finishing his semifinal in the 400 hurdles in 47.97, the only sub-48 time of the meet so far.

Benjamin ran 46.17 at the Tokyo Games to finish second in the fastest 400 hurdle race ever. His mark would have been a world record were it not for Norway's Karsten Warholm, who ran 45.94.

They appear headed for a rematch in Paris. Benjamin said he sees no need to post a time in Sunday's final as a way of sending a message.

ABS

"It's just about making this team," Benjamin said. "Once I do that, everything else will take care of itself."

Javelin thrower Kara Winger bought herself a few more throws to turn her comeback into her fifth trip to the Olympics.

Next up, she needs to eke out another meter.

The 38-year-old threw 63.01 meters (206 feet, 8 inches) to win qualifying and advance to Sunday's finals. But it will take more than a mere top-three finish for her to make it to Paris. She will also need to throw 64 meters, which is the Olympic qualifying standard.

"Every single throw matters, every single throw can be 64 meters," she said. "And I know I have it in me. But (63.01 is) the farthest I've ever thrown at trials."

Eric Holt, who made a splash by getting a sponsor this week at trials, initially earned the last qualifying spot for 800 final but was later disqualified for a lane infraction.

Two-time triple jump gold med-alist Christian Taylor, making one last run at the Olympics, advanced through qualifying and will jump for a spot in Sunday's final.

Also returning to the track this weekend is 41-year-old hurdler Lolo Jones, who finished last in her heat but advanced because no one was eliminated in a small prelim field.

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sistently, he's been training for weeks and weeks getting ready for this. And then I got a call from Golden State a day or two before camp saying that they're holding him out.

fine," Barrett said. "We

were talking to him con-

"So, from what I see, this is not an Andrew decision, this is from the team. And so, he won't be with us."

The Warriors told The

Associated Press on Friday night that it was a mutual decision between the

team and Wiggins. The 10-year NBA veter-

an last played for Canada in an Olympic qualifying tournament in 2021.

"I'm disappointed for him," Barrett said. "He's gone through a lot the last couple of years and then, obviously, his mother was an Olympian and this is something he's looking forward to and working toward and really on the

uphill climb it seemed like

in everything.

won the 100 meters in the Canadian Olympic track and field trials Friday night, finishing in 10.20 seconds to secure a spot in Paris. The 2020 Olympic 200 champion crossed the finish line with his arms wide open knowing he'd won, but the board at

Best of the Rest

Claude-Robillard sports complex listed Eliezer Adjibi in first. De Grasse was declared the winner following a review, with Adjibi second in 10.23.

11.20. (AP)

Zhu to lead Chinese team: Rio Olympic champion Zhu Ting will lead the Chinese women's volleyball team at the Paris Games next month, according to the team roster released by the Chinese Volleyball Association on Saturday. Fellow Olympic champions Yuan

Xinyue, Gong Xiangyu, Zhang Changning, Ding Xia will join Zhu in the squad which also includes Diao Linyu, Gao Yi, Wang Yuanyuan, Li Yingying, Zheng Yixin, Wang Mengjie and Wu Mengjie. Zhuang Yushan will also travel with the team to Paris as a reserve player.

China is bracketed with the United States, Serbia and France in the preliminary stage of the Paris 2024 women's volleyball competitions. Twelve teams will play in three groups with the top two finishers from each group and the best two third-placers to advance to the quarterfinals. (Xinhua)

China beat hosts Uganda: China beat hosts Uganda on Friday in a classification match of Bridge Games at the ongoing 2024 FISU World University Mind Sports Cham-pionship taking place in Entebbe, Uganda.

After finishing fifth in the round robin, China stopped Uganda (3) 20-0 in one of the matches played at the Imperial Botanical Beach Hotel.

In the other classification matches Slovakia beat Uganda (1) 20-0, while the United States stopped Burundi 19.22 -0.78. (Xinhua)



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De Grasse wins 100m: Andre De Grasse

Audrey Leduc won the women's 100 in

15

Veteran yet to open score

Ronaldo still Portugal's main man despite slow start at Euro 2024

DORTMUND, Germany, June 29, (AP): Cristiano Ronaldo has been a showstopper, as expected, at the European Championship. Just not necessarily in the way he'd

like to be.

The Portugal superstar with 632 million followers on Instagram and a never-ending stream of endorsement deals has had to deal with a raft of on-field selfie-seekers, during matches and in training. One presumed super-fan even leapt from the stands over the players' tunnel toward a startled-looking Ronaldo as he headed to the locker room after Portugal's match against Georgia. He's raged at a referee (earning a yellow card), booted away a water

SOCCER

bottle, and angrily remonstrated in the dug-out. He's also had 12 shots, more than anyone else at Euro 2024

What Ronaldo hasn't done is score a goal - and that's the currency he deals in, at least in soccer.

OK, there was that moment he passed up a golden chance to score by passing unselfishly to Bruno Fernandes for Portugal's third goal in the 3-0 win over Turkey. A double-stepover that befuddled Abdulkerim Bardakci and left the Turkey center back on his back has proved a hit on social media and gave the world a reminder of the Ronaldo of 10, 15, even 20 years ago.

Ronaldo, though, is 39 now. Those big moments have become fleeting, especially when it comes to the big tour-naments and when he's playing against top-level defenses.

Make that seven straight matches in which he has failed to score at a major tournament, covering the 2022 World Cup and Euro 2024. For the first time in his 21-year international career taking in five World Cups and six European Championships, he has ended a group stage without a goal.

So, with the powers of this undoubted soccer great on the wane, the question will again be asked heading into the knockout stage: will the constant drama surrounding Ronaldo wind up being a distraction for the Portugal team in its bid for another big soccer title, eight years

after winning its only one at Euro 2016? Roberto Martinez clearly doesn't think so. The Portugal coach is in thrall with Ronaldo, as shown by his reaction to the striker's assist - his record-tying eighth at the European Championship against Turkey.

"It should be shown in every academy in Portugal and world football," Martinez said, purring at this "spectacular" piece of play.

A day earlier, he'd got into an exchange with a journalist who questioned whether Ronaldo could handle the intensity of a major tournament at age 39.

"All you need to do is look at what he has done in the last 12 months," Martinez proffered, pointing to his record in the Saudi league with Al-Nassr, for whom he started 31 of 34 games and scored a league-high 35 goals, and his 10 goals in Euro 2024 qualifying - second only to Belgium's Romelu Lukaku.

Before the tournament, Martinez had lauded Ronaldo by saying he "approaches every day as a new way to be the best" and that his stats "are better than anything, subjectively, that you can say.

Maybe to justify his arguments - or who knows, to keep in Ronaldo's good books - Martinez started the striker against Georgia despite resting all of his other key outfield players for a game that meant little for Portugal, which had already qualified as group winner.

It was at this stage at the last World Cup where Ronaldo lost his place in Portugal's team, to the shock and anger of his millions of fans who might not see him play as much these days be-cause of his move to the Middle East. He had started all three of the group games, scoring only a penalty, and reacted poorly to being substituted by then-coach Fernando Santos against South Korea in the third. Ronaldo didn't start the 6-1 win over Switzerland in the round of 16 - his replacement, Goncalo Ramos scored a hat trick - nor the quarterfinal loss to Morocco, after which he left the field in tears.

Given his public comments, it's unlikely Martinez will follow Santos' path and drop his captain in the knockout stage, starting against Slovenia on Monday, for what may prove to be Ronaldo's last matches at a major tournament.

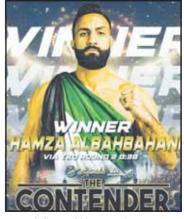
AI-Behbahani wins by technical KO in Bangkok, climbs World rankings

BANGKOK, June 29: Hamza Al Bahbahani continued his ascent to international prominence with a technical knockout victory over Pakistani boxer Abi Jozi Khan in their heavyweight (90 kg) bout last weekend in Bangkok, Thailand. The fight was part of the world championship organized by the World Boxing Council for Professionals (WBC). This victory propelled the Kuwaiti boxer over 200 places up in the world rankings, earning him "half a star" according to the WBC.

MIXED MARTIAL ARTS

Al Bahbahani dominated the fight from the first round until the technical knockout concluded the match.

Expressing his joy, Al Bahbahanisaid, "I dedicate this victory to the honorable political leadership. I hope to continue this journey, rise in the world rankings, and compete for world titles to raise the Kuwaiti flag high in professional boxing, which receives significant attention and follow-up globally.'



A flyer of Hamza victory.

Al Bahbahani also praised Sheikh Mubarak Faisal Al-Nawaf, the Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Kuwait Olympic Committee, describing him as the primary supporter of professional boxing in Kuwait. He highlighted Sheikh Mubarak's dedication to overcoming obstacles and his generous patronage, which motivates them to continue achieving success.

Brazilian Joao Ferreira. that the board is committed to maintaining the stability of the first team.

The coach's contract was renewed,

and high-level professionals were

signed well in advance of the new

season preparations, which will begin

camp, Al-Rashidi stated that a deci-

sion is pending the release of the new

season's calendar by the Federation,

which will provide dates for local and

Regarding the external training

between August 10 and 15.

international tournaments.

Kuwait Club volleyball team prepares for the new season with key signings **By Khaled El Anzi**

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 29: The Board of Directors of Kuwait Club has finalized the professional roster for the volleyball team's 2024-2025 season by signing Brazilian player Joao Ferreira and Cuban player Fernandez Ramos. They will replace Chinese player Liu and Iranian player Saber Kazemi, whose contracts were not renewed. Additionally, Kuwait Club has acquired Al-Arabi player Hussein Al-Masri, while Faisal Al-Ajmi has retired from the game.

Ferreira, a position 4 player, has previously played for Egypt's Zamalek



and Saudi Arabia's Al-Hilal, while Ramos, who plays the Kroos position, competed in the Greek League last season

The Kaifan handball team has renewed their confidence in Turkish coach Taner Atik for another season after he led them to win the treble: the Premier League, the Federation Championship, and the Super Cup.

Musleh Al-Rashidi, the director of volleyball at Kuwait Club, confirmed

Ismail Khafi set to join Al-Qadisiya

Spain's 'unbeaten' Euros record to be tested by Georgia in last 16



Portugal's Cristiano Ronaldo, (left), controls the ball as Turkey's Abdulkerim Bardakci falls down during a Group F match between Turkey and Portugal at the Euro 2024 soccer tournament in Dortmund, Germany. (AP)



Spain's Nacho (right), clears the ball past Croatia's Luka Modric during a Group B match between Spain and Croatia at the Euro 2024 soccer tournament in Berlin, Germany. (AP)

Rodri returns from one-game suspension

COLOGNE, Germany, June 29: (AP): Spain takes on Georgia in the round of 16 at Euro 2024 on Sunday. Spain is widely considered one of the tournament favorites after winning all three of its group games, but Georgia produced the shock result of Euro 2024 so far by beating Portugal.

Spain was the only team to finish the group stage with a perfect record of three wins and its 1-0 victory over defending champion Italy underlined its credentials to win the European title for the first time since 2012.

Spain had no trouble beating Georgia twice in qualifying last year. A 7-1 rout saw Lamine Yamal set a record for youngest ever goalscorer in a Euros qualifier, just two months after his 16th birthday.

Georgia's rapid improvement under coach Willy Sagnol was on show in the 2-0 win over Portugal that secured qualification. Its low block and quick counterattacks were similar to those of

SOCCER

Albania, which caused Spain plenty of problems as Spain won 1-0 on Mon-

day. The winner plays either Germany or Denmark in the quarterfinals in Stuttgart on July 5.

Fitness could be crucial. Spain hasn't played since Monday and was able to change 10 players from its lineup against Albania. Georgia, by contrast, was pushed to the limit against Portugal on Wednesday and had two fewer days to recover.

Spain coach Luis de la Fuente has his full squad available as midfielder Rodri returns from a onegame suspension. Three defenders, including right back Dani Carvajal, would miss a potential quarterfinal if they're booked against Georgia. Georgia midfielder Anzor Mekvabishvili is suspended after a yel-

Foden back for game against Slovakia

Mainoo could be one of England's changes

GELSENKIRCHEN, Germany, June 29, (AP): England plays Slovakia in the round of 16 at Euro 2024 on Sunday after facing fierce criticism for its performances during the group stage. Still, the runner up three years ago is unbeaten and on the opposite side of the draw to France, Spain, Germany and Portugal.

England advanced to the knockout phase as group winner and

low card against Portugal. Captain and defender Guram Kashia is one of four players who are one yellow card away from a suspension.

Georgian striker Georges Mikautadze was the surprise top scorer of any team in the Euro 2024 group stage with three goals, including a penalty against Portugal. None of Spain's players have scored more than once.

"Today we could see that it is possible to play with every team and it is possible to win. It doesn't matter unbeaten in three games, but fans showed their anger at the team's performance against Slovenia on Tuesday with loud jeers at the end

SOCCER

of the match and some threw beer cups toward manager Gareth South-

who your opponent is because there is no easy team at the European Championship." - Georgia forward Khvicha Kvaratskhelia, when asked about Spain after beating Portugal.

"A few months ago we weren't candidates (to win the title) and now we are favorites. But that doesn't mean anything. We have always said that we were going to come here to win the European Championship, and that is our mentality." - Spain left back Alejandro Grimaldo.



England's goalkeeper Jordan Pickford blocks the ball during a training session in Blankenhain, Germany, Saturday, June 29, 2024 ahead of the round of 16 soccer match against Slovakia at the Euro 2024 soccer tournament. (AP)

By Hassan Musa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 29: Al-Qadisiya is close to finalizing a contract with Moroccan player Ismail Khafi, with both parties having agreed on most of the terms for the upcoming 2024-2025 season

Khafi, 28, began his professional career with Moroccan club Ittihad Zamouri in 2018, before transferring

SOCCER

to Mouloudia Oujda the following season. In 2021, he joined the Royal Moroccan Army Club, and then moved to Qatari club Al Sailiya in 2022, before returning to the Royal Moroccan Army Club in 2023. He spent the last

A proficient striker, Khafi was the second-highest scorer in the Moroccan League last season with 13 goals. Al-Qadisiya has already renewed the contracts of Libyan Mohamed Sula Nigerian Daniel Gebula.

Under coach Francesco Calzoand na, Slovakia produced one of the shocks of the tournament by beating

Belgium 1-0 in its opening game. Phil Foden is back in the England squad after returning home for the birth of his child. Luke Shaw could make his first appearance at these Euros following a hamstring injury and Southgate is reportedly considering starting teenager Kobbie Mainoo in midfield.

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

This is Southgate's fourth major

tournament as England manager

and he has always managed to

lead the team to at least the quar-

Slovakia is playing in the round of 16 at a Euros for second time as

an independent nation, having ad-

vanced to this stage in 2016. It has

never gone beyond the round of 16.

terfinals.

England is unbeaten in six games against Slovakia, winning five and drawing one.

If they play, Juraj Kucka and Peter Pekarík will make record-extending 11th appearances for Slovakia at the Euros.

"Everything that's happened is now pretty irrelevant. We have things that we can build on, but also, this is a different test, a different phase of the tournament, and each individual game takes place on its own merit and can also take wild directions at times." - England manager Gareth Southgate.

"We remember where we started. When our coach first took the job, we were playing friendly matches in front of 2,000 people in the stadium. And now, after two years of hard work, we're among the best 16 teams in Europe. So, it's really wonderful, and we're happy about it." - Slovakia captain Milan Skriniar.

season with Ittihad Tangier Club.

NZ to hold sailing event: New Zealand is set to hold its largest multiday sailing regatta next January, with

more than 100 participating boats. The 22nd edition of the Bay of Islands Sailing Week, to be held between January 21 and 24 in Bay of Is-lands, near the country's North Island, will build on the excitement from last year's milestone of 100 participating boats, organizers said on Saturday.

The event has been celebrated by sailors since its inception in 2003, showcasing keelboats, trailer yachts and sports boats to promote the Bay of Islands as a premier sailing and holiday destination, organizers added.

The event brings international-standard racing to New Zealand's sailing community, they added. (Xinhua)

Mark Cavendish struggling: Mark Cavendish appeared to be struggling with stomach and heat issues during the opening stage of the Tour de France on Saturday, putting at risk his pursuit of breaking a tie with Eddy Merckx for the most career stage wins in cycling's biggest race.

Vomiting while on his bike, Cavendish dropped behind the pack on the very first climb, the second-cat-egory Col de Valico Tre Faggi, and four Astana teammates dropped back



Moroccan Ismail Khafi.

Meanwhile, the technical staff is reviewing several candidates to strengthen the team's lineup for the new season.

Best of the Rest

to help the British rider.

Cavendish equaled Merckx's mark of 34 stage wins during the 2021 Tour and went close to winning a 35th in the seventh stage in 2023. He crashed during the eighth stage last year, breaking his right collarbone. The 39-year-old Cavendish then put off retirement by a year to come back to the Tour and try again at breaking his tie with Merckx. (AP)

Earps to leave Man United: England goalkeeper Mary Earps is leaving Manchester United after a five-year stint, a third big departure for the club's women's team in less than a week.

Earps helped England win the 2022 European Championship and reach last year's World Cup final - where she was named best goalkeeper of the tournament - but said on social media Saturday that it was time for a "new challenge" in her club career.

"It's a decision I've gone backwards and forwards on for some time, and is not one I've made lightly.' Earps wrote. "The club is about to undergo a period of transition, and unfortunately I don't feel it aligns with the timing of where I'm at in my career, therefore I think now is the right time to make a change and embark on a new challenge." (AP)



Kuwait Portuguese head coach, Rui Pinto supervising the team training session in this file photo.



Latest sports scores at — http://sports.arabtimesonline.com PAYS 'pledges' full support for the Queiroz & Cuper among front runners to replace Pinto as Kuwait head coach team in 2026 World Cup qualifiers **By Khaled El Anzi**

KUWAIT CITY, June 29: The Acting Director General of the Public Authority for Youth and Sports, Bashar Abdullah, confirmed that the Authority is utilizing all its resources to support all national teams, including the national football team, during its upcoming journey in the final qualifiers for the 2026 World Cup, which will begin next September. The draw placed Kuwait in Group B alongside South Korea, Iraq, Jordan, Oman, and Palestine.

Abdullah stated that immediately after the draw ceremony, he communicated directly with Kuwait Football Association officials to ensure full support during this crucial stage. He expressed his readiness to provide everything necessary for the team in the coming period. Abdullah emphasized his full confidence in the players to satisfy fans eager for success,



Bashar Abdullah - Acting Director Generalof the Public Authority for Youth and Sports

highlighting the need for everyone to rally behind the team to achieve their goals.

Additionally, the Director General reiterated the Authority's commitment to supporting Kuwaiti athletes participating in the Paris 2024 Olympic Games, the world's largest sporting event. He assured continuous followup on all details concerning the partici-

SOCCER

pants to create a positive and effective environment for their success.

Abdullah also stressed that the Authority's doors are open to all athletes and especially to successful clubs and federations. These entities have earned full support due to their achievements, reflecting the Authority's dedication to advancing Kuwaiti sports and ensuring its rightful place on the global stage.

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff KUWAIT CITY, June 29: The Football Association is currently reviewing the biographies of several coaches from different backgrounds to select a new head coach for the Blues, replacing the current Portuguese head coach, Rui Pinto.

Among the top candidates are Portuguese coach Carlos Queiroz, Argentine Hector Cuper, Iraqi Adnan Hamad, Egyptian Hossam El-Badry, and Algerian Jamal Belmadi.

The decision to seek a new coach stems from the Blues' underwhelming performance in the joint Asian qualifiers for the 2026 World Cup in the United States, Canada, and Mexico, as well as the 2027 Asian Cup in Saudi Arabia.

The Association believes that Rui tar (0-3 and 1-2). Pinto has not made a significant impact on Kuwait's performance since taking over two years ago, delivering modest results in both friendly and official matches. Despite qualifying for the Asian Cup finals and advancing to the third round of the

SOCCER

World Cup qualifiers, critics argue that Pinto's tenure was marked by struggles, particularly in a group that included India, Afghanistan, and Qatar.

Under Pinto's leadership, Kuwait managed only two victories against Afghanistan (4-0 and 1-0), while suffering a defeat (0-1) and a draw (0-0) against India, and losing twice to Qa-

Among the five coaches, Cuper and Belmadi appear to be the frontrunners to lead Al-Azraq, while Queiroz, El-Badry, and Hamad are also being considered. The new coach is expected to be announced within the next two days.

The Association hopes that the team will perform impressively in the third round of the World Cup qualifiers, placed in a balanced group with South Korea, Iraq, Jordan, Ôman, and Palestine, and make a significant impact, especially since they haven't reached this stage in 19 years.

Meanwhile, the regular general assembly of the Kuwait Football Association will take place this evening in the conference hall at the Federation's headquarters in Jaber Al-Ahmad International Stadium.

Brazil trounce Paraguay, eye last 8

LAS VEGAS, June 29, (Xinhua): Vinicius Junior scored twice as Brazil all but secured a spot into the Copa America quarterfinals on Friday with a 4-1 victory over Paraguay.

Real Madrid forward Vinicius netted either side of a Savinho strike before Omar Alderete reduced the deficit with a long-range effort.

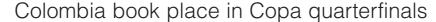
Lucas Paqueta made up for an earlier penalty miss by converting from the spot just after the hour as Brazil clinched its first win of the tournament.

The result leaves the five-time World Cup winner second in Group D with four points, two points behind Colombia and three ahead of thirdplaced Costa Rica. The Selecao also has a plus-three goal difference - six ahead of Costa Rica - with one groupstage match remaining. Paraguay is already guaranteed of

SOCCER

elimination, having lost each of its first two matches.

Paqueta squandered the chance to put his side ahead just after the half-





Max takes pole for Austrian GP

SPIELBERG, Austria, June 29, (AP): Max Verstappen is looking unbeatable again at the Austrian Grand Prix.

The Formula 1 leader followed up his win in the sprint race on Saturday with another dominant performance in qualifying to take pole position for the fourth straight year at the Red Bull Ring

It ended a streak of three straight races where the three-time defending F1 champion failed to take pole position, and dealt a blow to his closest rivals who hoped to challenge him on Red Bull's home circuit this weekend.

MOTOR RACING

"It's been a while that we've actually been on pole. So it's a great feeling," Verstappen said. "This is a great statement and hopefully we can also show that tomorrow in the race.'

After qualifying in the last three races was decided by narrow margins, this one wasn't even close.

Verstappen's final lap in the third qualifying session beat McLaren's Lando Norris by 0.404 seconds and earned his eighth pole of the season. Norris' teammate Oscar Piastri was initially third but had his time deleted for narrowly going outside track limits, pushing him down to seventh place and lifting George Russell of Mercedes into third.

Carlos Sainz Jr. of Ferrari and Lewis Hamilton of Mercedes round

hour at Allegiant Stadium when he sent his penalty attempt wide following an Andres Cubas hand ball.

But he went some way to making amends moments later as his delightful through ball found Vinicius, who dashed away from his marker and slotted a shot below goalkeeper Rodrigo Morinigo.

Girona forward Savinho extended the lead by tapping in from close range after Rodrygo's shot was parried clear by Morinigo.

Brazil's confidence grew by the minute and it extended its lead on the stroke of halftime through Vinicius, who stabbed home a first-time effort after Alderete's errant clearance.

Paraguay emerged from the interval with a renewed sense of purpose and Alderete atoned for his earlier error by controlling a high ball with his chest and thumping an unstoppable 25-yard drive into the bottom-right corner.

But Brazil continued to attack and it was awarded another penalty when Mathias Villasanti was deemed to have blocked Savinho's attempt on goal with his left arm.

Paqueta again stepped up for the spot-kick and this time the West Ham midfielder calmly chipped his shot into the bottom right corner.

Paraguay was reduced to 10 men nine minutes from time after Cubas' studs up challenge on Douglas Luiz earned the Vancouver Whitecaps midfielder a straight red card.

Brazil controlled the match thereafter as it put its campaign back on track following a goalless draw with Costa Rica last Monday.

Colombia secured a place in the Copa America quarterfinals on Friday with a 3-0 victory over Costa Rica, a result that extended the Cafeteros winning sequence to 10 games.

Liverpool forward Luis Diaz put his side ahead from the penalty spot at State Farm Stadium after Jhon Cordoba was brought down by Patrick Sequeira.

Galatasaray's Davinson Sanchez doubled advantage with a towering header following Jhon Arias's corner.

Colombia put the game beyond doubt just after the hour when James Rodriguez's sublime one-touch pass released Cordoba, who smashed a first-time effort into the far corner.

"We have a great group of players that are giving all they have for the team," Diaz said afterwards. "We are slowly moving towards our objective, step by step, but we know there will be some tough games ahead."

top five. Norris entered the weekend hoping to get even closer to Verstappen's pace after consecutive runner-up finishes behind the Dutch driver, but may have to lower his expectations after Red Bull showed much better speed than

McLaren throughout the day.

Kuwait youth team gears up for

World Cup qualifiers in Slovenia

Brazil's Bruno Guimaraes and Paraguay's Julio Enciso, (right), battle for the ball during a Copa America Group D soccer match in Las Vegas. (AP)

Once seen as a unifying force

England fans fall out of love with Southgate

DUESSELDORF, Germany, June 29 (AP): Gareth Southgate was credited with making England fans fall back in love with their national soccer team. Now many are turning on him.

Despite England advancing unbeaten to the round of 16 at the European Championship in Germany, criticism has been fierce.

"I would have got rid of him before this tournament," said Charlie O'Shea, a 32-year-old England fan from London, who traveled to Germany for the tournament.

The team isn't "really gelling," said O'Shea, wearing a retro blue England shirt.

"I think he needs to pick players that actually fit together in terms of the system ... and I don't think he's got the personality to actually do that," he said. "When he's in the changing room when it's not going well, are you going to listen to Gareth Southgate? No.3

SOCCER

The reactions toward Southgate are in stark contrast to previous tournaments when England fans serenaded him to a reworking of the 2001 hit "Whole Again" by British girl band Atomic Kitten, changing the words to 'Southgate you're the one.'

The vest he wore at the 2018 World Cup became one of the iconic symbols of the tournament and his team was a penalty shootout away from winning the last Euros - losing to Italy and missing out on England's first trophy since the 1966 World Cup.

Beyond soccer, Southgate was widely seen as unifying force during a period of upheaval and uncertainty in English politics and society. Since he was hired

Bardet wins hot, hilly opening Tour stage RIMINI, Italy, June 29, (AP): Two-

time podium finisher Romain Bardet won the opening stage of the Tour de France and claimed the yellow jersey on Saturday as cycling's biggest race began in Italy for the first time.

Combined with severe heat, one of the most challenging opening legs in recent memory created problems for Mark Cavendish and many other rid-

Tadej Pogacar, who is aiming to follow up his Giro d'Italia title with a third Tour trophy, and two-time defending champion Jonas Vingegaard both finished safely in the main pack, though.

Vingegaard's performance was especially encouraging, considering he

in 2016 - just months after a divisive referendum on leaving the European Union - the U.K. has seen four prime ministers, with the possibility of a fifth following a general election on July 4, just before the Euro 2024 quarterfinals.

He weighed in on political issues supporting players to take a knee in support of the Black Lives Matter movement and encouraging people to have COVID-19 vaccinations during the pandemic.

"I suspect and feel that Gareth Southgate's instinct is always as a unifier. He likes to try to bring people together and is driven by a sort of positivity," playwright and screenwriter James Graham told The Associated Press.

Graham wrote the West End play "Dear England" about how Southgate exceeded expectations to guide the national team to the semifinals of the 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 and had not raced since.

Bardet, the Frenchman who finished second in 2016 and third in 2017 and is racing his last Tour, attacked with slightly more than 50 kilometers (30 miles) to go. He caught up with his DSM-Firmenich PostNL teammate Frank van den Broek, who was in an early breakaway, and the pair just barely held off the onrushing peloton in the flat finish.

Bardet surged ahead of his teammate at the line and pointed to him to say, "Thank you."

World Cup in 2018 and the final of the last Euros

He believes Southgate speaks to a 'gentle patriotism" rather than the "aggressive or toxic culture wars we've been living in, in the rest of the political environment."

The play "Dear England" will be adapted for television and updated with the outcome of these Euros, which has seen the story take a dramatic turn with some fans losing faith.

There has been little sign of any feel-good factor in Germany, with England only winning one of its three group games - 1-0 against Serbia. The sense among England fans is the team, which was one of the pretournament favorites, is underachieving despite having star players like Harry Kane, Jude Bellingham and Phil Foden.

By Khaled El Anzi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

LJUBLJANA, June 29: Today marks the beginning of the second phase of our national youth handball team's training camp in Slovenia. This camp is part of their preparation for the 18th edition of the Asian Championship, which also serves as the 2025 World Cup Qualifiers. The championship will be held in Amman, Jordan, from July 16-26, with Kuwait competing in Group B alongside Iran and China.

Under the guidance of head coach Saeed Hegazy and assistant coach Mohamed Masoudan, the first phase of the camp focused on enhancing technical and physical skills, as well as increasing endurance. During this initial phase, the youth team played two friendly matches against Slovenia and Saudi Arabia.

In the second phase, starting today, the coaching staff will concentrate on finalizing the starting lineup for the Asian Championship and will include two additional friendly matches

Team director Abdulaziz Al-Zaabi expressed satisfaction with the initial preparation phase, noting the clear and multiplied efforts of everyone involved. He praised the players for their commitment both on and off the field, despite the demanding daily schedule. "We were concerned about the pos-

HANDBALL

sibility of injuries during the camp, but so far, the team has remained injuryfree, and we hope this continues," Al-Zaabi said.

He added, "I have full confidence in the players and their ability to perform at a level worthy of the name and reputation of Kuwaiti handball," also extending gratitude to the Handball Association for its support of the team



Players in a training session.



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