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KPC posts \$8.4bn net for FY '22-'23

Opinion

revolution of old and outdated law

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

THERE is no doubt that the continuity of the government depends on a number of criteria that cannot be overlooked; otherwise it will be like its predecessors, especially since after liberation. There have been 14 governments to this day, but all of them were unable to do the right thing either because of its shortcomings in decisions or due to the instability of the ministerial position, or its boss was not sagacious in decision-making.

That is why they passed quickly. Some of them ended in scandals, either in relation to its prime minister or the ministers. This cleared the path for some to persist in putting pressure on the Cabinet to achieve their goals without any confrontation.

Your Highness the Prime Minister, there is no doubt that all Kuwaitis seek to see a stable government that continues to play its role without any obstacles. You have what qualifies you to continue in office, provided that the approach is correct, and the decisions and laws serve the public interest and the people.

This is especially with regard to breaking away from oil and searching for alternative sources of income. This is because it is not possible to rely on the surge of high prices currently, because we have suffered a lot from their decline, which caused large financial deficits reaching the point of the previous thinking about delaying the payment of salaries to the public sector.

All this is due to the aging of laws that must be amended in line with contemporary developments, the movement of countries and the fierce competition between them to attract capital and foreign investment.

This cannot be achieved the luxury of entertaining antisocial laws and violating its freedom, such as proposing the ban on tattoos, plastic surgeries, and other things that do not serve the people, and overlooking what could activate the economic movement.

We are tired of repeating the words that you should follow the example of the neighboring countries and even all the countries of the world, and not ignore the disbelief of the citizens about the decisions that serve no interest except for short-sighted people who do not see more than

their noses.

This is especially with regard to locking down the country, and banning visitors except under ridiculous conditions, which even the Afghan "Taliban" government did not implement, as these conditions neither serve the country, nor allow for a sound financial cycle.

There is no doubt that there are some violators of the visit visa facility but it is the duty of the security services to prevent such violations.

The visitor that we are preventing from entering is someone who will use local taxis and hotels, and will spend his own money here. If he is a businessman or has an industry and wants to transfer it to the country, then it will provide many job opportunities, and thus save a lot of public money and reduce disguised unemployment as a result of random employment in the public sector.

In addition, it will also help with the liberation of the industry from the restrictions imposed on it, and the documentary cycle that has no basis at all, not forgetting that this sector is an added value to the national product, which suffers from limited sources of income. The e-government must also be freed from complex procedures that indicate the lack of understanding of its function.

That is why we keep on saying over and over again - Look at the neighboring countries, and how they issue their visas within minutes. A visitor does not need a university degree or be over fifty years old.

Indeed, Your Highness the Prime Minister, there must be a revolution in the aging laws, which may have been suitable in the past, but are no longer needed by Kuwait, which has money, human wealth, and youth who are able to work. It also has initiatives and ideas. It needs experts who understand the meaning of advancing the national economy, and not people who deliberately shut the country down because they do not understand the meaning of state administration.

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Commission for elections eyed

Cabinet okays draft law to adjourn Assembly session

KUWAIT CITY, July 31, (KUNA): Kuwait's Cabinet on Monday approved a draft law to adjourn the ordinary session of the National Assembly's 17th legislative term after the conclusion of the forthcoming session of parliament.

The draft law has been referred to His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, pending approval, the government's communication center said on its social media platforms

Meanwhile, the National Assembly will hold a special session Tuesday and Wednesday to discuss a draft of establishing a general commission for elections, in addition to presenting the

state's financial status.

The agenda of the special session includes discussing the state's financial status in accordance with the text of Article (150) of the Constitution in addition to four reports of the Budgets and Parliamentary Calculation Com-

It also includes a report of the Budgets Committee and the Parliamentary Final Account on a draft law linking the budget of ministries and government departments for the fiscal year (2024/2023) and the Minister of Finance's statement on the economic, financial and monetary conditions for the fiscal year (2024/2023).

ABK holds conference call

- Details Page 7 -

Day by Day

OH MINISTER of Municipality, I urge you to review the laws and decisions of your ministry and make necessary improvements. Currently, it appears that completing transactions has become a daunting task due to seemingly impossible conditions set forth. It is essential to ensure that the laws are fair and do not serve the interests of specific groups of people indefinitely.

A revolution in decisions and laws is long overdue. It is time to take action and work towards amending outdated and impractical regulations. Asking for a certificate of description for every transaction from institutions that have been in existence for 20 or 50 years seems unnecessary and burdensome. Simple tasks such as painting a wall of a room or office or relocating a toilet should not require such excessive documentation.

Oh Minister of Municipality, have mercy on the visitors, and develop

... Yet tomorrow is another day.

Zaher Matar

Prime Minister ... Kuwait needs a Al-Durra field challenge to Saudi-Iran rapprochement

Tehran 'ready for dialogue with Kuwait'

DUBAI, July 31, (AP): An escalating dispute over a gas field in the Arabian Gulf poses an early challenge to a Chinese-brokered agreement to reconcile regional rivals Saudi Arabia and Iran.

Saudi Arabia and neighboring Kuwait jointly claim the offshore Al-Durra gas field. Iran says it has rights to the field, which it refers to as Arash. The two sides held talks in Iran in March but were unable to agree on a border demarcation.

A spokesman for Iran's Foreign Ministry, Nasser Kanaani, said the country would not tolerate any infringement on its rights, echoing remarks by the coun-

try's oil minister the previous day.
"We have expressed our readiness to engage in dialogue with the Kuwaiti side," Kanaani told reporters Monday. "But if there is no interest in mutual utilization of this joint field, the Islamic Republic of Iran has naturally put the exploration and utilization of the resources on its agenda.

Kuwait's oil minister told Sky News Arabia last week that his country would commence drilling and production without waiting for a deal.

Saudi Arabia has sided with Kuwait, saying the two countries have exclusive ownership of the field, and has called on Iran to return to negotiations.

Saudi Arabia and Iran, which have backed opposite sides in conflicts across the Middle East and accused each other of destabilizing the region, formally restored diplomatic relations in April following a seven-year freeze. They have since reopened embassies and welcomed senior officials on visits.

But they continue to back opposite sides in Yemen's civil war, which is ongoing despite a 15-month ceasefire. Saudi Arabia is also in negotiations with the United States over potentially normalizing relations with Israel, which Iran's leaders have said should be wiped off the

Continued on Page 4



Palestinian demonstrators throw stones and burn tires during a protest against the territory's chronic power outages and difficult living conditions, in Khan Younis, southern Gaza Strip, Sunday, July 30, 2023.

Several thousand people briefly took to the streets across the Gaza Strip chanting 'what a shame' and in one place burned Hamas flags, before police moved in and broke up the protests. (AP)



Palestinian residents flee their home after clashes that erupted between members of the Palestinian Fateh group and Islamist militants in the Palestinian refugee camp of Ein el-Hilweh near the southern port city of Sidon, Lebanon, Sunday, July 30, 2023.

The death toll rose to nine Monday in three days of clashes between Palestinian factions at a refugee camp in Lebanon that have pitted members of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas' Fatah party against Islamist groups. (AP)

Kuwait-Iraq talks transparent, frank

KUWAIT CITY, July 31, (Agencies): The Iraqi Ambassador to Kuwait Al-Manhal Al-Safi has described the visit of Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to Iraq as "successful and fruitful," noting that the meetings took place in an atmosphere of transparency, frankness, reports Al-Qabas

Al-Safi told the daily that all outstanding files were discussed between the two countries, adding: "There were many participants, and it was agreed that the specialized technical committees would continue to work, and these files were discussed and completed

He revealed that the next meeting of the technical committee for demarcating the maritime borders will be held in Baghdad in mid-August, adding: "It was also discussed to make and coordinate joint efforts to combat drugs.

He pointed to inviting Kuwaiti investors and businessmen to enter the Iraqi market, as it represents great investment opportunities in construction, con-

Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah held on Sunday, official talks with the Iraqi counterpart Dr. Fuad Hussein.

The session is within the framework of the official visit that Sheikh Salem and his accompanying delegation are making to the capital of Iraq, Bagh-

Discussion focused on all aspects of bilateral relations and the frameworks for strengthening and developing them in various fields in order to achieve common benefits for the two countries and their

The talks also highlighted ways to increase the level of cooperation in a number of vital and important fields, especially economic, investment and developmental ones, and tackled everything that would achieve the aspirations of the two countries' leader-

Continued on Page 4

Highest in decade

KUWAIT CITY, July 31, (KUNA): The Kuwait Petroleum Corporation and its subsidiaries have posted KD 2.6 billion (about 8.4 billion US dollars) in net profits for the fiscal year 2022-2023, ending on March 31.

"These are the highest net profits we achieved in the past ten years," the Corporation's CEO Sheikh Nawaf Saud Al-Sabah boasted in a press statement on Sunday.

"The driving factor for this achievement: is the Kuwaiti oil sector's success in operating new projects which raised output of crude oil and clean, high-quality products that are high-ly-demanded around the world," he clarified.

Sheikh Nawaf Saud disclosed that the Kuwait Oil Company and the Kuwait Gulf Oil Company succeeded in increasing Kuwait's crude oil production capacity by more than 200,000 barrels per day to 2.8 million barrels per day in the same period.

"After more than eight decades of oil and gas production from the mainland of Kuwait, the KOC drilled Kuwait's first offshore well, as part of a broader KPC's plan to raise production capacity to four million barrels per day by 2035," Sheikh Nawaf Saud said. With regard to global exploration and pro-

duction, he stated that the Kuwait Foreign Petroleum Exploration Company posted in the same fiscal year the highest net profits since its inception in 1981, amounting to more than one billion US dollars. The Corporation's CEO added that the lo-

cal refining capacity of Kuwait surged from 800,000 barrels per day to 1.2 million barrels per day in the FY 2022-2023 It would climb more to 1.4 million barrels

per day with the full operation of the Al-Zour refinery in this quarter of the new fiscal year, he projected. He pointed out that thanks to its refining expansions and innovations in operation,

the Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC) recorded the highest profits in its history this year, hitting KD 1.016 billion (about USD 3.3 billion). On Kuwait's overseas refining capacity, Sheikh Nawaf Saud Al-Sabah indicated that the Duqm refinery in the Sultanate of Oman

would be fully operational by the end of this year, which would push Kuwait's refining capacity from joint ventures in Oman, Italy and Vietnam up to over 600,000 barrels per day of Kuwaiti crude oil.

Newswatch

KUWAIT CITY: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Monday sent a cable of condolences to President of Pakistan Dr. Arif Alvi over the victims of the terrorist attack that took place in northwestern Khyber province, resulting in multiple casualties.

In the cable, His Highness the Amir expressed Kuwait's denunciation of this heinous terrorist act that targeted the lives of innocent people and which contradicts laws and values, wishing speedy recovery to the injured.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh

Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and National Assembly Speaker Ahmad Al-Sadoun also sent a cable of condolences to President of Pakistan Dr. Arif Alvi over the victims of the terrorist attack that took place in northwestern Khyber province, resulting in multiple casualties.

TOKYO: China and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) will hold their first-ever joint air force training next month, the Chinese Defense Ministry said on Monday. According to the annual plan and the con-

sensus reached by the two countries, the Falcon Shield-2023 joint training exercise will be held in China's Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, the ministry said in a statement.

HELSINKI: Denmark's foreign minister said Sunday the government will seek to make it illegal to desecrate the Holy Quran or other religious holy books in front of foreign embassies in the Nordic country. Foreign Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen

said in an interview with the Danish public broadcaster DR that the burning of holy scriptures "only serves the purpose of creating division in a world that actually needs unity.'

EL-ARISH, Egypt: A shooting Sunday at a heavily fortified security facility in the restive part of Egypt's Sinai Peninsula killed at least four police, including a senior officer, two security and health officials said.

At least 21 other forces were wounded in the shooting at the National Security headquarters in el-Arish, the capital city of North **Sinai** province, they said. (AP)

A list of casualties obtained by The Associated Press showed that some forces suffered from gunshots and others faced breathing difficulties from tear gas that was fired inside the facility. There were eight officers among the wounded, the list showed. (AP)

TOKYO: Japanese Defense Minister Yasukazu Hamada and Saudi Defense Minister Prince Khalid bin Salman confirmed on Monday that defense cooperation and exchanges between the two countries are being promoted, Japan's Defense Ministry said.

During their meeting in Tokyo, Hamada and Prince Khalid exchanged views on bilateral defense cooperation and exchanges, including in the field of defense equipment and technology, the ministry said in a statement.

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Expected weather for the next 24 hours:

By Day: Very hot with light to moderate freshening at times northwesterly wind with speeds of 15-50 km/h with a chance for rising dust.

Weather

Kuwait Airport

By Night: Hot to rather hot with Abdalv light to moderate northwesterly Jahra wind with speeds of 12-35 km/h. Salmiyah Ahmadi Min Rec 46 **Station** Max Exp Nuwaisib **Kuwait City** 48

Wafra

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



Editor-in-Chief Ahmed Al-Jarallah, Russian Ambassador Vladimir Zheltov, and Diplomatic Attache Alexander Andreev



Editor-in-Chief Ahmed Al-Jarallah, Russian Ambassador Vladimir Zheltov, Mishaal Ahmed Al-Jarallah, Diplomatic Attache Alexander Andreev (extreme left) and Bassam Al-Qassas (extreme right)

Editor-in-Chief receives Russian ambassador

The Editor-in-Chief of Arab Times and Al Seyassah newspapers Ahmed Al-Jarallah, received in his office at Dar Al-Seyassah, the Ambassador of the Russian Federation to Kuwait, H.E. Vladimir Zheltov, and the diplomatic attache,

Alexander Andreev, in the presence of Managing Director Mishaal Ahmed Al-Jarallah. Friendly conversations were exchanged, and issues of common interest were discussed, especially with regard to the media field

Absolute ban on virtual assets

Bid to combat money-laundering, terror financing



Four authorities impose total ban on use of virtual assets.

Other Voices

Cash handouts, pay hikes will not bring 'satisfaction'

By Ahmad alsarraf

The proposal to purchase 'earned annual leave' emerged from a standpoint that exuded arrogance. It presumed that money was abundant, and people deserved it, all the while aiming

to buy public loyalty and concitizens vince that the government genuinely cared for their welfare.

no disagreement on the principle that citizens deserve to enjoy the country's prosperity, it's evident that true enjoyment doesn't



come solely from cash amounts or quick salary increases that slip away through their fingers.

Rather, genuine enjoyment is derived from an improved standard of living: better infrastructure, well-maintained roads, the creation of parks, and access to quality education, modern hospitals and advanced healthcare, a secure social safety net, dignified retirement options, nursing homes for the elderly, vibrant cultural institutions, and active community engagement. Frivolous cash payments, as proposed, are prone to wastefulness.

The law promoting cash payments for vacations was presented as beneficial for citizens, and its cost was reduced to facilitate its passage. However, in response to a parliamentary question, it was revealed that the actual expense for purchasing employee vacations amounted to one billion dinars more than three times the estimated

The Undersecretary of the Ministry of Finance justified this increase, claiming it was due to pressure from representatives - an unacceptable excuse in the eyes of active MPs Abdel Wahhab Al-Essa and Al-Asfoor.

Further investigation uncovered another scandal – the 300 million dinars allocated for buying vacations were arbitrarily set, not grounded in reality, revealing a clear government miscalcu-

Additionally, the unexpected surge in demand for the sale of licenses from government employees caught the Ministry of Finance off-guard, leading to a submission to the fait accompli, with the requested amounts being disre-

The billion dinars spent on purchasing employee loyalty or vacations largely went to waste, as very few employees invested or saved it for the future. Instead, the money could have been strategically utilized to improve everyone's lives at a much lower cost. if managed with foresight and ingenu-

The laxity and lack of responsibility in exceeding allocated amounts and obtaining supplementary credits indicate a disregard for laws, constitutional texts, customs, and accounting principles within the state. These actions suggest that our conditions have not been, and will not be, conducive to progress unless there is a fundamental change in approach and governance.

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KUWAIT CITY, July 31: Four supervisory authorities - the Capital Markets Authority, the Central Bank of Kuwait, the Ministry of **Commerce and Industry, and the Insurance** Regulatory Unit - which are members of the **National Committee for Combating Money** Laundering and Financing of Terrorism, have affirmed the absolute ban on using virtual assets as a payment or investment tool, reports Al-Qabas daily.

This came within the scope of strengthening efforts to combat money laundering and terrorism financing, and was based on the conclusions of the study prepared by the National Committee for Combating Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism regarding the required commitment for applying recommendation No. 15 of the international requirements, issued by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) related to dealing with virtual

According to informed sources, these moves come within the framework of the State of Kuwait's preparations for the process of mutual evaluation, to which the State of Kuwait will be subjected, in the field of combating money laundering

Virtual assets are defined as assets that have a digital representation of their value, that can be digitally traded or transferred, and that can be used for payment or investment purposes or the other corresponding value.

In separate circulars, the four entities affirmed that virtual assets do not include digital representations of paper currencies, securities, and other financial assets that were discussed in another part of the FATF recommendations. Those entities affirmed their commitment to the following:

1. Absolute prohibition of the use of virtual assets as a payment tool/method, or to recognize it as a decentralized currency in the State of Kuwait. Therefore, you must refrain from conducting transactions whereby virtual currencies are used as a payment tool/method within the scope of this pro-

2. It is prohibited to deal with virtual assets as a means of investment. Therefore, it is necessary to refrain from providing this type of services to any of the clients.

3. It is prohibited to issue or grant to any natural or legal person within the State of Kuwait a license to provide virtual asset services as a commercial business for his own benefit or on behalf of others (in addition to the fact that no licenses have been previously issued in this regard).

4. Securities regulated by the Central Bank of Kuwait and other securities and financial instruments regulated by the Capital Markets Authority are excluded from this prohibi-

5. Absolute ban on all virtual currency/asset mining activi-

The regulatory authorities called on the institutions that subject to their supervision to constantly educate customers about the risks that may result from dealing in virtual assets (which are carried out through transactions outside the State of Kuwait with the knowledge of customers), especially encrypted currencies because they do not carry a legal status, and does not get issued or supported by any government. It is also not linked to any asset or issuer, and the prices of these assets are always driven by speculation that exposes them to a sharp decline.

The measures or penalties stipulated in article 15 of law No. 106/2013 on combating money laundering and terrorism financing shall apply to anyone who violates this circular without prejudice to the penalties stipulated in each supervi-

Unified e-visa for trip to Russia starts Aug 1

KUWAIT CITY, July 31: The Russian Ambassador to Kuwait Vladimir Zheltov announced that the amended system for issuing entry visas to the Russian Federation will enter into force on August 1 through the electronic platform for issuing the unified electronic visa, according to the list of countries approved by the Government of the Russian Federation, reports Al-Qabas daily.

In a press statement, Ambassador Zheltov said the list of countries currently includes Kuwait and 51 other countries.

He explained that the new system enables citizens of these countries wishing to visit the Russian Federation to obtain entry visas of a new type - the unified electronic visa - through the electronic website - https://visa.kdmid.ru/ - or via a mobile application available for download on the same site.

In order to obtain the unified electronic visa, the visa applicant must enter his personal data through the aforementioned electronic platform, and attach a personal photo in addition to the photo of the main page of the passport. There is no need to submit any other documents.



Deputy Minister of Defense Sheikha Dr. Shamayel Ahmed Khaled Al-Sabah during her meeting with the Chief of Army Staff of the People's Republic of Bangladesh General S M Shafiuddin Ahmed.

Kuwait, Bangladesh discuss cooperation

Deputy Minister of Defense Sheikha Dr. Shamayel Ahmed Khaled Al-Sabah reviewed with the Chief of Army Staff (CAS) of Bangladesh Army General S M Shafiuddin Ahmed, SBP (BAR), OSP, ndu, psc, PhD, aspects of cooperation and bilateral work between the two

The Ministry of Defense said in a press statement today, Monday, that Sheikha Dr. Shamayel Al-Sabah received Army General S M Shafiuddin

Ahmad and his accompanying delega-

During the meeting, they discussed a number of issues of common interest, in addition to reviewing aspects of cooperation and joint bilateral work between the two friendly countries.

of the General Staff of the Administration and Manpower Authority, Major General Dr. Khaled Al-Kandari, and a number of army leaders. (KUNA)

'India ban not to hit rice supply'

Water use exceeds 19 mln gallons

KUWAIT CITY, July 31: Informed sources in the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy expect the electrical loads, Tuesday and Wednesday, the power and water consumption to reach record levels, surpassing the highest recorded in the current summer, which amounted to 16,370 MW in July, reports Al-Rai daily.

The sources said this is due to the high temperature and the maximum expected ranges between 50 and

52 degrees Celsius. The sources pointed to the efforts made by the officials and employees of the operation and maintenance of power stations, during the current period, to avoid the occurrence of any emer-



Fahd Al-Otaibi

gency problems in the production units to ensure that the ministry's services reach all consumers around the clock, pointing out that the rate of water consumption during the past two days exceeded the rate of production by up to about 19 million imperial gallons.

The sources explained that "the ministry is making up for the shortage through the strategic reserve, which currently stands at 3,793 million imperial gallons," noting that consumption rates reached a record of 518 million gallons, while the production rate was 499 million gallons.

On the other hand, meteorologist Fahd Al-Otaibi expected that the maximum temperature would be recorded in the middle of this week, a temperature ranging between 50 and 52 degrees Celsius, and that the high temperatures would begin to gradually decline by the end of next August.

Rice supply sufficient: The Minister of Commerce and Industry and Minister of State for Youth Affairs, Muhammad Othman Al-Aiban, stated that Kuwait's stock of rice is reassuring, and covers its needs for a full year, so citizens will not be affected by the repercussions of India's decision to ban the export of rice, and it will not affect the additional shipments of rice that the Kuwait Catering Company has signed contracts for supply as per scheduled dates, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Al-Aiban indicated that the Ministry of Commerce and Industry is closely following the changes and developments that supply commodities are exposed to in the List awaits nod

'Leave cash soon'

KUWAIT CITY, July 31: According to reliable sources, the work team for implementing the rules and controls for entitlement and disbursement of cash allowance for the balance of periodic leaves while serving in the Ministry of Social Affairs completed a new list of 68 employees eligible for the allowance worth a total of KD 183,000, which is expected to be disbursed very soon after the list is approved by the Acting Undersecretary Abdulaziz Sari, reports Aljarida daily.

They explained that the oversight

authorities, represented by the Office of Employment Affairs of the Civil Service Commission (CSC), finished reviewing the names of these employees, and then submitted them to the ministry's Financial Affairs Department to complete their disbursement

The ministry will continue to pay the allowance successively as soon as the oversight authorities finish reviewing and approving the lists of beneficiaries in accordance with the rules and conditions of eligibility set by the Civil Service Council.

Meanwhile, Undersecretary Sari issued a decision to rotate about 140 financial and administrative officers appointed from the Ministry of Social Affairs within the cooperative societies distributed over all parts of the country. This is aimed at developing work and renewing blood, and in accordance with the principle of transparency. Periodic rotation between supervisors is an essential part and a positive matter in order to advance collaborative work, just like with the employees in any oversight body, where there are changes implemented for the sake of work.

global markets, especially rice, given that rice and wheat are among the most important basic foodstuffs in Kuwait, so there are direct instructions to the Kuwait Catering Company to enhance the country's stock of rice and build a large food stock of food commodities, which guarantees the stability of food security locally, and enhances the country's ability to face any emergency

KUWAIT CITY, July 31: Deputy Prime Mining opportunity to the largest number of those ister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Ahmed wishing to re-enlist in the military service, in Al-Fahd has cancelled the term condition for leaving the military service for those wishing to re-enlist among the non-commissioned officers and civilians, along with the adoption of the decision to increase the age requirement to 55 years old in accordance with the

Move to allow rejoin military duty

regulations set by the Kuwait Army General Staff, reports Al-Anba daily. The minister's decision is aimed at givorder to benefit from their scientific and field experiences to improve the level of readiness in all sectors of the Army. The Kuwait Fire Force announced the doubling of applicants' admission to Kuwait Fire Force courses from 300 to 600 applicants from various disciplines, under the directives of the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Talal Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, according to KUNA.

diwaniya 💎 چیوانیة



A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

'Diversifying Kuwait's presence on British soil vital to align with allies'

"ON THE evening of July 11, Ambassador Khaled Al-Duwaisan and I, representing the Kuwait-British Friendship Association, held a meeting with some of Kuwait's British friends. Among the attendees were members of parliament, ministers, political and media influencers, as well as Lord Ahmed -- Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and Lord Howell -- former Minister for Petroleum," columnist Abdullah Bishara wrote for Al-Qabas daily.

"Our primary focus was on the relations between our two countries. We emphasized Kuwait's urgent need for a deterrent that ensures its independence, sovereignty,

cultural heritage, and addresses the tense regional situation, including Iran's instability and the complexi-

ties in Iraq.
"We stressed the importance of safeguarding Kuwait's safety and that of other Gulf states, as it is closely intertwined with global security in political, economic, and developmental aspects.

"During our discussion, we highlighted the historical significance of the British role in preserving Kuwait's integrity, em-

phasizing their commitment, agility in decision-making, and ability to overcome challenges. From 1899 to 1961, Britain displayed loyalty in safeguarding Kuwait's safety and sovereignty, establishing itself as a reliable ally

Bishara

regardless of political changes.
"We also acknowledged the significant role played by British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher in mobilizing President George Bush to confront the invasion of Kuwait promptly, drawing parallels to her determination during the Falkland Islands conflict.

"We made it clear that the British presence in Kuwait has no time limit considering the ongoing volatility and

has no time limit, considering the ongoing volatility and ambitions in the region. The British side comprehended the challenges Kuwait faces and appreciated Kuwait's commitment to its constitution's principles.

"During the discussion, there were suggestions to activate Kuwait's role in humanitarian aspects globally, particularly in regions like Syria, Lebanon, Sudan, Asia, and Africa. Emphasis was placed on promoting Kuwait's contributions through parliamentary and cultural festivals and highlighting its economic and investment endeavors in London.

"The presence of members from the House of Commons and the House of Lords enriched the conversation, and it was recognized that parliamentary delegation visits play a crucial role in strengthening communication between our countries. The 70th anniversary celebration of the Kuwait Investment Office in London was also mentioned as a testament to the enduring partnership.

"We were pleased that the British participants acknowledged Kuwait's need for a deterrent to safeguard its identity and independence. Lord Ahmed of Wimbledon, the British Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, expressed his agreement with Kuwait on future meetings within the framework of the strategic partnership.

"We were touched by the warm welcome given to Ambassador Brigadier General Khaled Al-Duwaisan, who has lived in London for thirty years. His humility, vitality, and dedication to his duties were appreciated by the British side, and they recognized his significant contributions to diplomatic leadership over the past two decades.

"We concluded that this discussion should be followed by further communication beyond official dialogues to fully utilize the benefits of our permanent strategic partnership. The Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber, acknowledged the importance of communicating with the global family, particularly strategic partners like Britain.

"Kuwait's security was identified as resting on three pillars: a strong and technologically advanced Kuwaiti army, cooperation within the Gulf Cooperation Council, and strategic partnerships with allies dedicated to Kuwaiti and Gulf security. Given Britain's historical understanding of Kuwait's reality, it stands in the forefront of such alliances.

"The symposium concluded with everyone's satisfaction, and we recognized the need to diversify Kuwait's presence on British soil to align with our alliances, especially with the United States. There was a hope that Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Ahmed Al-Fahd would take the lead in this regard.

"Finally, our British friends displayed interest in Kuwaiti women's contributions to the nation's development and suggested arranging visits of Kuwaiti women's delegations to influential sites within the British political and media sphere through the Kuwaiti embassy

Also:

"A few days ago, the Ministry of Finance revealed the budget for the year 2022-2023, bringing glad tidings that signaled the commencement of a 'new era' bearing the fruits of reform efforts in various sectors of the country,"

columnist Mishari Al-Mutairi wrote for Al-Anba daily. "The announcement marked a significant milestone as it was the first time in nine years that the state had a surplus from its budget, validating the progress on the right path and the successful recovery of the nation. This achievement was attributed to the wise leadership of His Highness the Amir, Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad, and the visionary guidance of His Highness the Crown Prince, Sheikh Mishaal Al-Ahmad, whose crucial roles contributed to the positive changes.

"The government's determination to combat corruption and prioritize the interests of citizens played a pivotal role in this transformation. From my personal perspective, the current government appears to be exceptionally strong, drawing strength from the unwavering support of the people, who trust and endorse the Prime Minister.

"The government has been dedicated to implementing reform measures aligned with its policies in managing affairs. This involved significant changes in leadership across various ministries, injecting fresh talent into all sectors of the state. Additionally, they established mechanisms to safeguard public funds and efficiently utilize them in income-generating projects.

"The surplus of 6.368 billion dinars (approximately 20.77 billion dollars) announced by the Ministry of Finance is a remarkable economic achievement. The budget allocated substantial funds, including two billion dinars for purchasing 'earned annual leave' from around 351,600 public sector employees and 600 million dinars as a grant of 3,000 dinars to retirees. Despite the financial obligations, the state managed to achieve a substantial surplus.

"It is evident that the strength of the oil sector, being Kuwait's primary income source, has played a significant role in this success. However, there is a need to ensure the sector's continuous success while also focusing on developing and enhancing other economic sectors. Diversifying the economy and creating new revenue streams beyond oil is essential for sustainable growth.

"Our wise government has shown its capabilities, and I firmly believe it can achieve the success and change that citizens aspire to see. I have no doubt that this government will leave a remarkable mark in Kuwait's history, leading us towards a future of development and

prosperity that we have always dreamed of.
"With the government's dedication, we can look

formative laws, and impactful projects that will shape a brighter future for Kuwait.'

"I have no doubt that Russia is looking for a new strategic partner in the Arab Gulf and with Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, particularly during these difficult political transformations, including change in the global balance of power and the decline of American interest in the Middle East," columnist Hamad Al-Jadaei wrote for Al-Rai daily.

"Therefore, we are living in an advanced stage in the relationship between the Gulf states and the Russian Federation. The GCC countries are adopting a new approach in international relations by adhering to neutrality and strengthening relations with their partners in the security and economic wing, and with oil and gas producers around the world.

"We understand the relationship between the GCC countries and the Russian Federation, a relationship that may not be optional, but obligatory for a moment of balance global energy markets.

"Yes, there is an unprecedented development in the economic partnership and exchange of benefits between the Gulf and Moscow, and there is a strong link which is the OPEC Plus organization. If the State of Kuwait enjoyed strategic relations since the days of the Soviet Union, then the United Arab Emirates is the country that enjoys the most non-oil trade exchange with Moscow, which reached \$2.6 billion, just last year.
"As for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, there is no

doubt that it has officially begun to fill the void left by the American withdrawal and has begun to guide the region's policies with strength, balance and a forwardlooking view.

"The fact that should be clear to everyone is that although the Gulf-Russian relations are excellent and developed, the GCC countries stand at the same distance with all their partners around the world.

"Perhaps, this is best explained through what happened at the Arab Summit last May in Jeddah, when Syria was invited to the summit with Russian mediation. At the same time, Ukrainian President Vladimir Zelensky was invited as a guest of honor in the party.'

"Kuwait Municipality identified various 'diseases' in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh in a study it submitted to the Council of Ministers in September 2022," columnist **Muddafar Abdullah** wrote for **Al-Jarida** daily.

'These 'diseases' include high population density, unregulated traffic, spread of dirt and garbage, damaged public facilities, high crime rate, breach of law, building violations, heavy machinery in inappropriate places, crowding and transformation of residential areas into expulsion areas!

"According to the statistics of the Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI), around 274,000 people are residing in this area — 1.5 percent of whom are Kuwaitis, while the number of non-Kuwaiti males reached 225,000 and the females reached 45,000.

"It is a bachelor community with 'distinction' and an environment for thieves, not to mention that the phenomenon of children whose parents are unknown is growing. The area consists of 2,886 residential units that PACI classified as house, building or temporary shelter. It is either the first or second in the number of crimes recorded in the area's police station. The American Embassy even warned its citizens from entering the area in a previous statement!

"Question: Why is there an area like Jleeb Al-Shuying the rentier economy that affects the national wealth. It creates poor economic activities like recruiting workers without planning or need, municipal corruption, weak security role of the Ministry of Interior, and suspicious silence of previous governments over labor, housing and security issues for decades.

"Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh is a summary of the government's inability to confront the imbalance in the labor market. It is tantamount to permitting a miserable economic activity the recruitment of marginal laborers. This is in addition to providing a dirty back garden near the international airport, Sabah Al-Salem University, Jaber International Sports Stadium and new model residential areas!!'

"The government's action program for the years 2023-2027 consists of five main axes," columnist Dr Faisal Al-Sharifi wrote for Al-Jarida daily. "Meanwhile, the Environment Public Authority has

four objectives as follows: 1. Launch the general framework for improving air

quality and reducing carbon emissions, and then link it with global indicators. 2. Launch and monitor the national solid waste man-

agement strategy by 2040. 3. Launch an electronic platform for supporting the

agricultural and livestock sectors. 4. Launch an electronic platform for supporting and

monitoring the strategy of transitioning into a circular carbon economy to achieve carbon neutrality by 2060. "Despite the importance of these objectives, the government's action program did not establish implementa-

tion mechanisms, costs, health and environmental benefits, and timetables in this regard. "In addition, the time plan for reaching the zero point of carbon neutrality and waste disposal is far away compared with most countries in the world. Some countries have controlled most of their solid waste and reached

advanced stages in achieving carbon neutrality. "As for reducing carbon emissions, the recently announced results of the State of Kuwait on air quality indicators show that it is at the bottom of the list.'

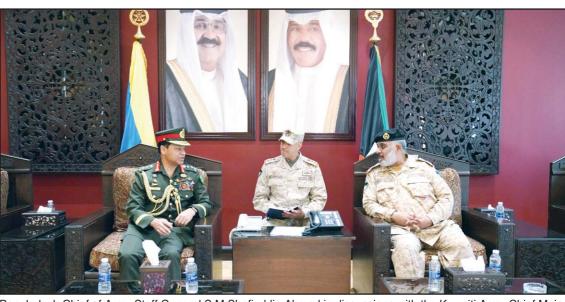
"Tourism, as it is known globally, is an industry like oil, entertainment, sports, etc. It is supposed to generate income for countries. However, in Kuwait, tourism is still viewed without the global concept, so its ranking is either very low or in the last place according to international, or even the Gulf and Arab indicators," columnist Hamad Al-Hamad wrote for Al-Rai daily.

"When we review our reality in the Gulf and Arab countries, we find that our neighbors — the Gulf countries - have benefited from tourism as a source of State income. For example, Fitch Solutions ranked the UAE first with an income equivalent to \$40.8 billion, followed by Saudi Arabia with \$21.7 billion and Qatar with \$16.2 billion, while Kuwait is in last place with an income of \$0.7 billion.

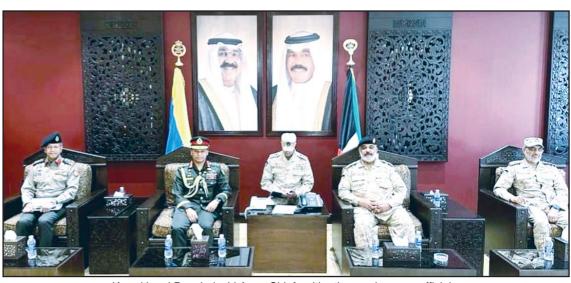
"It is natural that we occupy the last place, because without taxes, there is no income from tourism. We know that in the capitals and cities of other Gulf countries, the tourist pays 15 percent tax on his purchases of goods and entry to theaters, cinemas, restaurants, hotels, even matches, events and others. Therefore, all these amounts are transferred to the State and replenish its budget.

"In Kuwait, the tourist enters and exits, and as the popular proverb says: 'He walks and walks and does not pay a penny to the State', even though he uses its infrastructure, health and other facilities. Only the private sector could benefit, and this is not enough.

— Compiled by Mai Elsoukary



Bangladesh Chief of Army Staff General S M Shafiuddin Ahmad in discussions with the Kuwaiti Army Chief Major General Ghazi Hassan Al-Shammari.



Kuwaiti and Bangladeshi Army Chiefs with other senior army officials

Bangladesh Army Chief on 4 days Kuwait visit

The Respected Chief of Army Staff (CAS) of Bangladesh Army General S M Shafiuddin Ahmad, SBP (BAR), OSP, ndu, psc, PhD met Acting Chief of the General Staff of Kuwait Armed Forces, Major General Ghazi Hassan Al-Shammari on July, 31, 2023. The Acting Chief of the General Staff conveyed his satisfaction to the visiting Chief for the professional attitudes of Bangladeshi soldiers who are deployed in Kuwait under Kuwait Armed Forces.

The visiting Chief of Bangladesh Army conveyed his thanks for inviting him to Kuwait and rendering continuous support to the Bangladeshi deputees. Both the Generals confirmed that the existing co-

operation between the two Armed Forces shall continue and grow further in the days to come. The CAS of Bangladesh Army is scheduled to attend the Call On of one of the Deputy Prime Ministers, Undersecretaries of Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Interior, and National Guard during his 4 days official visit

No 'human trafficking' in **Kuwait; rights protected**

Global standards upheld: Al-Qallaf

KUWAIT CITY, July 31: The National Committee for the Implementation of the National Strategy to Prevent Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants, in the presence of representatives from the ministries of Interior and Justice, the Public Authority for Manpower, and the **International Organization** for Migration in Kuwait, organized an event commemorating the International Day to Combat Trafficking in Persons, which is observed annually on July 30, reports Al-Qabas daily.

During the campaign held under the theme "Together Against Traf-ficking in Persons," Undersecre-

tary of the Ministry of Justice, Hashem Al-Qallaf, emphasized Kuwait's dedication to upholding international standards in preventing human trafficking and smuggling



of migrants, as well as safeguarding the rights of victims.

Al-Qallaf highlighted that human trafficking has become a global con-

7 held for practicing immorality

KUWAIT CITY, July 31: The Public Relations and Security Media Department of the Ministry of Interior stated that the General Department of Criminal Investigation, represented by the Public Morals Protection Department, arrested 7 men of Asian nationality

on charges of practicing immorality and immoral acts at a massage institute in Salmiya in exchange for sums of money, reports Al-Rai

The department said the seven men have been referred to the competent authorities.

cern, representing a grave violation of fundamental human rights and freedoms. He stressed that this criminal activity knows no borders and takes various forms, depending on each state's interpretation of the concept of trafficking and its commitment to respecting human rights principles. He further explained that Kuwait's

strong values of tolerance, brotherhood, and respect for others are reflected in the country's legislation, which addresses human trafficking comprehensively, enacting severe penalties for perpetrators to protect victims and witnesses.

Notably, Kuwait enacted the Anti-Human Trafficking Law in 2013, prescribing penalties ranging from 15 years' imprisonment to the death penalty in cases of victim fatalities alongside other relevant laws and the establishment of the center for sheltering expatriate workers. As of the present, the center has provided its services to over 5,000 beneficiaries since 2018.

Al-Qallaf reaffirmed the government's unwavering commitment across all sectors to combat this crime and provide maximum protection to victims. As part of this commitment, Kuwait established the permanent national committee responsible for implementing the anti-trafficking strategy in 2018, with the active participation of relevant ministries and

Mazen Abu Al-Hassan, the head of the United Nations Migration Agency in Kuwait, commended Kuwait for being one of the pioneers in the region to enact laws against human trafficking. He defined human trafficking as the recruitment, transportation, harboring, or exploitation of individuals under coercion, force, deception, or vulnerability.

Aseel Al-Mazyad, the Director of the Public Relations and Media Department and official spokesperson for the Public Authority for Manpower, expressed the authority's dedication to combat trafficking in persons through its involvement in the permanent national committee.

She emphasized Kuwait's significant role in this crucial field and the authority's efforts to educate employers about human rights, especially in relation to protecting workers.

The Permanent National Committee affirmed its commitment to enhancing international cooperation in the fight against trafficking in persons, recognizing the transnational nature of the

'No power cut in some areas'

KUWAIT CITY, July 31: The Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy has clarified that the news published by some media outlets about the air conditioning system shutdown in some schools and government agencies; as well as the power cut in industrial areas, chalets and farms, is inaccurate, reports Al-Jarida daily.

In a press statement, the ministry revealed that the information included in the published news is part of its emergency plan, which is prepared annually before the summer season. It said the plan takes into account all possible scenarios and strategies to provide alternatives in emergency cases only.

The ministry added that it is continuously conducting public awareness campaigns on conserving electricity and water, reducing waste, and proper use of national re-



Reduced diesel quota expected to hinder shrimp fishing season

Council member calls for building parking for boats



Minister of Interior Sheikh Talal Khaled during the graduation ceremony.

Minister of Interior witnesses graduation ceremony of 5 female university students

(KUNA): First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Talal Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah witnessed on Sunday, the graduation of five female university students (non-commissioned officers) and their promotion to the rank of lieutenant.

The General Department of Relations and Security Media at the Ministry of Interior said in a press statement that Sheikh Talal Al-Khalid stressed, during his meeting with the graduties in applying the law, the sciences, and the skills they acquired during the study into a practical reality to advance security work.

The Minister of Interior congratulated the graduates on their new ranks, stressing their commitment to the oath, and that they put the country and the citizens as a trust and the fear of God before their eyes.

The acting director of the Officers Training Institute, Brigadier General ates, the need for them to Fahd Al-Ghareeb, had read

KUWAIT CITY, July 31, assume their responsibili- the appointment decision, while the head of the Examinations Affairs Department, Brigadier Bader Al-Mutaga, read the oath.

The graduation ceremony was attended by the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior, Lieutenant General Anwar Al-Barjas, the Assistant Undersecretary for the Office of the Minister of Interior, Major General Hamed Al-Baloul, and the Assistant Undersecretary for Education and Training Affairs, Major General Badr AlKUWAIT CITY, July 31: The shrimp fishing season is facing hurdles even before the season kicks off on Aug 1 as the reduced fuel quota for fishing came to an end and the fishing boats assembled at the pier, waiting to fill diesel, which is crucial for the upcoming shrimp fishing inside Kuwait's territorial waters, reports Al-Rai daily.

The head of the Kuwaiti Federation of Fishermen, Dhaher Al-Suwayyan, expressed concern as he mentioned that the diesel tanks at Naqat Al-Shamlan and Fahaheel piers remained empty, posing a serious threat to the shrimp season.

He emphasized that unless diesel became available and the quota returned to its previous level, the fishing boats would not be able to set out for their fishing activities.

Al-Suwayyan urged the government to pay attention to the fishing sector and remove hindrances that affect the fishermen, including visa restrictions, fishing restrictions, and stringent laws that favor the consumption of imported fish over fresh fish caught locally.

Meanwhile, citing the high cost of marine marinas in Kuwait, which ranges from 600 to 2,000 dinars annually per berth, a member of the Municipal Council, Fahd Al-Abdul Jader, has submitted a proposal to establish surface and multi-storey boat parking in various locations around the country, reports Al-Rai daily. In his proposal, Al-Abdul-Jader stressed that "Kuwait is considered one of the countries known for requesting boats, and one of the important countries for its factories.

Statistics also show that the Kuwaiti demand for purchasing boats represents 40 percent of boat sales in the Middle East, pointing out that due to the increase in the number of boat owners annually several complaints have been received from some citizens who complain about the parking of boats in random places within residential areas, which causes problems with neighbors.

He added, "The main problem facing boat owners and dealers is the lack of berths or parking lots near the beaches to accommodate the increasing number of boats.'



Firemen on inspection round before closure of factories.

'Apply safety, fire protection requirements'

DGFD shuts 3 factories for violating safety measures

KUWAIT CITY, July 31: The Public Relations and Media Department of the Directorate-General of Fire Department (DGFD) said the department has administratively closed 3 factories in the Ahmadi and Sabhan regions for violating safety and fire prevention requirements because they contained chemicals and flammable liquids after the end of the period of notifications and warnings granted to these factories to remove these violations, reports Al-Rai daily.

This comes as a continuation of the cam-

paigns of the inspection teams of the prevention sector on various commercial and investment buildings, industrial plots, factories, etc., which are subject to safety and fire prevention systems, and safety procedures are followed in them.

The DGFD has called on the owners and tenants of factories, industrial plots, commercial and investment buildings to apply safety and fire protection requirements and remove violations in order to avoid administrative closure and to achieve community

Three services included on 'Sahel'

Total retirement pension, share must not exceed KD 1,020: min

KUWAIT CITY, July 31: Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Oil, Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investment, and Acting Minister of Finance Dr. Saad Al-Barrak, has issued a decision regarding the regulations for collection and determination of the minimum share in one or more pensions, following the Public Institution for Social Security (PIFSS) Board of Directors' approval through circulation, reports Al-Anba daily.

The daily added, as per the amended Resolution 5/1978, the total sum of the retirement pension and share from one or more pensions must not exceed 1,020 dinars. This limit will be taken into consideration when redistributing the pension, in accordance with Article 75 of the PIFSS Law. The decision specifies that "the recipient can accumulate shares from multiple pensions, provided the total does not surpass 1,020 dinars.

The minimum shares to be granted are 273 dinars for widows or husbands, 210 dinars for each of the parents, 139 dinars for each son, son-in-law, and daughter-in-law, and 136 dinars for each brother, sister, or double the entitled share, whichever is lower.

3 e-services added: Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Communications Dr Ahmed Al-Mejren has announced the inclusion of three electronic services on the 'Sahel' application, reports Al-Anba daily.

In a recent press statement, Al-Mejren disclosed this is part of the ministry's plan to develop its electronic services. He pointed out this is an essential stage towards accelerating digital transformation that will improve the efficiency and speed of completing government transactions.

to collecting fees for the services provided by the ministry and issuing clearance to customers. He added these services are as ■ Send notification to customers about

He said the electronic services are related

their outstanding bills based on the civil identification numbers registered in the automated system of the ministry. ■ Send notification to customers upon

completion of the payment process including the updated balance statement. Through this process, the subscriber can obtain the invoice electronically.

■ Issue a clearance electronically if the customer has no outstanding bill.

Kuwait-Iraq

Continued from Page 1

The session also delve into ways to bolster development and prosperity between the

During the session, the two ministers agreed on the importance of resolving all outstanding issues between the two countries, foremost of which is the issue of completing the demarcation of the maritime borders between the State of Kuwait and the Republic of Iraq beyond the 162 mark, in a way that would contributes to strengthening bilateral relations and achieves common interests, in addition to limiting smuggling operations.

Combating drugs, illegal hunting or trespassing on sovereign borders and joint cooperation were also reviewed in this regard.

For his part, Sheikh Salem praised the positive steps and measures taken by the technical committees in this regard, notably the issue of the remains of Kuwaiti martyrs, prisoners and missing persons, Kuwaiti property, and the Kuwaiti National Archives,

which were all tackled during the session. Sheikh Salem also praised efforts exerted by the Iraqi government towards finding the remains of the Kuwaiti martyrs, prisoners and missing persons since the war, stressing on the need to end this humanitarian issue.

The Kuwaiti minister also asserted on the importance of continuing efforts to recover all Kuwaiti properties, Kuwaiti National Archives, and to completely end these For his part, the Iraqi minister affirmed on

the sincere commitment and effective work towards reaching the desired results, namely towards determining the fate of all prisoners and missing persons and overcoming all obstacles in this regard. The talks also highlighted the latest devel-

opments on the regional and international arenas, geopolitical changes, and their repercussions on the security and stability of the The two sides also exchanged views and ways for the most effective solutions to cri-

ses and challenges regionally and internationally, in addition to the importance of strengthening cooperation. Iraqi President Dr. Abdul Latif Rashid

received on Sunday visiting Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

Deep-seated bilateral relations, means to further develop them on all levels, namely in trade and investment, were discussed during the meeting, where Sheikh Salem conveyed greeting to President Rashid from His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabha, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, as well as best wishes to the brotherly people of Iraq.

Completion of maritime demarcation process between the two countries was also discussed during the meeting

Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammad Al-Sudani also received on Sunday Sheikh

During the reception, the Kuwaiti top diplomat handed a letter from His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah to Premier Al-Sudani on deep-seated bilateral relations, especially in trade and investment, as well as on continuing talks between the two sides through the joint technical and legal committee, which resumed meetings after the successful November 2022 visit of Al-Sudani to the State of Kuwait. The committee is tasked with completing border demarcation process between the two countries.

Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah also met with the Iraqi Parliament Speaker Mohammad Al-Halbousi and a number of Iraqi lawmakers and heads of committees.

In the meeting, Sheikh Salem conveyed greetings on behalf of the Kuwaiti leadership to the Speaker and to the Republic of Iraq and its people, extending his wishes for sustained growth, prosperity, and progress.

The meeting then delved into the strong relations that bind the two countries and the frameworks for supporting and strengthening bilateral cooperation in various fields, especially parliamentary cooperation, in a way that serves common interests and achieves the aspirations of the two countries.

The two sides also discussed vital and diverse areas of cooperation and to how to develop the economic, cultural, educational and security sectors, exchange experiences and strengthen partnership between the two countries.

Two sides mulled enhancing political and parliamentary coordination, cultural and security cooperation, and ways to enhance joint action towards ending all outstanding issues and removing everything that could impact the fraternal relations.

Al-Durra field

Continued from Page 1

"Any step in the direction toward normalization of ties with this aggressive regime will only serve to give it more leeway to commit more atrocities against the Palestinian nation," Kanaani, the Iranian

Foreign Ministry spokesman, said. It's unclear whether the dispute over the gas field, which goes back to the 1960s, will escalate beyond rhetoric. But tensions are already high in the Arabian Gulf, where the U.S. is building up military forces in response to what it says is Iran's unlawful seizure of oil tankers and harassment of commercial vessels

Saudi Arabia and Kuwait agreed last year to jointly develop the gas field. Kuwait said at the time that they aimed to produce 1 billion which for the formula to produce 1 84.000. lion cubic feet of natural gas and 84,000 barrels of liquefied gas per day. Iran denounced the agreement as illegal and said it should be included in any such plans.



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SAB's report on work of MoSA reveals a number of violations

Social aid disbursed to undeserving beneficiaries

KUWAIT CITY, July 31: The annual report of the State Audit Bureau, which included several observations and shortcomings that marred the audit and review of the work of the **Ministry of Social Affairs** for the 2022/2023 fiscal year, revealed a number of violations, most notably related to the disbursement of social aid in the light of law No. 12/2011 regarding public aid, reports Aljarida

According to the report, the audit showed the accumulation of financial aid disbursed to undeserving beneficiaries during the aforementioned fiscal year at KD 4.627 million. This resulted in an increase in the balance of accumulated debts since the 2017/2018 fiscal year by KD 21.658 million.

The balance of new amounts that are proven as debts owed by their bankers without right during the current fiscal year increased by one million dinars compared to the 2021/2022 fiscal year. Its balance at the end of this year reached 3.616 million, a percentage increase of 28 percent, as a result of granting aid to groups that do not fulfill requirements for such disbursement, in addition to the continuation of disbursement for cases that are not entitled to the aid.

Observations

There are observations of previous years that are pending without settlement, including those related to computer contracts. The ministry confirmed that all facts related to this department are referred to the concerned investigation authorities to take the necessary action regarding them.

Sources from the Ministry of Social Affairs attributed the reasons for the accumulation of debts to the delay of some government agencies in completing the automated linking process with the ministry, in addition to reducing the value of the monthly deduction of debts from the principal debt (the value of assistance disbursed without right), which resulted in low collection rates

and the length of time taken for that. The continuation of the concerned committee in discovering new debts for







Part of the meeting of the Executive Office of the Forum of specialized qualitative Arab federations.

SAFF's executive bureau meets in Oman

The Executive Bureau of the Specialized Arab Federations Forum convened its sixth session in Salalah city, in southern Oman, on Saturday under auspices of the

The meeting, organized by the Arab Union for Tourist Media, discussed a number of organizational issues and the operating mechanism of the Forum, said Ambassador Plenipotentiary Mohammad Abdul-Qader, director of the Arab League's organizations dept.

routine procedures in force.

KUWAIT CITY, July 31: According to

informed sources, the authorities con-

cerned with the implementation of the

aid that was disbursed in violation of the The sources added, "The cases of law and the regulations and adding them suspension that have a source of into the current financial obligation stands come that can be deducted from (the as an obstacle to increasing collection employer, or the salaries of the Public rates, explaining that the follow-up of such obligations to cases of suspension and deaths takes a lot of time due to the

Institution for Social Security) require a lot of time to address these agencies and pension institutions. As for cases that do not have a

The agenda of the meeting included launching a website for the SAFF as well as the challenges facing the Arab unions, he told KUNA.

It also discussed the agenda of the seventh session of SAFF, due on Monday, and the opening of the third Arab forum for tourism and heritage (the 2023 Oscar for Tourist Media) and the sideline award ceremony of the Arab tourist media and creators. (KUNA)

> source of income that can be deducted from, they require communication with the beneficiary or his relatives to pay in amicable ways, and in the event that this is not possible, then the matter takes some time to address the legal authorities in the Ministry and outside to take the necessary action.

'Operation Triangulation'

Kaspersky unveils latest APT trends for 2nd quarter of '23

LONDON, July 31: In Kaspersky's latest report on Advanced Persistent Threat (APT) trends for the second quarter of 2023, researchers analyzed the development of new and existing campaigns. The report highlights APT activity during this period including the updating of toolsets, the creation of new malware variants, and the adoption of fresh techniques by threat actors.

A significant new revelation was the exposure of the long-running "Operation Triangulation" campaign involving the use of a previously unknown iOS malware platform. Experts also observed other interesting developments that they believe everyone should be aware of. Here are key highlights from the report:

Asia-Pacific witnesses a new threat actor - Mysterious Elephant

Kaspersky uncovered a new threat actor belonging to the Elephants family, operating in the Asia-Pacific region, dubbed "Mysterious Elephant". In their latest campaign, the threat actor employed new backdoor families, capable of executing files and commands on the victim's computer, and receive files or commands from a malicious server for execution on the infected system. While Kaspersky researchers have observed overlaps with Confucius and SideWinder, Mysterious Elephant possesses a distinctive and unique set of TTPs, setting them apart from other groups.

Toolsets upgraded: Lazarus develops new malware variant, BlueNoroff attacks macOS, and more

Threat actors are constantly improving their techniques, with Lazarus upgrading its MATA framework and introducing a new variant of the sophisticated MATA malware family, MATAv5. Blue-Noroff, a financial attack-focused subgroup of Lazarus, now employs new delivery methods and programming languages, including the use of Trojanized PDF readers in recent campaigns,the implementation of macOS malware, and the Rust programming language. Additionally, ScarCruft APT group has developed new infection methods, evading Markof-the-Web (MOTW) security mechanism. The ever-evolving tactics of these threat actors present new challenges for cybersecurity professionals

Geopolitical influences remain primary drivers of APT



attacks on regions such as Europe, Latin Amer-Middle East and various parts of

campaigns

dispersed,

remain geographically

with actors

concentrat-

their

Asia. Cyber-espionage, with a solid geopolitical backdrop, continues to be a dominant agenda for these endeavors.

"While some threat actors stick to familiar tactics like social engineering, others have evolved, refreshing their toolsets and expanding their activities. Moreover, new advanced actors, such those conducting the 'Operation Triangulation' campaign, constantly emerge. This actor uses a previously unknown iOS malware platform distributed through zero-click iMessage exploits. Staying vigilant with threat intelligence and the right defense tools is crucial for global companies, so they can protect themselves against both existing and emerging threats. Our quarterly reviews are designed to highlight the most significant developments among APT groups to help defenders combat and mitigate related risks," comments David Emm, principal security researcher at Kaspersky's Global Research and Analysis Team (GReAT).

Council of Ministers gives high priority to implementation of project

Tender docs for Mubarak Al-Kabeer Port project ready



Aerial shot of Mubarak Port project.

Measures aim to ensure transparency

Prepaid credit cards can be used only to pay for materials, gov't entities services

KUWAIT CITY, July 31: The Ministry of Finance has recently set new guidelines for use of prepaid credit cards by government institutions to meet their obligations, reports Al-Rai

The new circular also specifies certain restrictions, such as prohibiting cash withdrawals from the cards and the cardholder's ineligibility for gift and reward programs or any bank privileges.

Additionally, the employee must present purchase or service invoices, provide monthly settlements for the bank account, and submit them to the Ministry of Finance for review.

The following measures aim to ensure transparency and accountability in the use of prepaid credit cards by government agencies.

• The government agencies must compare offers from various banks to secure the best possible deal for issuing the prepaid cards.

• Prior approval from the Ministry of Finance is required to open a bank account for card issuance, based on the agency's needs.

• The issuance of the card must be authorized by the Undersecretary of the relevant government entity or their designated representative, and the card should be registered in the entity's name.

• The maximum limit for the prepaid credit card is set at 2,000 dinars.

• The cardholder is personally responsible for its usage, and the department manager requesting the card shares joint responsibility. The trading of the card password is strictly

• The card will be suspended if not used for three months or if the responsible employee is transferred. During an employee's leave, the card must be handed over to the concerned depart-

· Only Kuwaiti nationals can be entrusted with holding the cards, and issuing multiple cards to the same individual is not allowed.

• The card can only be used to purchase materials and services required by the government entity for its official work. • The card can also be used for pay-

ing government agency fees for mutual government services that require automatic payment, subject to an agreement with the issuing bank. Certain provisions regulating commodity and material purchases

are exempted from the card's usage

restrictions • All purchases must comply with the circulars issued by the Ministry of Finance.

• The cardholder must not engage with the issuing bank to obtain data or make modifications and should solely

interact with the government agency. • If the card is used for purposes other than its intended use, or if it is lost, damaged, or experiences a deficit, the employee holding the card is deemed responsible and the deficit will be deducted from their dues with the government.

• The card balance must be replenished whenever it falls below 75 percent of the total value.

• Government agencies must handle currency differences resulting from the card's usage.

finished preparing the tender documents to complete the implementation of the project. They are working on offering contracts for manufacturing, supplying, installing, testing, operating and maintaining the handling equipment that are necessary to operate the port on October 1, reports Al-Qabas daily.

They explained that the Council of Ministers gave high priority to the implementation of the project, which will be implemented after determining the government agency that will assume the tasks of management, supervision and operation of the Mubarak Al-Kabeer Port project, and assigning the Silk City and Boubyan Island Development Authority to supervise, follow-up, manage and operate Mubarak Al-Kabeer Port in coordination with the Ministry of Public Works to move forward with the procedures related to

This will involve completing the necessary executive contracts for it and overcoming all the obstacles facing it in a way that guarantees its completion as quickly as possible, and in a way that ensures the consistency of the schedule for construction works with the project's operating plan.

Advisory studies

The Council of Ministers assigned the Public Authority for Investment to carry out the necessary advisory studies for the Mubarak Al-Kabeer Port project in coordination with the Silk City Development Authority.

All details regarding completing the procedures of the memorandum of understanding between Kuwait and China were discussed. It was agreed to prepare an executive memorandum during the coming period to complete the memorandum of understanding signed in 2019, in line with Kuwait's vision, which aims primarily at transforming the country into a financial and commercial center that attracts investment.

In this regard, the Council of Ministers reviewed the letter of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which includes a request for urgently operating the Mubarak Al-Kabeer Port and overcoming obstacles in this regard in order to implement the manifestations of the sovereignty of the State of Kuwait over that region.

One of the obstacles facing the Ministry of Public Works in implementing the project is that its completion requires the implementation of three contracts whose legal procedures have not been completed, namely:

1 - Building and infrastructure con-

2 - Holding equipment and cranes. 3 - Deepening the basin and the connecting channel with the existing

The reason for not implementing the contracts for the construction of Mubarak Al-Kabeer Port is the decision of the Ministry of Finance and the Supreme Council for Planning and Development to postpone offering these contracts until the operator is determined.

The Council of Ministers instructed the Ministry of Finance to approve the financial appropriations to start implementing the three contracts related to the process of establishing the first phase of Mubarak Al-Kabeer Port.



Italy reconsiders participation in Silk Road

Italian Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani said his government would re-assess the possibility of continuing participation in China's Silk Road, or Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

Italy may withdraw from the project because it did not bring significant economic or trade benefits to Italy, he said in a televised interview.

Meanwhile, Tajani affirmed

Italy's keenness on maintaining strong economic relations with

China, saying that Rome is interested in the Chinese market and will see the best way to keep good relations with Beijing.

Italy seeks to maintain maritime security and free navigation across the Indian and Pacific oceans while keeping the status quo in Taiwan, he made clear. Yesterday, Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni told reporters following her meeting with US President Joe Biden in Washington that her government will make a final decision on the BRI in December, 2023.

She noted that it is possible for Italy to keep strong ties with China without this initiative. On March 23, 2019, the then Italian prime minister Giuseppe Conte and Chinese President Xi Jinping signed a memorandum of understanding on Italy's joining the project for four years. In so-doing, Italy became the first member of the G7 to join the BRI despite US opposition. (KUNA)

China factory activity shrinks in July

Chinese factory activity contracted in July as export orders shrank, a survey showed Monday, adding to pressure on the ruling Communist Party to reverse an economic slowdown. A purchasing managand monetary measures."
Chinese leaders are trying ers' index issued by the national statistics agency and an industry group improved to 49.3 from Júne's 49 on a 100-point scale but

was below the 50-point level that shows activity contracting. "China's manufacturing PMI

remained in contraction, albeit a softer pace, as the drag from the external sector deepened," Erin Xin of HSBC said in a report. That puts "more pressure on Beijing to support growth through both fiscal

to revive economic activity by promising to support entrepreneurs who generate jobs and wealth. But they have yet to give details possible tax cuts or spending and have avoided an-nouncing a large-scale stimulus. Demand for Chinese exports weakened after U.S. and European interest rates were raised to cool record-breaking inflation.

At home, consumers are uneasy about possible job losses and are putting off big purchases. Real estate sales, an economic engine, are weak after the government tightened control on the industry's use of debt. (AP)

Market Movements 31-07-2023

	UAE JAPAN PAKISTAN EGYPT	-	DFM Nikkei KSE 100 EGX 30	Change +0.155 +1.26 +1.94 +0.24	Closing pts 4,059.27 33,172.22 48,052.98 17,595.92	•
T						

Change Closing pts PHILIPPINES - PSEi -0.51 6,591.47 -0.8211,692.23 Tadawul

Business

Members of Congress break for August recess

No clear path to avoiding a shutdown this fall

WASHINGTON, July 31, (AP): Lawmakers broke for their August recess this week with work on funding the government largely incomplete, fueling worries about whether Congress will be able to avoid a partial government shutdown this

Congress has until Oct. 1, the start of the new fiscal year, to act on government funding. They could pass spending bills to fund government agencies into next year, or simply pass a stopgap measure that keeps agencies running until they strike a longer-term agreement. No matter which route they take, it won't be easy. "We're going to scare the hell out of the American people before we get this

done," said Sen. Chris Coons, D-Del. Coons' assessment is widely shared in Congress, reflecting the gulf between the Republican-led House and the Democratic-led Senate, which are charting vastly different - and mostly incompatible - paths on spending.

The Senate is adhering mostly to the top-line spending levels that President Joe Biden negotiated with House Republicans in late May as part of the debt-ceiling deal that extended the government's borrowing authority and avoided an economically devastating default.

That agreement holds discretionary spending generally flat for the coming year while allowing increases for military and veterans accounts. On top of that, the Senate is looking to add \$13.7 billion in additional emergency appropriations, including \$8 billion for defense and \$5.7 billion for nondefense.

House Republicans, many of whom opposed the debt-ceiling deal and refused

GOP leaders have teed up bills with far less spending than the agreement allows in an effort to win over members who insist on rolling back spending to fiscal year 2022 levels. They are also adding scores of policy add-ons broadly opposed by Democrats. There are proposals to reduce access to abortion pills, bans on the funding of hormone therapy and certain surgeries for transgender veterans, and a prohibition on training programs promoting diversity in the federal workplace, among many others.

At a press conference at the Capitol this past week, some members of the House Freedom Caucus, a conservative faction within the House GOP, said that voters elected a Republican majority in that chamber to rein in government spending and it was time for House Republicans to use every tool available to get the spending cuts they want.

"We should not fear a government shutdown," said Rep. Bob Good, R-Va. "Most of the American people won't even miss if the government is shut down temporarily

Many House Republicans disagree with that assessment. Rep. Mike Simpson, R-Idaho, called it an oversimplification to say most Americans wouldn't feel an impact. And he warned Republicans would take the blame for a shutdown.

We always get blamed for it, no matter what," Simpson said. "So it's bad policy, it's bad politics.' But the slim five-seat majority Republicans hold amplifies the power that a significant majority of both Republicans and Democrats, conservatives opponents were so unhappy in the aftermath that they shut down House votes for a few days, stalling the entire GOP agenda.

small group can wield. Even though the debt ceiling agreement passed with a

Shortly thereafter, McCarthy argued the numbers he negotiated with the White House amounted to a cap and "you can always do less." GOP Rep. Kay Granger of Texas, who chairs the House Appropriations Committee, followed that she would seek to limit nondefense spending at 2022 budget levels, saying the debt agree-

ment "set a top-line spending cap - a ceiling, not a floor."

The decision to cut spending below levels in the the debt ceiling deal helped get the House moving again, but put them on a collision course with the Senate, where the spending bills hew much closer to the agreement.

"What the House has done is they essentially tore up that agreement as soon as it was signed," said Sen. Chris Van Hollen, D-Md. "And so we are in for a bumpy

Even as House Republicans have been moving their spending bills out of committee on party-line votes, the key committee in the Senate has been operating in a bipartisan fashion, drafting spending bills with sometimes unanimous support.

The way to make this work is do it in a bipartisan way like we are doing in the Senate. If you do it in a partisan way, you're heading to a shutdown. And I am really worried that that's where the House Republicans are headed," Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., told reporters this week.

WS drifts as it heads toward the close of another winning month



A woman walks past monitors showing an exchange rate of the Japanese yen against the U.S. dollar at a securities firm in Tokyo, Monday, July 31, 2023. (AP)

Asia shares gain after Wall St rally

NEW YORK, July 31, (AP): Stocks are drifting Monday as Wall Street rolls toward the end of another winning month.

The S&P 500 was mostly unchanged in afternoon trading, on track for a fifth straight month of gains, which would be its longest winning streak in nearly two years. The index is near a 16-month high after rallying on hopes cooling inflation will mean the economy can avoid a long-predicted recession.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average was up 2 points, or less than 0.1%, at 35,461 as of 12:13 p.m. Eastern time, and the Nasdaq composite was 0.1% higher.

To be sure, critics have been saying Wall Street's seemingly growing consensus for a soft landing for the economy has come too quickly. Several reports this upcoming week could poke holes in the theory that inflation will keep coming down enough for the Federal Reserve to not only stop hiking interest rates but to begin cutting them by early next year.

Big names in the market, such as Rob Arnott at Research Affiliates, are warning not to be "overly hasty in popping the champagne corks." Arnott sees the possibility of inflation rebounding again later this year, even though it's cooled considerably recently.

Fed Chair Jerome Powell himself has pointed to Friday's upcoming report on the overall U.S. job market as an important datapoint. Growth needs to be strong enough to keep a lid on worries about a possible recession. But a reading that's too hot could also mean upward pressure on inflation, which could push the Fed to get more aggressive about rates.

High rates undercut inflation by slowing the overall economy and dragging on prices for stocks and other investments. The Fed has already hiked its main rate to its highest level in more than two decades, a jolting shock after the rate began last year at virtually zero.

Two of Wall Street's most influential stocks are also set to report their earnings for the spring. Amazon and Apple are both scheduled to release their latest quarterly results on Thursday. Because they're two of the most massive stocks on Wall Street, their stock movements pack much more punch for the S&P 500 and other indexes than other stocks.

Both stocks have soared this year, in part on expectations for strong continued growth, and they'll need to deliver to justify the big moves. Both Apple and Amazon are up more than 50% so far this year.

Roughly halfway through the earnings reporting season, more companies than usual have topped analysts' profit expectations, according to FactSet. Companies also seem to be more optimistic about their upcoming results, giving better-than-expected profit forecasts more often than usual, according to strategists at Bank of America.

"While economic uncertainty remains, we believe the profit cycle is inflecting higher," the strategists wrote in a BofA Global Research report.

ON Semiconductor rose 3.1% for one of the larger gains in the S&P 500 after reporting stronger profit for the latest quarter than expected. The company, known as onsemi, also gave a forecast for profit in the current quarter that topped analysts' expectations.

On the losing end was Tempur Sealy International. The mattress company said it discovered a cybersecurity event last week, which pushed it to shut down some of its technology systems. It has resumed operations after what it called a temporary interruption and is working to determine the incident's full impact. Its stock fell 4.7%.

Europe

Shares were mixed in Europe after most Asian markets logged gains Monday on hopes for more stimulus from Beijing for the sluggish Chinese economy. Germany's DAX was up 0.1% at 16,481.74, while

the CAC 40 in Paris gained 0.2% to 7,492.95. Britain's FTSE 100 gave up 0.1% to 7,683.50.

The hope among traders is that the slowdown in inflation means Wednesday's hike to interest rates by the Federal Reserve will be the final one of this cycle. The federal funds rate has leaped to a level between 5.25% and 5.50%, up from virtually zero early last year. High interest rates work to lower inflation by slowing the entire economy and hurting prices for stocks and other investments.

Asia

Shares were mostly higher in Asia on Monday after Wall Street got back to climbing following more encouraging profit reports and the latest signal that inflation is loosening its chokehold on the economy.

Sentiment also has been boosted by revived hopes for more stimulus from Beijing for the sluggish Chinese economy. Chinese factory activity contracted in July as export orders shrank, a survey showed, adding to pressure on the ruling Communist Party to reverse an economic slowdown.

A purchasing managers' index issued by the national statistics agency and an industry group improved to 49.3 from June's 49 on a 100-point scale but was below the 50-point level that shows activity contracting.

"The PMI surveys suggest that China's economic recovery continued to lose momentum in July," Julian Evans-Pritchard of Capital Economics said in a commentary. "Looking forward, policy support is needed to prevent China's economy from slipping into a recession, not least because external headwinds look set to persist for a while longer."

The Hang Seng in Hong Kong rose 0.9% to 20,094.50 while the Shanghai Composite index advanced 0.5% to 3,291.04.

Tokyo's Nikkei 225 index was up 1.3% at 33,172.22. In Seoul, the Kospi climbed 0.9% to 2,632.58. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 edged 0.1% higher, to

7,410.40 and the SET in Bangkok was up 0.8%. The Sensex in India rose 0.2% to 66,304.33.

In other trading on Monday, U.S. benchmark crude oil gave up 12 cents to \$80.46 a barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. It gained 49 cents to \$80.58 on Friday.

Brent crude, the international standard, shed 15 cents to \$84.27 a barrel.

Currencies

The U.S. dollar rose to 142.05 Japanese yen from Friday's 141.01 yen. The euro slipped to \$1.1017

Rate hikes weighing on businesses

Europe economy grows a bit after months of 'stagnation'

FRANKFURT, Germany, July 31, (AP): Europe's economy has grown modestly after months of stagnation, but higher interest rates designed to fight inflation are casting a shadow as they make it more expensive for households and businesses to borrow, invest and spend.

The 20 countries that use the euro currency and their 346 million people saw 0.3% growth in the April-to-June period, compared with the first three months of the year, the EU statistics agency Eurostat reported Monday.

That's an improvement over zero growth in the first quarter and a slight decline in fourth quarter of last year but not by much. Plus, one-time factors and an outsized bump from Ireland made things look better than they really were.

The eurozone got a boost by 0.5% growth in France and 0.4% in Spain, where lower inflation has helped lift consumer spending power.

Yet the French figure was increased by the delivery of one very large manufactured item - a cruise ship. That statistical quirk flattered French growth but does little to disguise weak demand for goods in the eurozone's

second-largest economy.
Ireland's growth of 3.3%, largest in the eurozone, also distorted the overall picture. Its growth figures often show large swings due to major international companies housing their headquarters there, including tech giants like Meta,

Google and Apple. Without Ireland, euro-area growth would have been only 0.1%, said Franziska Palmas, senior Europe econ-

omist at Capital Economics. The overall figure "was driven by a few country idiosyncrasies and masks an underlying momentum that is likely much closer to stagnation," said Marc de Muizon, senior European analyst at

Deutsche Bank Research. Europe's largest economy, Germany, struggled in the second quarter, recording zero growth after two straight quarters of falling output as it grappled with high energy costs tied to Russia's war in Ukraine. Italy, the No. 3 economy, shrank by 0.3%.

The eurozone growth figures for the first quarter were revised from a decline of 0.1%, statistically erasing what had been two straight quarters of contraction - one definition of reces-

Inflation in the eurozone, meanwhile, continued its gradual decline, falling to 5.3% in July from 5.5% in

Europe is still struggling with the aftershocks of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, including Moscow cutting off most of its natural gas to the continent that sharply raised prices for the fuel and the electricity it generates.

In Germany, Europe's manufacturing powerhouse, Vice Chancellor and Economy Minister Robert Habeck has proposed capping energy prices for industry with government help.

The worst of the price spike is over, but costs are still higher than before the war began. Energy has faded as a main driver of inflation, but price rises are hitting Europeans when they shop for groceries, clothes and more, and the rebound for services companies - such as hotels and restaurants that suffered during the COVID-19 pandemic - has mostly run its course.

Food prices rose 10.8% in July from a year earlier, an improvement from June and previous months but still a pain point for households. Energy, meanwhile, kept dropping, falling 6.1%. Stripping out volatile food and energy prices, core inflation held steady at 5.5% - a key indicator that has not fallen as much as central bankers want.

In a bright spot for Europe, rebounding travel, especially in the Mediterranean countries that heavily rely on tourism, is expected to support growth in the upcoming third quarter as people flock to the beach for their summer holidays in Greece, Spain and Italy, despite recent heat waves and wildfires.

Lebanon's cbank governor ends 30-yr tenure under investigation

BEIRUT, July 31, (AP): Lebanon's embattled central bank governor stepped down on Monday under a cloud of investigation and blame for his country's economic crisis as several European countries are probing his alleged financial crimes.

Riad Salameh, 73, ended his 30year tenure as tearful employees took photos and a band played celebratory music with drums and trumpets as he left the building.

His four vice governors, led by incoming interim governor Wassim Mansouri, quickly pivoted to urge fiscal reforms for the cash-strapped coun-

try.
"We are at a crossroads," Mansouri said at a news conference. "There is no choice, if we continue previous policy ... the funds in the Central Bank will eventually dry up.'

Salameh kicked off his tenure as governor in 1993, three years after Lebanon's 15-year civil war came to an end. It was a time when reconstruction loans and aid was pouring into the country, and Salameh was widely celebrated for his role in Lebanon's recovery.

Now, he leaves his post a wanted man in Europe, accused by many in Lebanon of being responsible for the country's financial downfall since late

It was a steep fall for a leader whose

policies were once hailed for keeping the currency stable. Later, many financial experts saw him as setting up a house of cards that crumbled as the country's supply of dollars dried up on top of decades of rampant and corruption and mismanagement from Lebanon's ruling parties.

The crisis has pulverized the Lebanese pound and wiped out the savings of many Lebanese, as the banks ran dry of hard currency. With the country's banks crippled

and public sector in ruins, Lebanon for years has run on a cash-based economy and relied primarily on tourism and remittances from millions in the diaspora.

Mansouri said previous policies that permitted the central bank to spend large sums on money to prop up the Lebanese state is no longer feasible. He cited years of spending billions of dollars to subsidize fuel, medicine, wheat and more to keep the value of the Lebanese pound stable.

He proposed a six-month reform plan that included passing long awaited reforms such as capital controls, a bank restructuring law, and the 2023 state budget.

"The country cannot continue without passing these laws," Mansouri explained. "We don't have time, and we paid a heavy price that we cannot pay

ABK holds first half 2023 Analyst Conference call

Soonawalla expresses delight in delivering yet another successful half-year performance

KUWAIT CITY, July 31: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) recently held its Analyst Conference for the first half of 2023. Attended by Mr. Shiamak Soonawalla, Group Chief Finance Officer, Mr. Abdulaziz Jawad, Chief Strategy Officer, and Mr. Yaqoub Almulla, Senior Manager of Investor Relations, the call involved a discussion of ABK's first-half financial

Hosted by EFG Hermes, an extensive presentation was conducted on the Group's performance and financial indicators during the first half of the year. Furthermore, the speakers also shared insights on ABK's upcoming strategic plans.

Ongoing Growth

Mr. Soonawalla expressed his delight in delivering yet another successful halfyear performance. He said, "ABK's results demonstrate good progress and delivered responsible growth for our shareholders with an achieved Net Profit of KD 23.9 million for the first half of 2023, representing a 30% increase over the comparable half of 2022. Furthermore, Earnings per Share reached 11 fils, an increase of 38% compared to 8 fils in the previous year."

The Group CFO affirmed that the financial performance in the first half of 2023 reflects continued improvement in underlying operating drivers, strong loan growth, lower provisions and impairments, a healthy balance sheet, comfortable liquidity levels, and a solid capital base.

Furthermore, he highlighted that the Bank continues to benefit from a competitive advantage due to the distribution of ABK's operations across the UAE and Egypt. He said, "The Group's geographical footprint supports revenue generation, loan distribution, and deposit collection. The Group's international operations comprise the operations of its UAE branches and ABK-Egypt subsidiary, contributing about 39% of operating income and 35%

Mr. Soonawalla also announced that Net Operating Profit totaled KD 44.3 million, which was led by a 2% improvement in Operating Income to KD 88.3 million in comparison to KD 86.3 million in the first half of 2022. Meanwhile, the Nonperforming Loan Ratio was at 1.36% with a Loan Loss Coverage Ratio for the Group of 376% in 2023, and excess provisions of KD 195 million over IFRS requirements according to Central Bank of Kuwait guidelines.

Stable Performance

Mr. Soonawalla highlighted that the Group maintained stable operating performance with a Net Interest Margin of 2.1% and Operating Profit to Average Assets of 1.4%. These results once again reflect solid performance by the Group and demonstrate the continued growth in its busi-

He said, "The Group also has high liquidity levels with a Net Stable Funding Ratio of 110%, a Liquidity Coverage Ratio of 245%, and a self-funded balance sheet with a Customer Deposit of KD 4 billion with customer deposits accounting for 71% of total liabilities."

Mr. Soonawalla stated that the Group has shown stable total equity during the last 3 years and a strong capital position with a Tier 1 ratio of 12.7%, and a total Capital Adequacy Ratio of 15.1% in the first half of 2023. The Group's Operating Income of KD 88.3 million breaks down to 44% in commercial banking, 44% in retail banking, and 12% in treasury.

As for the Group's breakdown in assets, 59% is in commercial banking, 13% in retail, and 28% in treasury. Total Interest Income at KD 195 million for the first half of 2023 reflected a strong growth of KD 79.5 million (69%) over the first half of 2022, led mainly by strong asset growth and improved interest rate environment. Fees and commissions income contributed KD 16.7 million.

He continued, "The Group's operating expenses reflect continued investments in key business initiatives, digital technologies and processes. This enables the Group to offer best-in-class service to customers and optimize resources to improve operational efficiency.'

Furthermore, Mr. Soonawalla mentioned that the Group has taken provisions in ordinary course of business for retail and corporate customers in Kuwait and overseas locations. The Group remains committed to its conservative approach in managing credit exposures and provision-

Strategic Success

In his part, Mr. Jawad noted that during the first half of 2023, the macroeconomic global landscape experienced gradual improvements. Various economic indicators and key factors played a pivotal role in shaping the overall performance of the economy and a decline in global bank credit failures.

He said, "As central banks continue their campaigns to slow inflation, both the US and Europe are likely to avoid recessions by Federal Reserve (Fed) along with other central banks around the globe trying to defeat inflation by rapidly raising interest rates. The Fed raised the target range for the Fed funds rate by 25bps to 5.25%-5.5% in its July 2023 meeting, which continues to push borrowing costs to the highest level for the past 22 years. Subsequently, the Central Bank of Kuwait increased the



Abdulaziz Jawad - Chief Strategy Officer

discount rate by 25bps to reach 4.25% following the Fed increase.'

Moving to Kuwait, Mr. Jawad elaborated that the economy is forecasted to be solid with numerous drivers to consider, including a newly elected cabinet and clear government plan of progression on largescale projects. He mentioned a 2% projected rise in the country's oil and gas GDP, leaving the non-oil sector as the primary driver of overall GDP growth.

Meanwhile, Kuwait's 2022-2023 budget reported a surplus of KD 6.4 billion, the first surplus achieved in the past 9 years. Moreover, Kuwait's government intends to undertake 107 projects in its 4-year program as part of the recently published Kuwait Development Plan.

Mr. Jawad continued, "ABK's profitability ratios also increased as ROAA and ROAE reached 0.65% and 8.3% respectively in tandem with improving asset quality ratios as well as coverage ratio. We are well above both our current 9.5% minimum CET1 and 13.5% minimum CAR in-

It is worth noting that ABK's long credit rating by Fitch stands with an (A) with a stable outlook and (A2) from Moody's with continued observed growth in many of the key markets ABK operates in.

Digital Transformation

Mr. Jawad shared ABK's significant progress in its digital transformation efforts through the opening of its first fully digitized branch in Al Khiran Mall in Kuwait. He commented, "This has enabled us to streamline our operations, provide better customer experience, and expand



Shiamak Soonawalla - Group Chief Finance

our customer base. Looking ahead, we remain committed to driving innovation and growth in our business. We are capable in our strategy and our ability to execute, and will continue to make investments in the areas that will drive long-term value for our stakeholders.'

On the strategy side, ABK continues to deliver on its three major pillars, namely (1) Scaling & Creating Value, (2) Sustaining & De-Risking, and (3) Innovation and Enablement, which were translated to almost 100+ key initiatives. He said, "These are monitored on a monthly basis in order to ensure the successful execution of our strategy, which is in line with our first half 2023 financial results."

Credit Facilities

Continuing his discussion on ABK's strategy, Mr. Jawad stated that, in line with the goal of becoming the international banking hub for the Group, the ABK DIFC branch successfully closed a 37-month (with a 12-month extension option) USD 600 million Asian focused syndicated term loan facility. This inaugural transaction will register ABK with the largest facility by volume from a Kuwaiti borrower targeting the Asian market to date.

The deal was well received in Asian markets and, on the back of excessive demand, was upsized to USD 600 million from the initial launch target of USD 500 million. The landmark financing closed with a total of 11 Asian lenders.

Capital Increase

Commenting on the Bank's capital increase, Mr. Jawad said, "ABK is also currently increasing its capital and has

obtained the approval of the Capital Markets Authority (CMA) and Central Bank of Kuwait for the request to increase the Bank's capital. The approval is to increase the share capital by KD 50 million (without the share premium), offering a rights issue of 500 million new shares for subscription with the right of preemption for the Bank's shareholders. Additionally, an EGM was held on 17 July 2023 and the approval to increase capital was obtained. We are currently in the final stages for the CMA approval to commence the subscription process.'

ESG and Sustainable Finance

He continued, "ABK achieved growth in all key performance indicators and has proven its commitment and leadership in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) by participating in various community, relief, and humanitarian initiatives inside and outside Kuwait. Our commitment to sustainability goes beyond merely complying with regulations; it's a fundamental part of our strategic vision. We believe that ESG is crucial for the future success of our bank and the wellbeing of the communities we

That being said, ABK is finalizing a comprehensive, updated ESG strategy that aligns with its core business objectives along with internationally renowned sustainability frameworks, such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, United Nations Principles for Responsible Banking and the recently introduced International Sustainability Standards Board (ISSB) standards.

Mr. Jawad highlighted that this strategy will act as a roadmap to integrate ESG elements into every aspect of ABK's operations, ensuring the proactive management of ESG risks and capitalization on the presented opportunities.

He continued, "We are also implementing an ESG policy that sets clear guidelines for responsible practices across all our business activities. Not only will this policy guide our internal operations, but it will also extend to our interactions with clients, partners, and suppliers, promoting sustainable practices throughout our entire value chain.

Mr. Jawad concluded his statement by highlighting one of the significant milestones in ABK's sustainability journey - the imminent implementation of a Sustainable Finance Framework. He said, "This framework will facilitate the funding of projects that positively contribute to society and the environment. By directing capital towards sustainable initiatives, we aim to accelerate the transition to a more inclusive and low-carbon economy, while maximizing value for our stakeholders."

Skepticism prevails

Workers say it's pushing them to the brink

Chinese leaders promise to back private Customers want instant gratification businesses to spur the slowing economy

BEIJING, July 31, (AP): The Fangbiaogan Real Estate Agency in the southern city of Nanning is still waiting for China's post-COVID rebound.

Home sales are 30-40% below last year's depressed level after the economy barely grew in the latest quarter, according to the owner, who would give only his surname, Cai. He has cut staff by 80% to 40 employees. Their income from sales commissions has fallen as much as 90%.

"People are worried," said Cai. "They feel safer holding onto their savings instead of spending them."

Chinese leader Xi Jinping's government is making ambitious promises to drag the economy out of that crisis of confidence aggravated by tension with Washington, wilting exports, job losses and anxiety among foreign companies about an expanded anti-spying law.

Its most striking pledge: To support entrepreneurs who generate jobs and wealth but have felt under attack over the past decade as the ruling Communist Party built up state-owned industry, tightened control over business and pressured them to pay for its technology and industrial ambitions.

China has an "urgent need" to "boost confidence in the outlook for the private economy," the Cabinet said in a July 19 announcement.

Entrepreneurs and investors are waiting to see what tax, spending or other steps the ruling party might take and whether it will rein in state companies that dominate banking, energy and other industries and that economists

say are stifling growth. The ruling party took action after the economy grew by just 0.8% in the three months ending in June from the previous quarter, down from 2.2% growth in January-March. That is equal to a 3.2% annual rate, among China's weakest in

With households anxious about possible job losses, retail sales growth slid to 3.1% in June from the previous

month's 12.7% "Policymakers have underestimated the difficulty in boosting the confidence of households and private companies,' Macquarie economists Larry Hu and Yuxiao Zhang said in a report. China needs a "reset in macro and regulatory policies to make them more pro-growth and pro-business," they said

The ruling party's Politburo followed up on July 24 with a statement promising to shore up economic growth and support real estate, which has struggled since Beijing clamped down on debt levels in China's biggest industry. Stock markets in Hong Kong and China surged on the news but fell

back as investors waited to see what Beijing might do. "I've seen lots of policies like this,

but none were carried out," said Cai, the real estate broker. China's leaders want the prosperity generated by free enterprise but also are requiring businesses to invest in political initiatives that include developing computer chips and narrowing

the wealth gap between China's elite

and the poor majority. Regulators shut

down an internet-based tutoring in-

dustry and imposed limits on children

playing online games. Skeptical businesspeople and economists expect little more than fine-tun-

"We doubt this marks a fundamental shift in the way that the leadership views the role of private firms," Julian Evans-Pritchard of Capital Economics said in a report.

The country's No. 2 leader, Premier Li Qiang, and Cabinet ministers spent the first half of this year meeting visiting CEOs including Apple Inc.'s Tim Cook and Elon Musk of Tesla Ltd. in a charm offensive aimed at reviving in-

Despite that, foreign companies are on edge following unexplained raids on two consulting firms and a due diligence firm. The expansion of an antispying law and a push for self-reliance in technology also are seen as risks. Foreign investment into China fell 2.7% from a year earlier in the first half of 2023, according to official data.

A survey by the British Chamber of Commerce in China found 70% of foreign companies want "greater clarity" before making new investments. The European Union Chamber of Commerce in China said its members are shifting investments to Southeast Asia and other targets.

Exports in June fell 12.% from a year earlier after interest rate hikes to cool inflation dampened U.S. and European consumer demand.

A furniture dealer in the central city of Taiyuan said her sales were down 20-30% compared with during the pandemic. The merchant, who would give only her family name, Ma, said her customers are salaried urban workers who still were recovering from anti-virus measures that shut down companies. "We have lost money so far this

year," said Ma, who was unaware of the ruling party's promise of support. An official survey found unemployment among young people in cities

spiked to a record 21.3% in June. A researcher at Peking University, Zhang Dandan, wrote in the business news magazine Caixin the true rate might be almost 50% if young people who are paid by parents to work around the house while they try to find other jobs or have given up looking are in-

The party's decision to reverse one of its signature policies and ease controls imposed in 2020 to rein in surging debt in real estate reflect the urgency of the problem. Those curbs triggered a wave of hundreds of bankruptcies among developers and dragged on business activity.

Still, the property industry's problems persist. Developers have renegotiated payments to banks and bondholders, but financial analysts say they face another cash crunch if sales fail to pick up. The biggest, Evergrande Group, still is trying to resolve more than \$300 billion in debt.

Tech tycoon Ma Huateng, the publicity-shy co-founder of games and social media giant Tencent Holding, broke his media silence and issued a statement praising the July 19 announcement as a "clear and in-depth understanding" of challenges for entrepreneurs.

Tencent, operator of the popular WeChat message service, is a target of anti-monopoly and data security crackdowns launched by Beijing in 2020 to tighten control over tech industries. Its share price has fallen by half, wiping out more than \$400 billion in stock market value.

The statement "raised earnest expectations for high-quality development of private enterprises," Ma wrote on a state TV blog

NEW YORK, July 31, (AP): Six straight days of 12-hour driving. Single digit paychecks. The complaints come from workers in vastly different industries: UPS delivery drivers

and Hollywood actors and writers. But they point to an underlying factor driving a surge of labor unrest: The cost to workers whose jobs have changed drastically as companies scramble to meet customer expectations for speed and convenience in industries transformed by technol-

ogy.
The COVID-19 pandemic accelerations retailers ated those changes, pushing retailers to shift online and intensifying the streaming competition among entertainment companies. Now, from the picket lines, workers are trying to give consumers a behind-the-scenes look at what it takes to produce a show that can be binged any time or get dog food delivered to their doorstep with a phone swipe.

That workers are overworked and underpaid is an enduring complaint across industries - from delivery drivers to Starbucks baristas and airline pilots - where surges in consumer demand have collided with persistent labor shortages. Workers are pushing back against forced overtime, punishing schedules or company reliance on lower-paid, part-time or contract forces.

At issue for Hollywood screenwriters and actors staging their first simultaneous strikes in 40 years is the way streaming has upended the



A worker tries out the clothing at a quiet fashion boutique in Beijing on Thursday, July 27, 2023. Chinese leader Xi Jinping's government is promising to drag the economy out of a crisis of confidence aggravated by tensions with Washington, wilting exports, job losses and anxiety among foreign companies about an expanded anti-spying law. (AP)

economics of entertainment, slashing pay and forcing showrunners to

"This seems to happen to many places when the tech companies come in. Who are we crushing? It doesn't matter," said Danielle Sanchez-Witzel, a screenwriter and showrunner on the negotiating team for the Writers Guild of America, whose members have been on strike since May. Earlier this month, the Screen Actors Guild-American Federation of Television and Radio Artists joined the writers' union on the picket line.

produce content faster with smaller

Actors and writers have long relied on residuals, or long-term payments, for reruns and other airings of films and televisions shows. But reruns aren't a thing on streaming services, where series and films simply land and stay with no easy way, such as box office returns or ratings, to determine their popularity.

Consequently, whatever residuals streaming companies do pay often amount to a pittance, and screenwriters have been sharing tales of receiving single digit checks.

Adam Shapiro, an actor known for the Netflix hit "Never Have I Ever," said many actors were initially content to accept lower pay for the plethora of roles that streaming suddenly offered. But the need for a more sustainable compensation model gained urgency when it became clear streaming is not a sideshow, but rather the

future of the business, he said. "Over the past 10 years, we realized: 'Oh, that's now how Hollywood works. Everything is streaming,' Shapiro said during a recent union

Shapiro, who has been acting for 25 years, said he agreed to a contract offering 20% of his normal rate for "Never Have I Ever" because it seemed like "a great opportunity, and it's going to be all over the world. And it was. It really was. Unfortunately, we're all starting to realize that if we keep doing this we're not going to be able to pay our bills."

Then there's the rising use of "mini rooms," in which a handful of writers are hired to work only during preproduction, sometimes for a series that may take a year to be greenlit, or never get picked up at all.

Sanchez-Witzel, co-creator of the recently released Netflix series "Survival of the Thickest," said television shows traditionally hire robust writing teams for the duration of production. But Netflix refused to allow her to keep her team of five writers past pre-production, forcing round-theclock rewrites with just one other

"It's not sustainable and I'll never do that again," she said.

Sanchez-Witzel said she was struck by the similarities between her experience and those of UPS drivers, some of whom joined the WGA for protests as they threatened their own potentially crippling strike. UPS and the Teamsters last week reached a tentative contract staving off the

Jeffrey Palmerino, a full-time UPS driver near Albany, New York, said forced overtime emerged as a top issue during the pandemic as drivers coped with a crush of orders on par with the holiday season. Drivers never knew what time they would get home or if they could count on two days off each week, while 14-hour days in trucks without air conditioning became the norm.

"It was basically like Christmas on steroids for two straight years. A lot of us were forced to work six days a week, and that is not any way to live your life," said Palmerino, a Teamsters shop steward.

Along with pay raises and air conditioning, the Teamsters won concessions that Palmerino hopes will ease overwork. UPS agreed to end forced overtime on days off and eliminate a lower-paid category of drivers who work shifts that include weekends, converting them to full-time drivers. Union members have yet to ratify the deal.

The Teamsters and labor activists hailed the tentative deal as a game-changer that would pressure other companies facing labor unrest to raise their standards. But similar outcomes are far from certain in industries lacking the sheer economic indispensability of UPS or the clout of its 340,000-member union.

Efforts to organize at Starbucks and Amazon stalled as both companies aggressively fought against unionization.

Still, labor protests will likely gain momentum following the UPS contract, said Patricia Campos-Medina, executive director of the Worker Institute at the School of Industrial and Labor Relations at Cornell University, which released a report this year that found the number of labor strikes rose 52% in 2022.

"The whole idea that consumer convenience is above everything broke down during the pandemic. We started to think, 'I'm at home ordering, but there is actually a worker who has to go the grocery store, who has to cook this for me so that I can be comfortable," Campos-Medina said.

Solid credit ratings, high liquidity ratios of KFH support business growth: Al-Roshood

Bank holds earnings webcast for H1-2023

KUWAIT CITY, July 31: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) held the earnings webcast for highlighting the Bank's financial performance during the first half of 2023.

AbdulWahab Al-Roshood, Acting Group Chief Executive Officer at KFH said "by the grace of Allah, KFH reported record net profit for its shareholders of KD 333.4 million (US 1.086 billion) for the first half of 2023, an increase of 141.4% compared to the same period last year. Earnings per share for the first half of 2023 reached 22.03 fils; an increase of 73.3% compared to the same period last

Al-Roshood added that the record profits KFH achieved cement its standing and positively contribute to raising the performance of the Kuwaiti banking sector, indicating the outstanding profitability ratios confirm the benefits and significance of the acquisition deal and reflect the efficient operational performance, the flexible business model of KFH and the disciplined execution of KFH's strategy. The distinct ratios also reflect the continuous mo-



Abdulwahab Al-Rushood

mentum in all KFH's business areas and the contribution of operations at the Group level.

He explained that KFH showed growth in all key financial indicators and maintained good ratios in terms of ROAA, ROAE, improving asset quality ratios as well as the coverage ratio of provisions for non-performing debt. cost to income ratio and other financial indicators.

Al-Roshood pointed out that KFH tops the Kuwaiti banks in terms of assets and market capitalization. It also ranked first among the listed companies on Boursa Kuwait in terms of market capitalization exceeding KD 11 billion. This means that KFH is the largest player in the private sector in

He indicated KFH sustained excellence in developing innovative products and services as well as financial and investment solutions, and in adopting FinTech and AI tools to enhance operations, customer experience, leadership, and market share.

Al-Roshood said that KFH increased investment in green finance, and expanded ESG-linked investments, contributing effectively to building low-carbon economy for a sustainable future. KFH won Best Islamic Bank for ESG- global category 2023 award from Euromoney and Kuwait's Best Bank for Sustainable Finance in 2023 from Global Finance. KFH received these awards in recognition of its spectacular efforts in adopting ESG principles in all its banking and business activities, the annual growth of sustainability products and green finance, becoming the first Bank in Kuwait to receive the Global Sustainability Assessment System GSAS - Gold Level Certificate in addition to

the fruitful partnership with UNDP. Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem, Group Chief Strategy Officer

Fahad Al-Meanwhile, Eng. Mukhaizeem, Group Chief Strategy Officer covered highlights of the Kuwait operating environment with an overview on KFH. He also shared KFH's strategy, as well as results for the first half of 2023.

Al-Mukhaizeem said "the latest International Monetary Fund (IMF) April 2023 forecasts Kuwait to register 8.2% GDP growth in 2022, and a growth is

Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem

expected in 2023. The Inflation Rate in Kuwait remained unchanged at 3.70% in May from 3.70% in April of 2023." He added that the Central Bank of

Kuwait raised the discount rate by 50 basis points from 3.5% to 4.0% effective January 26, 2023, bringing borrowing costs to their highest level since September 2019.

Standard & Poor's credit rating for Kuwait stands at A+ with stable outlook. Moody's credit rating for Kuwait was last set at A1 with stable outlook. Fitch's credit rating for Kuwait was last reported at AA- with stable outlook.

Al-Mukhaizeem pointed out that a new indicator has emerged in the world of economics, called the Global Economic Diversification Index. Economic diversification is considered a major political topic for commodity-producing countries, aiming to stabilize the economy, achieve economic growth and development, create new job opportunities by stimulating the private sector, and enhance government finances sustainability to a greater extent. Countries were measured and classified based on their economic diversification from various angles, including diversity in economic activities, international trade, and government revenues (beyond reliance on natural resources or commodity revenues).

Jamal Al-Humiari, General Manager Financial Control, and Acting Group Chief Financial Officer (AGCFO).

Meanwhile, Jamal Al-Humiari, General Manager Financial Control, and Acting Group Chief Financial Officer (AGCFO), said the Group has achieved Net Profit After Tax attributable to Shareholders for the first six months ended 30th June 2023 of KD 333.4mn higher by KD 195.3mn or 141.4% compared to H1-22 of KD 138.1mn.

Al-Humiari added that the higher profits are mainly from increase in total operating income, and lower provisions, partly offset by increase in operating expenses and taxation.

He said that financing income has increased by KD 508.5mn or 105.5% compared to same period last year due to increase in yield and average profit earning assets.

Net financing income at KD 458.5mn increased by KD 138.3mn or 43.2% compared to same period last



ing income by KD 508.5mn offset by increase in finance cost and distribution to depositors by KD 370.2mn.

Net Operating income at KD 489.1mm increased by KD 180.7mn or 58.6% compared to same period last year; mainly from increase in net financing income by KD 138.3mn, increase in Investment income by KD 80mn, increase in Net gain from for-eign currencies by KD 30.1mn and increase in fees and commissions by KD 18.1mn offset by increase in operating expenses by KD 96mn.

Al-Humiari explained that Total Operating Expenses at KD 245.3mn is KD 95.9mn or 64.2% higher than same period last year primarily due to consolidation of AUB.

Al-Humiari said:" Average Yielding Assets is up by 25.5% compared to FY2022 and 61.4% compared to H1-22, mainly from the growth in Financing receivables and debt securities."

Cutting-edge features to meet customers' banking needs incorporated

KIB launches state-of-the-art Corporate Online Banking platform

KUWAIT CITY, July 31: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) has announced the launch of its all-new Corporate Online Banking platform, heralding a new phase of financial empowerment and security for its corporate customer. The launch falls in line with the Bank's commitment to digital innovation and expanding its modern banking solu-

This platform was implemented as part of KIB's pledge to elevate its state-of-the-art digital banking technologies to cater to the Bank's corporate customer segment. Designed to seamlessly integrate innovation and security into corporate businesses, the platform promises cutting-edge features and complete control over financial transactions.

In his statement on this major announcement, Hesham Al-Mubaraki, General Manager of Wholesale Banking at KIB, said: "We wanted to build an online platform that our customers could trust. Accordingly, the Corporate Online Banking platform was designed to deliver great levels of personalization, efficiency, and security. Today, the platform marks a great leap in the development of our financial solutions and banking experience. It also paves the path for further promising applications to make our banking experience even more personalized and unique."

Speaking about the unique features and benefits of the platform, Al-Mubaraki highlighted that KIB Corporate Online Banking offers customers a holistic view of their financial activities, from high-level insights to granular details, to help them make well-informed decisions and take their businesses to new heights. He said: "Corporate customers who sign up to the platform would be saving their valuable time and resources, as it provides them with the opportunity to personalize and streamline their op-



KIB's Corporate Online Banking Platform

erations with complete ease and convenience.'

To this end, customers can tailor their Corporate Online Banking experience to match their role within their relevant features only, thereby optimizing their time and allowing them to remain productive. With the Redirect Requests feature, the platform's users would be allowed to forward their requests to any superior within their organizations to better streamline the approval process.

Moreover, the platform's POS Dashboard provides users with a centralized view to seamlessly track and manage cash flow across all payment methods, including MasterCard, Visa, or KNet. As for the Hide Amount feature, it enables users to work in open spaces while ensuring complete privacy and security. The Tracking Dashboard, meanwhile, allows users to view all their interactions with the Bank in one place, easily tracking the status and progress of accounts, finances, and all requests. Lastly, the platform's Advanced Salary Portal is designed to simplify and streamline any payroll system with innovative



Hesham Al-Mubaraki, Wholesale

Concluding his statement, Al-Mubaraki said: "On behalf of KIB, I would like to applaud our high-caliber technical team, from technology pioneers to UI/UX designers and product developers, who enabled the fruition of this new distinctive online platform. The experts worked closely with different sectors of the Bank to ensure our online platform meets all our corporate customers' banking needs.'

It is worth noting that KIB always strives to provide an enhanced digital banking experience to better suit its customers' evolving lifestyles. The Bank also prides itself in committing to a customer-centric strategy that focuses on the modern needs of customers, especially in terms of technology. This commitment falls in line with KIB's "Bank for Life" slogan.

About KIB Kuwait International Bank (KIB) is a bank that operates according to the Islamic Shari'ah, based in the State of Kuwait. Incorporated in 1973, and originally known as Kuwait Real Estate Bank, KIB made the transition to its current Islamic operating model in 2007. In 2018, KIB embarked on a new phase of its journey full of innovation and development. As part of its new strategic direction, the Bank focuses on offering a next-level customer experience under the slogan:

"Bank for Life". Through a network of branches spread across the State of Kuwait, KIB offers a broad range of banking products and services, as well as innovative digital banking solutions in line with international best standards. As part of its duty towards the community, the Bank also encompasses a leading social responsibility program that aims at positively impacting all members of the community through a wide range of impactful initiatives and activities.



Jet ski revealer

'Summer needs a jet ski'

stc continues latest summer campaign

KUWAIT CITY, July 31: Kuwait Telecommunications Company - stc, a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers, enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, announced that its latest summer campaign under the slogan "Summer needs a jet ski" will continue throughout the summer season. The campaign offers stc customers, whether new or existing, a chance to win a jet ski simply by subscribing to any of stc's postpaid packages, renewing their existing subscriptions, or adding a device through Zeed at stc's Khairan Mall branch only.

In a statement, stc highlighted that customers can increase their chances of winning the jet ski based on their activity. Customers renewing their subscription, subscribing to new postpaid plans, or adding devices can increase their chances of winning based on how many times they perform any of the 3 activities throughout the campaign period. Upon performing any of the 3 highlighted activities, customers will automatically be enrolled into the draw for a chance to win.

The winner of the summer campaign will be announced during an event organized by stc, where one lucky customer will take home a brand new jet ski. Attendees will have the opportunity to participate in engaging competitions and have a chance to win exciting prizes from stc. In addition to the jet ski draw, stc

customers will also enjoy the benefits of stc's wide range of summer offers and exclusive postpaid packages. The summer offers include additional benefits to stc's Always On postpaid voice and internet plans, accompanied by the latest cutting-edge smartphone

AUB to announce AI-HASSAD Islamic program monthly draw winner of KD100,000 today

KUWAIT CITY, July 31: As a part of the Al-Hassad Islamic Program, the very first draw account in Islamic banking in Kuwait, Ahli United Bank (AUB) will conduct draw for the Lucky Winner of the KD 100,000 the monthly prize in Al-Hassad Islamic draw tomorrow, Wed Aug 2nd, 2023. The draw will be held at AUB Head Office in the presence of a representative of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry as well as a representative from Deloitte as the external auditor to oversee the draws as per the instructions of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry in this regard.

On this occasion, Mr. Amresh Nandkeolyar, Head of Marketing and Product Development, Retail at AUB said: Al-Hassad Islamic Account provides a suite of unique and exclusive features. It is the simplest and easiest savings account. Moreover, it provides a unique account-opening feature online with easy instant deposit option.

Nandkeolyar added: "There are many great winning chances still awaiting our existing customers and anyone desirous to open Al-Hassad Islamic Savings Account with Ahli United Bank.

Nandkeolyar underlined that the Al-Hassad Íslamic prizes program promotes the culture of savings and encourages society members to seek financial security. It also contributes to reshaping the lives of its customers for the better through winning valuable prizes that exhilarate and uplift them. From this standpoint, Ahli United Bank periodically reviews the structure of the draws and adapt them to be in line with the requirements and aspirations of the Bank's customers.



Al-Hassad Draw flyer

NielsenIO at Saudi Food Show

How 'shoppers' in Saudi navigate a sea of change

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia, July 31, (Business Wire): The aftershocks of the CO-VID-19 pandemic and the resultant shifts in the Saudi Arabian retail space, as well as food inflation, have generated a pullback on promotions, coupled with price increases. This has created a challenging environment for Saudi Arabian shoppers who have adapted quickly by shifting towards convenience and essential prod-

This was the view of Andrey Dvoychenkov, NielsenIQ Middle East General Manager, as an introduction to the very first Saudi Food Show held in Riyadh and attended by a host of local and international retail professionals. His NielsenIQ presentation entitled provided the latest insights into the Saudi Arabian Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) sector.

Dvoychenkov said; "The Saudi market has recently been driven by price increases, with some prices raised by 10 to 15% during the year, which is mostly due to the rising cost of raw materials." Dvoychenkov also highlighted the uniqueness of the Saudi Arabian market "where the majority of products and raw materials are imported, making it essential for industry players to navigate supply chain disruptions and consider local substitutes to create more stability.'

Dvoychenkov reported that as a result consumers in Saudi Arabia are scaling back on spending and optimising their budgets due to various lifestyle changes. These changes include cooking at home more often, minimizing waste and spending less on clothing and grooming. An interesting dynamic is that de spite their intention to curtail spending, Saudi shoppers seem to care deeply about quality. The premium product segment is growing ahead of the economy segment for local and international brands in food, with 65% of Saudi shoppers saying they are will ing to pay more for quality products.

In terms of their response to the cur rent challenging conditions they face, tactics that consumers are employing include weighing up the attributes that matter most, shopping online to get the best deals, and stopping buying certain categories of products. Interestingly, despite these changes and turbulent times, consumers in Saudi Arabia have the lowest percentage globally in perceiving themselves to be in a recession.

Dvoychenkov indicated that Saudi shoppers primarily spend their shopping time in hypermarkets and su permarkets, but there is a noticeable trend of faster growth in smaller format stores, such as grocery and convenience stores. The price increase in groceries is also significantly lower in these smaller format stores compared to traditional supermarkets.

When it comes to choice and product selection, 77% of Saudi shoppers feel that food prices have increased and are only willing to buy essentials. Regarding the definition of "essentials" for modern shoppers, Dvoychenkov emphasized the need to be careful in how this term is perceived.

KUWAIT CITY, July 31: As part of its efforts to communicate more quickly and effectively, Gulf Bank is receiving complaints through the Mobile Application, where the complaints are

received by the Complaints and Customer Protection Unit and addressed within 15 working days. This aligns with the instructions of the Central Bank of Kuwait, in an ef-

fort to enhance the protection of customers - by establishing a balanced relationship between banks and their customers - that is guided by the best international practices in this field. The Deputy General Manager of

Consumer Banking at Gulf Bank, Mr. Bader Al-Ali stated that if customers would like to file a complaint through the specified mechanisms, they must take into account the following:

1. The Customer Complaints and Protection Unit work to find a solution, or explanation, for a customer's complaint, within the framework of the implementation of the terms of the contractual relationship between the customer and the bank.

2. The Customer Complaints and Protection unit works five days a week, from Sunday to Thursday, from 8:00 am to 3:00 pm, and is closed on weekends and public holidays.

3. Complaints submitted are addressed and responded to within 15

Gulf Bank receiving customer

complaints via the mobile app

4. The work of the unit is limited to responding to customers' complaints; hence, the Customer Complaints and Protection unit cannot perform banking transactions such as: Activating accounts, canceling, requesting, activating bank cards, changing a mobile phone number, or updating customer information.

5. The response to the written complaint is done through the Customer Complaint and Protection Unit at Gulf Bank, and not through the Central Bank of Kuwait. In case the customer objects to the response, he must file a grievance to the Central Bank of Kuwait through the mechanism mentioned on Gulf Bank's website or the Central Bank of Kuwait's website.



Bader Al-Ali

Kering to buy 30% stake of Valentino

French luxury conglomerate Kering has reached a cash deal to purchase a 30% stake in Italian fashion house Valentino for 1.7 billion euros from a Qatari investment firm.

With the purchase, Kering is seeking to shore up its revenue stream as it struggles to turn around former powerhouse Gucci. Kering on Thursday reported first-half revenues of 10.1 billion euros, up 2% as Gucci sales stagnate.

up 2%, as Gucci sales stagnate. Under the deal announced Thursday, Kering has the option to buy

100% of Valentino no later than The partnership could lead to the Qatari investment firm, May-hoola, becoming a shareholder in Kering, as well as other potential "joint opportunities," the statement

Kering Chairman and CEO Francois-Henri Pinault expressed admiration for "the evolution of Valentino under Mayhoola ownership," which Kering said turned Valentino "into one of the most admired luxury houses in the world."

"I am very pleased of this first step in our collaboration with Mayhoola to develop Valentino and pursue the very strong strategic jour-ney of brand elevation," citing the role of Valentino CEO Jacopo Ven-turini, who "will continue to lead."

Valentino, founded by Valentino Garavani in 1960, recorded revenues of 1.4 billion euros in 2022. Pierpaolo Piccoli has been creative director at Valentino since 2008, working alongside Maria Grazia Chiuri from 2008-16. (AP)

Adidas to release 2nd batch of Yeezy sneakers

Adidas said Friday that it is re-leasing a second batch of high-end Yeezy sneakers after cut-ting ties with rapper Ye, formerly known as Kanye West, as the German sportswear brand seeks to unload the unsold shoes while donating to groups fighting antisemitism

The online sale, to start Wednesday through Adidas smartphone apps and its website, follows an earlier set of sales in May. Models that will be available include the Yeezy Boost 350 V2, 500, and 700 as well as the Yeezy Slide and Foam RNR.

The company cut ties with Ye in October after he made antisemitic and other offensive remarks online and in interviews. That left Adidas holding 1.2 billion euros (\$1.3 billion) worth of unsold Yeezys and searching for a responsible way to dispose of them.

Adidas CEO Bjørn Gulden said in May that selling the popular sneakers and donating some of

the profits was the best solution to deal with the unsold inventory and make a difference. He said the company spoke with nongovernmental organizations and groups that were harmed by Ye's comments and actions.

Part of the profits from the sales of the Yeezy shoes will go to the Anti-Defamation League and the Philonise & Keeta Floyd Institute for Social Change, run by social justice advocate Philonise Floyd, the brother of George Floyd. (AP)

NerdWallet

'Never think you're too smart to be duped'

We're all vulnerable: How to stay safe from financial scams

By Kimberly Palmer NerdWallet

One of the biggest mistakes you can make when it comes to protecting vourself from financial scams is thinking you're too smart to be duped by

"We're all vulnerable - we can all fall for a scam given the right set of circumstances," says Eva Velasquez, president and CEO of the Identity Theft Resource Center, a nonprofit organization that provides advice and assistance related to identity theft. Keeping yourself safe starts with accepting that fact, she adds.

"You look at the profiles of victims who filed complaints and it runs the gamut from highly educated, highincome people all the way down to the most vulnerable people in our population," says John Breyault, vice president of public policy, telecommunications and fraud at the National Consumers League, a nonprofit advocacy group that speaks out about consumer concerns.

While there isn't a "foolproof solution to stay safe from all scams," as Breyault puts it, there are strategies you can employ to reduce your risk. Here are four of the most important

Go to source

If you're contacted by anyone claiming to be your bank or other familiar company, end the conversa-tion and call the institution's verified number yourself, Velasquez says. "We always say, 'If you did not initiate the interaction, then you need to go to the source," she adds.

Otherwise, you don't actually know who's on the other end of the line, she says, especially because scammers can spoof the number that shows up on your caller ID so it might look legiti-

In some cases, you might want to pay your bank a visit in person to get clarification. When Thorn Roberts, owner of a small business in Elizabeth,

West Virginia, received a payment request he didn't recognize, he went to his bank to ask about it.

"They knew it was a scam," he says. As a result, he immediately canceled his accounts and created new ones. Thanks to his quick action and the bank's help, his money was safe.

Secure accounts Basic online security practices can also help protect you, Velasquez says.

She recommends enabling multifactor authentication on your financial accounts, creating unique passwords and not sharing personal details such as your birthdate online.

Jason Zirkle, training director at the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners and former fraud analyst with law enforcement, suggests checking your financial accounts at least once a week and investigating any unidentified charges immediately. Even one small erroneous charge could suggest someone has access to your account, signaling the beginning of a larger problem.

Common scams

The Federal Trade Commission reports that the top scams of 2022 include people impersonating institutions like banks, phony sweepstakes and fake job postings. "You don't have to become an expert in each one, but you need to understand the hallmarks of most scams: They contact you first, dangle some sort of bait in front of you and create a sense of urgency," Zirkle says. Then, they ask for either money or personal information, which they use to access your money.

That's what happened to former government executive and security expert Ken Westbrook's mother earlier this year. A fake tech support window popped up on her computer, which likely came from a malicious ad. It connected her to criminals who persuaded her to call them and send gift cards and cashier's checks under the

guise of protecting her bank accounts from being hacked.

"My mom knew gift cards were a red flag, but she did it anyway because they scared her," says Westbrook, who lives in the Washington, D.C., area. Eventually, Westbrook discovered what was happening and put a stop to it, but only after his mom lost thousands of dollars.

These scammers "sound like the nicest tech support people that you've ever dealt with," says Chris Pierson, founder and CEO of BlackCloak, a cybersecurity firm. "They install remote management tools to see what's on your screen and then can suck out your files and extort you."

Report scams

Reporting fraud to government agencies and private organizations allows for better fraud tracking. While there's no centralized source for fraud tracking, you can report it to the Federal Trade Commission, your state's attorney general's office, the FBI. your local police station, your bank's fraud department, the Better Business Bureau's Scam Tracker and the Identity Theft Resource Center, among others.

Most people who lose money to scams never see it again. "The first thing you need to do is accept your money is probably gone and you won't get it back," Zirkle says. He suggests 'being your own advocate" with your bank and police. In some cases, your financial institution or law enforcement might be able to help you recover some or all of it.

Still, some losses are harder to quantify. "In addition to a financial crime, it's an emotional crime," Westbrook says. "People are affected by this for the rest of their lives. What I tell everyone, and tell my mom, is, 'It's not your fault. The thieves work for organized crime gangs who are very good at what they do." (AP)



In this photo provided by the National Transportation Safety Board, investigators examine a driverless Uber SUV, March 20, 2018, that fatally struck a woman in Tempe, Ariz. Rafaela Vasquez, the backup Uber driver involved in the first death involving a fully autonomous vehicle, has pleaded guilty to en-

Negligent homicide charge

Uber driver pleads guilty in 1st autonomous car death

PHOENIX, Juy 31, (AP): The backup Uber driver for a self-driving vehicle that killed a pedestrian in suburban Phoenix in 2018 pleaded guilty Friday to endangerment in the first fatal collision involving a fully autonomous car.

Maricopa County Superior Court Judge David Garbarino, who accepted the plea agreement, sentenced Rafaela Vasquez, 49, to three years of supervised probation for the crash that killed 49-year-old Elaine Herzberg. Vasquez told police that Herzberg "came out of nowhere" and that she didn't see Herzberg before the March 18, 2018, collision on a darkened Tempe street.

Vasquez had been charged with negligent homicide, a felony. She pleaded guilty to an undesignated felony, meaning it could be reclassified as a misdemeanor if she completes probation.

Authorities say Vasquez was streaming the television show "The Voice" on a phone and looking down in the moments before Uber's Volvo XC-90 SUV struck Herzberg, who was crossing with her bicycle.

Vasquez's attorneys said she was was looking at a messaging program used by Uber employees on a work cellphone that was on her right knee. They said the TV show was playing on her personal cellphone, which was on the passenger seat.

Defense attorney Albert Jaynes Morrison told Garbarino that Über should share some blame for the collision as he asked the judge to sentence Vasquez to six months of unsupervised probation.

"There were steps that Uber failed to take," he said. By putting Vasquez in the vehicle without a second employee, he said. "It was not a question of if but when it was going to happen.'

Cause

Prosecutors previously declined to file criminal charges against Uber, as a corporation. The National Transportation Safety Board concluded Vasquez's failure to monitor the road was the main cause of the crash.

"The defendant had one job and one job only," prosecutor Tiffany Brady told the judge. "And that was to keep her eyes in the road."

Maricopa County Attorney Rachel Mitchell said in a statement after the hearing that her office believes the sentence was appropriate "based on the mitigating and aggravating fac-

tors."
The contributing factors cited by

the NTSB included Uber's inadequate safety procedures and ineffective oversight of its drivers, Herzberg's decision to cross the street outside of a crosswalk and the Arizona Department of Transportation's insufficient oversight of autonomous vehicle testing.

The board also concluded Uber's deactivation of its automatic emergency braking system increased the risks associated with testing automated vehicles on public roads. Instead of the system. Uber relied on the human backup driver to intervene.

It was not the first crash involving an Uber autonomous test vehicle. In March 2017, an Uber SUV flipped onto its side, also in Tempe when it collided with another vehicle. No serious injuries were reported, and the driver of the other car was cited for a

Features

Herzberg's death was the first involving an autonomous test vehicle but not the first in a car with some selfdriving features. The driver of a Tesla Model S was killed in 2016 when his car, operating on its Autopilot system, crashed into a semitrailer in Florida.

Nine months after Herzberg's death, in December 2019, two people were killed in California when a Tesla on Autopilot ran a red light, slammed into another car. That driver was charged in 2022 with vehicular manslaughter in what was believed to be the first felony case against a motorist who was using a partially automated driving system.

In Arizona, the Uber system detected Herzberg 5.6 seconds before the crash. But it failed to determine

whether she was a bicyclist, pedestrian or unknown object, or that she was headed into the vehicle's path, the board said.

The backup driver was there to take over the vehicle if systems failed.

The death reverberated throughout the auto industry and Silicon Valley and forced other companies to slow what had been a fast march toward autonomous ride-hailing services. Uber pulled its self-driving cars out of Arizona, and then-Gov. Doug Ducey prohibited the company from continuing its tests of self-driving cars.

Vasquez had previously spent more than four years in prison for two felony convictions - making false statements when obtaining unemployment benefits and attempted armed robbery - before starting work as an Uber driver, according to court records.

Mounting job vacancies push US states into wage war for workers

Public employers struggle to fill jobs

FULTON, Mo., July 31, (AP): At the entrance to Missouri prisons, large signs plead for help: "NOW HIRING" ... "GREAT PAY & BENEFITS."

No experience is necessary. Anyone 18 and older can apply. Long hours are guaranteed.

Though the assertion of "great pay" for prison guards would have seemed dubious in the past, a series of state pay raises prompted by widespread vacancies has finally made a difference. The Missouri Department of Corrections set a record for new applicants last month.

"After we got our raise, we started seeing people come out of the woodwork, people that hadn't worked in a while," said Maj. Albin Narvaez, chief of custody at the Fulton Reception and Diagnostic Center, where new prisoners are housed and evaluated.

Public employers across the US have faced similar struggles to fill jobs, leading to one of the largest surges in state government pay raises in 15 years. Many cities, counties and school districts also are hiking wages to try to retain and attract workers amid aggressive competition from private sector employers.

The wage war comes as governments and taxpayers feel the conse-

quences of empty positions. In Kansas City, Missouri, a shortage of 911 operators doubled the average hold times for people calling in emergencies. In one Florida county, some schoolchildren frequently arrived late as a lack of bus drivers delayed routes. In Arkansas, abused and neglected kids remained longer in foster care because of a caseworker shortage. In various cities and states, vacancies on road crews meant cracks and potholes took longer to fix than many motorists might like.

"A lot of the jobs we're talking about are hard jobs," said Leslie Scott Parker, executive director of the National Association of State Personnel Executives.

Lingering vacancies "eventually affects service to the public or response times to needs," she added.

Workforce shortages worsened across all sorts of jobs due to a wave of retirements and resignations that began during the pandemic. Many businesses, from restaurants to hospitals, responded nimbly with higher wages and incentives to attract employees. But governments by nature are slow-



A 'Now Hiring' sign is shown at the entrance to a Missouri Department of Corrections prison facility, Thursday, July 13, in Fulton, Mo. Nearly 1-in-4 positions were vacant late last year at the Department of Corrections. But vacancies have been declining since a pay raise was implemented this spring. (AP)

er to act, requiring pay raises to go through a legislative process that can take months to complete - and then can

take months more to kick in. Meanwhile, vacancies mounted.

In Georgia, state employee turnover hit a high of 25% in 2022. Thousands of workers left the Department of Corrections, pushing its vacancy rate to around 50%. The state began a series of pay raises. This year, all state employees and teachers got at least a \$2,000 raise, with corrections officers getting \$4,000 and state troopers \$6,000.

The Georgia Department of Corrections used an ad agency to bolster recruitment and held an average of 125 job fairs a month. It's starting to pay off. In the first week of July, the department received 318 correctional officer applications - nearly double the weekly norm, said department Public Affairs Director Joan Heath.

Almost 1 in 4 positions - more than 2,500 jobs -- were empty in the Missouri Department of Corrections late last year, which was twice the pre-pandemic vacancy rate in 2019.

Missouri gave state workers a 7.5% pay raise in 2022. This spring, Gov. Mike Parson signed an emergency spending bill with an additional 8.7% raise, plus an extra \$2 an hour for people working evening and night shifts at prisons, mental health facilities and other institutions. The vacancy rate for entry level corrections officers now is declining, and the average number of applications for all state positions is up 18% since the start of last year.

At the Fulton prison, where staff shortages have led to a standard 52hour work week, newly hired employees can earn around \$60,000 annually - an amount roughly equal to the state's median household income. The prison also is proposing to provide free child care to correctional officers willing to work nights.

Quit

If prison staffing is too low, "it can get dangerous" for both inmates and guards, Narvaez said.

Public safety concerns also have arisen in Kansas City, where a country music fan attacked before a concert last month waited four minutes for a 911 call to be answered and an hour for an ambulance to arrive. About one-quarter of 911 call center positions are vacant - "a huge factor" in the longer wait times to answer calls, said Tamara Bazzle, assistant manager of the communications unit for the

Kansas City Police Department. In Biddeford, Maine, a 15-person roster of 911 dispatchers dipped to just eight employees in July as people quit a "pressure cooker job" for less stress or better pay elsewhere, Police Chief JoAnne Fisk said.

The city is now offering fully certified dispatchers \$41 an hour to help plug the gaps on a part-time basis - \$10 an hour more than comparable new workers normally would earn.

This month, Biddeford also launched a \$2,000 bonus for city employees who refer others who get jobs. That comes a year after Biddeford adopted a fourday work week with paid lunch periods to try to make jobs more appealing, said City Manager Jim Bennett.

To attract workers, other governments have dropped college degree requirements and spiced up drab job descriptions.

Nationally, the turnover rate in state and local governments is twice the average of the previous two decades, according federal labor statistics.

Uncompetitive wages were the most common reason for leaving cited in exit interviews, according to a survey of 249 state and local government human resource managers conducted by MissionSquare Research Institute, a Washington, D.C. -based nonprofit. The hardest positions to fill included police and corrections officers, doctors, nurses, engineers and jobs requiring commercial driver's licenses.

Change to take years

US requiring more planes to have accessible restrooms

WASHINGTON, July 31: Some new planes eventually will be required to have lavatories big enough to be accessible to wheelchair users, a change that disability advocates have sought for many years. The US Department of Transporta-

tion issued a long-awaited final rule on the subject Wednesday. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg said the new rule will give travelers

in wheelchairs "the same access and dig-

nity as the rest of the traveling public."

The rule will only apply to new singleaisle planes with at least 125 seats, such as the Boeing 737 and Airbus A320. The restriction means that smaller regional jets used on hundreds of flights a day for the major airlines won't be covered.

Also, airlines won't be required to retrofit current planes, so the number of planes with larger lavatories will grow slowly over time. The require-

ment for at least one accessible lavatory will apply to planes ordered 10 years or delivered 12 years after the rule takes effect this fall, except for future models of planes, which will have to comply within one year.

Two-aisle planes - more commonly used on international flights - have long been required to have accessible lavato-

Despite the limitations, advocates

for people with disabilities praised the new rule, which largely follows 2016 recommendations from a Transportation Department-backed committee that included representatives of airlines and aircraft maker Boeing.

In a recent survey by disability

groups, more than half of the respondents said the lack of restroom access was reason to avoid flying. Others avoid drinking liquids before flights.

Takeda's OX2R agonist safe and effective

TAK-994 improves sleepiness in patients with narcolepsy type 1

OSAKA, Japan, July 31: Takeda (TSE:4502/NYSE:TAK) has announced that data from the Phase 2 study of orexin receptor 2 (OX2R) agonist TAK-994 in patients with narcolepsy type 1 (NT1) was published in The New England Journal of Medicine. These data represent the first-ever clinical data to be published of an oral orexin agonist in NT1. The article appears in the July 27 issue of the journal and is titled, "Oral Orexin Receptor 2 Agonist in Narcolepsy Type 1.'

"There is significant unmet need for patients with narcolepsy, a chronic neurologic disease caused by severe loss or absence of the neuropeptide orexin, also known as hypocretin. Today, most patients with NT1 require multiple therapies that only manage excessive daytime sleepiness and cataplexy. Moreover, none of the available agents target the underlying cause of the disease,' said one of the TAK-994 study principal investigators Yves Dauvilliers, M.D., Director, Sleep-Wake Disorders Center, Department of Neurology, Gui de Chauliac Hospital, Montpellier, France. "Although this study was not designed to compare TAK-994, the first-in-class oral OX2R agonist, with other narcolepsy drugs, its effectiveness on objective measures of wakefulness, self-reported assessment of daytime sleepiness, and frequency of cataplexy was impressive. However, TAK-994 was associated with hepatotoxicity, therefore studies with new well tolerated OX2R agonists are strongly requested.'

Patients aged 18-65 years with confirmed NT1 were randomly assigned to twice-daily oral TAK-994 30, 90, 180 mg, or placebo.

Primary endpoint was the change in mean sleep latency in minutes on the Maintenance of Wakefulness Test (MWT) from baseline to week 8 (test range: 0-40, normal >=20 minutes).

■ Secondary endpoints included change in Epworth Sleepiness Scale (ESS) score (scale range: 0-24, normal =20 minutes) for most patients. Similar effects were observed for the

Safety results

Forty-four (79%) patients treated with TAK-994 had adverse events; the most common were urinary urgency or frequency. More patients experienced TEAEs with TAK-994 than with placebo, with a greater number and severity of TEAEs observed with higher TAK-994 doses. Most TEAEs were mild in severity. Eight patients exceeded predefined alanine transaminase (ALT) and/ or aspartate transaminase (AST) thresholds for subject discontinuation, including three cases meeting Hy's law criteria (ALT/AST abnormalities >3 x upper limit of normal combined with bilirubin >2 x upper limit of normal; two with TAK-994 180 mg and one with 90 mg), indicating drug-induced hepatotoxicity and leading to the early termination of the trial. No specific risk factors were identified. The current hypothesis is that TAK-994 associated druginduced liver injury is caused by reactive metabolites and is unlikely to be an on-target effect of OX2R activation as orexin receptors are not expressed on human hepatocytes or

"As leaders in orexin research and development, Takeda is committed to applying our learnings from the TAK-994 trial and our deep and growing understanding of orexin biology as we drive forward the research and development of multiple orexin assets. We would like to thank the patients, caregivers and investi-

on most immune cells.

gators who participated in the TAK-994 clinical trials and are committed to continue developing and delivering transformative treatments to people living with narcolepsy and other hypersomnolence disorders. Takeda is also exploring other indications that could benefit from this mechanism," said Sarah Sheikh, M.Sc., B.M., B.Ch, Head, Neuroscience Therapeutic Area Unit at Takeda. "Orexin programs in development include the oral OX2R agonist TAK-861, currently being evaluated in two Phase 2 trials for the treatment of narcolepsy type 1 (NCT05687903) and narcolepsy type 2 (NCT05687916), and danavorexton (TAK-925), an intravenously administered OX2R agonist we are investigating in a Phase 2 study of people with obstructive sleep apnea after general anesthesia (NCT05814016).'

Takeda is focused on creating better health for people and a brighter future for the world. We aim to discover and deliver life-transforming treatments in our core therapeutic and business areas, including gastrointestinal and inflammation, rare diseases, plasma-derived therapies, oncology, neuroscience and vaccines. Together with our partners, we aim to improve the patient experience and advance a new frontier of treatment options through our dynamic and diverse pipeline. As a leading values-based, R&Ddriven biopharmaceutical company headquartered in Japan, we are guided by our commitment to patients, our people and the planet. Our employees in approximately 80 countries and regions are driven by our purpose and are grounded in the values that have defined us for more than two centuries.

Priveterra Acquisition Corp (Nasdaq: PMGM) ("Priveterra"), a special purpose acquisition company led by Chairman & CEO, Robert Palmisano, along with President, **Vikram Malik**, and COO and CFO, Oleg Grodnensky, have announced the successful completion of its business combination (the "Business Combination") with AEON Biopharma, Inc. ("AEON"), a Phase 3 stage-ready biopharmaceutical company developing a proprietary neurotoxin with initial focus on preventive treatments for episodic and chronic migraines along with other debilitating medical conditions.

The resulting combined company changed its name to AEON Biopharma, Inc. and is expected to commence trading of its shares of common stock and warrants on NYSE American LLC ("NYSE") under the ticker symbols "AEON" and "AEON WS," respectively, on July 24, 2023. Mr Robert Palmisano will join the new 5-member board to serve as a Director.

Mr. Palmisano said, "We are grateful to all investors that continue to support Priveterra's investment thesis in combining with AEON, along with their significant contributions of up to \$125 million in arranged funding. I look forward to continuing my journey with AEON as a Director along with its President and CEO, Marc Forth."Latham & Watkins LLP served as legal advisors to AEON. Davis Polk & Wardwell LLP served as legal advisors to Priveterra. Cohen & Company Capital Markets, a division of J.V.B. Financial Group, LLC served as sole financial advisor to Priveterra. Roth Capital Partners, LLC served as capital markets advisor to Priveterra.

Company announces first successful implantation

Anteris' DurAVR THV heart valve used in life-saving valve-in-valve procedure

eris Technologies Ltd, (Anteris or the Company) (ASX: AVR), a structural heart company developing DurAVRTM THV, a new class of biomimetic heart valve and the world's only balloonexpandable, single-piece transcatheter aortic valve shaped to mimic the performance of a native human aortic valve, has announces that the DurAVRTM THV was used for the first time in a valve-in-valve (ViV) procedure as part of Health Canada's Spe-

cial Access Program (SAP). A ViV procedure is required for patients with a life-threatening situation wherein their current bioprosthetic aortic valve is failing due to calcification or structural deterioration, and a new heart valve must be implanted inside the failing valve. These patients are at high risk for another surgery and require a minimally invasive treatment option. Canada's SAP exists so that life-saving technology not currently available for commercial use in Canada can be provided when no other commercially available alternatives are suitable.

Dr. Anita Asgar, Co-Director of the Structural Heart Program at the Institut de Cardiologie de Montreal (Montreal. Canada), made the request to Health Canada to use the DurAVRTM THV in a patient with a failing valve that needed optimal hemodynamic results as well as a short frame height as they were very high risk of poor hemody-namic result with a conventional ViV procedure. Dr. Asgar performed the procedure on an 84-year-old male and implanted a DurAVR™ THV inside the failed surgical aortic valve replacement (SAVR).

Complex

The procedure was successful. The hemodynamic performance of the valve was outstanding in such a complex patient. The patient had an 88% reduction in mean gradient which brought the patient back to a near-normal physiologic state, with a final gradient of only 6mmHg after deploying the valve. These results mirror what DurAVR™ THV has seen in its extensive ViV bench-top studies.

Dr. Asgar commented: "The DurAVR™ THV provided a life-saving solution for a patient requiring a new valve to be implanted without compromising hemodynamic per-formance or future coronary access. These hemodynamic results are not INGELHEIM, Germany, July 31: The European Commission (EC) approved Jardiance® (empagliflozin) for the treatment of adults with

chronic kidney disease (CKD),8 Boehringer Ingelheim and Eli Lilly and Company (NYSE: LLY) have announced. The approval has the potential to advance the standard of care for more than 47 million people in the EU living with CKD, and help relieve burden on healthcare systems by reducing the risk of all-cause hospitalization for people with CKD. With existing indications in type 2 diabetes and heart failure, empagliflozin could help manage the risks of cardio-renal-metabolic conditions. which are often interconnected. Cardio-renal-metabolic conditions af-

fect over 1 billion people worldwide. "We celebrate this significant milestone in the field of chronic kidney disease. CKD is a silent killer and prevention and early detection are crucial in the general population," said Daniel Gallego, President of European Kidney Patients' Federation. "This new treatment option has the potential to further improve the management of cardiorenal metabolic syndrome and renal disease,

offering renewed hope and improved quality of life for countless individuals living with CKD worldwide."

of kidney disease progression

Drug approved in EU

Empagliflozin cuts relative risk

The approval is based on results from EMPA-KIDNEY, the largest and broadest dedicated SGLT2 inhibitor trial in CKD to date, which showed a significant benefit of empagliflozin in reducing the relative risk of kidney disease progression or cardiovascular death by 28 percent vs. placebo in people with chronic kidney disease (HR; 0.72; 95% CI 0.64 to 0.82; P0.000001 [absolute risk reduction 3.8%]).

Demonstrated

The trial also demonstrated a statistically significant relative risk reduction in hospitalization for any cause by 14 percent vs. placebo (HR; 0.86; 95% CI 0.78 to 0.95; p=0.0025 [absolute risk reduction 4.4%]).4,5 The overall safety data was generally consistent with previous findings, confirming the well-established safety profile of empagliflozin.4,5 CKD doubles a person's risk for hospitalization3 and is a leading cause of death globally.2 In the EU, hospitalizations account for up to 70 percent of total healthcare costs for

"Living with chronic kidney disease can have a drastic impact on patients and their family's lives. CKD not only affects individuals but also society overall due to the high economic burden to healthcare systems," said Carinne Brouillon, Head of Human Pharma, Boehringer Ingelheim. "As we deepen our knowledge in interconnected cardio-renalmetabolic conditions, we are very excited about the approval and the potential for empagliflozin to play an essential role in helping patients, their physicians and healthcare sys-

"CKD is closely linked to other cardio-renal-metabolic conditions such as type 2 diabetes and heart failure - thus an integrated approach is vital for optimized treatment of these interconnected conditions. We look forward to continuing conversations with other regulatory bodies worldwide so that empagliflozin can be made available for as many people living with these conditions as quickly as possible," continued Leonard Glass, M.D., F.A.C.E., senior vice president, Diabetes & Obesity Global Medical Affairs, Lilly.

seen with currently available products, which is important as there is a large need for a valve that can offer optimal hemodynamic performance in the valve-in-valve setting, particularly with a shorter frame height. Additionally, despite this being an incredibly complex case, using Anteris' ComASURTM delivery system and deploying the valve was remarkably easy. The unique design of DurAVRTM, including the low frame height and the single-piece design, makes the valve well-suited to address the needs of valve-in-valve pa-

Chris Meduri, Anteris Technologies CMO, commented: "This successful procedure further validates our extensive pre-clinical work in valve-invalve as well as our extensive clinical experience in native aortic stenosis. This signals the viability of a purposebuilt valve designed to achieve lifesaving outcomes in a patient population currently treated with tradeoffs in mind. Eliminating that compromise would be widely beneficial to a rapidly growing population of patients whose current valve is failing. Anteris Technologies (ASX: AVR)

is a structural heart company committed to designing, developing, and commercialising innovative medical devices. Founded in Australia, with a significant presence in Minneapolis MN – a US MedTech hub, Anteris is science-driven, with an experienced team of multidisciplinary professionals delivering transformative solutions to structural heart disease patients.

The Company's lead product, DurAVRTM THV, is a first-in-class biomimetic transcatheter aortic valve for the treatment of aortic stenosis (AS). The $DurAVR^{TM}$ THV, in concert with the ComASURTM Delivery System, is designed to achieve pre-disease hemodynamic performance leading to improved clinical outcomes.

DurAVR™ THV has been designed in partnership with the world's leading interventional cardiologists and is the first transcatheter aortic valve replacement (TAVR) to use a single piece of bioengineered tissue. This first-inclass biomimetic valve is uniquely shaped to mimic the performance of a healthy human aortic valve.

Anteris' patented anti-calcification ADAPT® tissue technology has been used clinically for over 10 years and distributed for use in over 50,000 patients worldwide.

The ComASURTM Delivery System is designed to provide controlled deployment and accurate placement of the DurAVRTM THV with balloonexpandable delivery, allowing precise alignment with the heart's native commissures to achieve desired valve positioning.

Aortic stenosis is a common and serious valvular heart disease. It is the narrowing of the aortic valve, reducing blood flow from the heart as it opens. This means the heart must work harder to push the blood needed to function. Severe affects an estimated 3.4% of those aged ≥75 years in Europe and the USA.1 In Australia, an estimated 150,000 people suffer from moderate to severe AS, with the figure projected to climb to 200,000 by 2031 due to the aging population.2 The global TAVR market is estimated to be USD 10 billion by 2028.

Anteris Technologies is set to revolutionize the structural heart market by developing clinically superior solutions to meet significant unmet clinical

ViV procedures represent an additional, rapidly growing patient population for the treatment of aortic stenosis. ViV procedures have increased more than 10 times from 2014 to 2019, representing about 6% of commercial transcatheter aortic valve replacement



Dr Anita Asgar (centre) Co-Director of the Structural Heart Program at the Institut de Cardiologie de Montreal, Anteris Technologies Chief Medical Officer, Dr Chris Meduri (far right), with the Anteris Technologies clinical team with the DurAVR THV investigational device.







in Hong Kong on Monday. The evening services were expected to be attended by her family, friends and supporters. Lee died July 5 at age 48.

gathering with flowers to pay their respects to their idol at her funeral

She was born in Hong Kong and attended school in San Francisco before releasing her first album in 1994 at age 19. She began her career as a Mandopop singer but branched out to release albums in Cantonese

She was the first Chinese singer to break into the American market, and her English song "Do You Want My Love" climbed to #4 on Billboard's Hot Dance Breakouts chart in December 1999. In 2001, she sang "A Love Before Time" from Ang Lee's movie "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon" at the Academy Awards, becoming the first Chinese American to perform at the Oscars.

Lee was also the voice of heroine Fa Mulan in the Mandarin version of Disney's "Mulan," and sang the Mandarin version of the movie's theme song "Reflection."

Lee was married to Bruce Rockowitz, former CEO of Hong Kong supply chain company Li & Fung. She had two stepdaughters.

Her death had shocked fans. Her siblings posted on Facebook that she had depression for years and had attempted suicide at home on July 2. She died a few days later.

On Monday afternoon, more than 100 fans dressed in black were waiting outside the funeral home.

Lin Jing, a fan from Fujian province in the southeast, said she admired Lee's smile and appearance, adding: "She was really talented. She always tried to improve and she inspired women to feel independent.

In a video for her memorial service, actors and singers from Hong Kong, mainland China and Taiwan recalled their memories with Lee and mourned her death.

Proud

Action star Jackie Chan said in the video that everyone was proud of her when she sang at the Oscars.

"To friends like us, Coco was a passionate and kind friend who showed care to us. She was really a good person. That's why we are so reluctant to accept she has left us," he said. Award-winning director Ang Lee recalled his exchanges with the

late singer before the Oscars and said it was a pity she died so young. 'We miss her very much. Coco, rest in peace," he said in the video.

In Coco Lee's recent social media posts, she kept spreading positivity. In March, she posted about having to relearn how to walk after undergoing surgery for an old leg injury.

"Successful surgery. Even though I'm in a lot of pain and I have to

re-learn how to walk again, I know I can do it," she wrote in a Facebook post. "Yes I can and I will!"

LOS ANGELES: Quavo will release "Rocket Power," his first album since fellow Migos member Takeoff was shot and killed outside a bowling alley in November 2022. Quavo introduced the new LP with a trailer that features a massive CGI rocket preparing to launch into space. In a statement, he shared: "Through the process of healing I've learned to turn tragedy into triumph. I had to dig deep into my purpose and find the power to keep striving." This summer, Quavo and Future shared a new song, "Turn Your Clic Up," which followed recent singles "Greatness" and "Honey Bun." Shortly before his death, Quavo

and Takeoff had shared their joint LP, "Only Built for Infinity Links."

Rick Springfield, whose hits include "Human Touch," and, of course, "Jessie's Girl," is putting out his 21st album, "Automatic." Written and produced by Springfield, the collection features 20 new songs. "My goal was solid three-minute tunes with the biggest hooks I could come up with," he said in a news release. Springfield previewed his sound by releasing the title track and "She Walks With the Angels." The album is dedicated to Matty Spindel, a friend and soundman of 25 years who died in 2022. Springfield will be hitting the road this summer on the I Want My '80s Tour.

Variety



This image released by Lucasfilm shows Phoebe Waller-Bridge, (left), and Harrison Ford in a scene from 'Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny.' (AP)

Film

Goodbye to most beloved character in 'Indiana Jones'

Allen on one last hurrah as Marion

Seven days after Greta Gerwig's "Barbie" and Chris-

topher Nolan's "Oppenheimer" conspired to set box office records, the two films held unusually strongly in theaters. "Barbie took in a massive \$93 million in its second weekend, according to studio estimates Sunday. "Oppenheimer" stayed in second with a robust \$46.2 million. Sales for the two movies dipped 43% and 44%, respectably — well shy of the usual week-two drops.

NEW YORK: A week later, the "Barbenheimer" boom has not

abated.

"Barbenheimer" has proven to be not a one-weekend phenomenon but an ongoing box-office bonanza. The two movies combined have already surpassed \$1 billion in worldwide ticket sales Paul Dergarabedian, senior media analyst for data firm Comscore, call it "a touchstone moment for movies, moviegoers and movie theaters.

"Having two movies from rival studios linked in this way and both boosting each other's fortunes both box-office wise and it terms of their profile — I don't know if there's a comp for this in the annals of box-office history," said Dergarabedian. "There's really no comparison for this."

Following its year-best \$162 million opening, the pink-infused pop sensation of "Barbie' saw remarkably sustained business through the week and into the weekend. The film outpaced Nolan's "The Dark Knight" to have the best first 11 days in theaters of any Warner Bros. release ever.

"Barbie" has rapidly accumulated \$351.4 million in US and Canadian theaters, a rate that will soon make it the biggest box-office hit of the summer. Every day it's played, "Barbie" has made at least \$20 million.

And the "Barbie" effect isn't just in North America. The film made \$122.2 million internationally over the weekend. Its global tally has reached \$775 million. It's the kind of business that astounds even veteran studio executives.

'That's a crazy number," said Jeff Goldstein, distribution chief for Warner Bros "There's just a built-in audience that wants to be part of the zeitgeist of the moment. Wherever you go, people are wearing pink. Pink is taking

over the world Amid the frenzy, "Barbie" is

NEW YORK, July 31, (AP): Indiana Jones. Karen Allen always knew he'd come walking back through her Since 1981's "Raiders of the Lost Ark," Allen has been only a sporadic presence in the subsequent sequels. But the glow of the freckled, big-eyed actor who so memorably played Marion Ravenwood has only grown stronger over time.

Indiana Jones may be one of the movies' most iconic characters, but he's always needed a good foil. It was Kate Capshaw and Ke Huy Quan in "Temple of Doom" and Sean Connery in "The Last Crusade. Yet none could top, or out drink, Allen's Marion, a wisecracking, naturalistic beauty and swashbuckling heir to screwball legends like Katharine Hepburn and

Allen's place in the latest and last "Indiana Jones," the "Dial of Destiny," has long been a mystery. Now that the movie is in theaters - spoiler alert - we can finally let the cat out of the bag. Allen returns. And while her role isn't large - tragedy has driven Marion and Indiana apart - it's extremely poignant in how she figures into

Harrison Ford's swan song as Indiana Jones. "Secrets," Allen chuckled in a recent interview, "are not my specialty.3

Allen, 71, was a magnetic presence in some memorable 1970s and '80s films, including 1978's "Animal House", 1984's "Starman" and 1988's "Scrooged." But while she's steadily worked ever since, the era's male-dominated Hollywood often seemed to squander her talent. Allen has lived for decades in the Berkshires, where she opened a textiles and clothing boutique and has frequently performed at Tanglewood.

Allen also returned to Marion in 2008's "Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull." But as much as "Dial of Destiny" signifies the end of Ford's run as Indy, it's also Allen's goodbye to her most beloved character. This time, Indiana's sidekick went to Phoebe Waller-Bridge, the "Fleabag" creator and star. Allen, praising Waller-Bridge as a strong woman, approves.

"If it wasn't going to be me," said Allen, "I'm glad it was her.'

AP: Did Spielberg or "Dial of Destiny" director James Mangold reach out to you about returning as

Allen: There was a period of time when Steven

was going to direct the film. It was my understanding - although I never read any of those scripts - that it was being developed very much as a still-ongoing Marion-and-Indy story. When Steven decided to step down and James took over and brought in new writers, I knew it was going into a different direction. Having not even known what it was before, it was even more mysterious after they took it over. So I really didn't know anything for a long period of time until they had a script. And I have to confess, I was a bit disappointed that she wasn't more woven throughout the story and didn't have more of an ongoing trajectory. However, the way in which she does come back into the story was very satisfying. I just thought, "OK, I'm just going to embrace this." certainly would have been wildly disappointed had

Marion just sort of vanished into the ether. AP: Did you always think Marion and Indiana were destined for each other? You don't exactly get a sense

of permanence between them in "Raiders Allen: It's funny. When I first started working on it, I just decided that Indy was the love of her life. I just decided to make a deep commitment to that and to play through "Raiders of the Lost Ark" with the feeling they're soulmates. When we end up married in "Crystal

Skull," I wept when I read that script. AP: "Indiana Jones" could be a boys world but you

were such a spirited force of nature. Allen: Well, Steven and George had this experience as young boys with these Saturday afternoon matinee serial films. They were just a little bit older than I am, so I kind of missed that. I don't have a reference point for that. So I don't think that I necessarily understood the genre of film we were making. I thought we were making "Casablanca." I really, truly did. So I sort of defined my character in that sort of genre - which I think weirdly enough works quite well for the film. I never imagined Marion as a damsel in distress in any sort of way. I was always pushing back against that, and in the

end, Steven was supportive of that. **AP:** Do you ever wish you had gotten the chance to

star in more Hollywood films? Allen: I make movies all the time, although I have tended in the last 10 or 15 years to focus more on indie films. In truth, the kinds of roles I'm really hungry to play, particularly for someone my age, they're written more in the indie world. People kind of think, "Where have you been?" There were times I was raising my son but I often do at least two films a year. They're very satisfying, probably more satisfying than the sort of roles I would be offered. A lot of times I turned down things. There's a lot of thankless roles for women in

bigger budget films. **AP:** What has Marion meant to you?

Allen: She's sort of at the core of my growth as an actor and certainly my relationship to the world. As I move through the world, I've become very identified with that character. There was maybe a brief period of time where I found it annoying. But that passed and now it's just this character that I love. I can't imagine anything more satisfying to have had the chance in life to create a character that has some meaning for people.

AP: What was it like to shoot your scenes with Ford

in "Dial of Destiny"? Allen: It was fantastic. We shot it all in one day or maybe two days. To just imagine these two people that have been wrenched apart through grief and loss and then she's coming back with this hope that they can move forward. When we played the scene, that was very, very affecting. We were both very affected by it and a little teary. And the crew was a little teary

AP: How has it been keeping your role in the film

Allen: It's been excruciating. (Laughs) I never have to do anything like this again. People have come up to me and they've been so upset because they didn't see my name on IMDb. People would be so mad I'd have to stand there and just be like, "What do I say? Do I say, 'Yeah, isn't that a drag?' or 'You never never know wink, wink." I've had to say I just can't answer any questions about "Indiana Jones" - which I feel like is sort of saying that I'm in the film. It's a lose-lose situation. (Laughs)

AP: Does playing Marion one last time cap anything for you?

Allen: More so for Harrison than for me. He's such a fully developed character and has done all five of these. With Marion, I've kind of come and gone. But she will always be a character that moves through life with me. I don't know if I really have a sense of it being over. There always was a sense that one more would be done, even if it took 20 years. Now, they've been very clear that this is the last one. So it is a letting go.

already attracting a lot of repeat moviegoers. Goldstein estimates that 12% of sales are people going back with friends or family to see it again.

For a movie industry that has been trying to regain its prepandemic footing — and that now finds itself largely shuttered due to actors and screenwriters





strikes - the sensations of "Barbie" and "Oppenheimer" have showed what's possible when everything lines up just right. "Post-pandemic, there's no ceil-

ing and there's no floor," Goldstein said. "The movies that miss really miss big time, and the movies that work really work big time.'

Universal Pictures' "Oppenhe-

imer," meanwhile, is performing more like a superhero movie than a three-hour film about scientists talking.

Nolan's drama starring Cillian Murphy as atomic bomb physicist J. Robert Oppenheimer has accrued \$174.1 million domestically thus far. With an additional \$72.4 million in

international cinemas, "Oppenheimer" has already surpassed \$400 million globally

Showings in IMAX have typically been sold out. "Oppenheimer" has made \$80 million worldwide on IMAX. The largeformat exhibitor said Sunday that it will extend the film's run through Aug. 13. (AP)

People & Places

Music

Classic heartbreak album

'Broken Hearts' stands as an island of Jones' career

NEW YORK, July 31, (AP): A sign of how much "Little Broken Hearts" represented a departure for $\bf Norah$ Jones was that she filmed not one, but two music videos for the album depicting herself as a murderer.

One victim was a lying, cheating boyfriend, the other his temptress. Both ended up at the bottom of a lake. A decade after its release, the disc

stands as an is-

land in Jones'

a little gem

to leave a musical comfort

zone to pro-

cess romantic turmoil - and

career.

where tested herself



ended up with a concise, consistent statement that rivals some classic heart-

break albums. "I just love it," Jones said recently. "It's one of my favorite things I've ever done. I also think that for people who weren't really on board with me or my music, some of them liked it when they didn't like the rest of my stuff, and I always thought that was kind of fun and funny.'

This is Norah Jones, remember. Her sumptuous voice was everywhere in the early 2000s, songs from her jazz-inflected debut "Come Away With Me" pouring out of speakers in living rooms, boutiques and restaurants. It has sold a staggering 23.7 million copies.

It was music so pleasing and inoffensive, it offended some.

The Jones who approached 2012's "Little Broken Hearts" was in her early 30s and just off "one of my more dramatic break-ups." Her voice seemed weary in the song "Good Morning," which sounded like dawn breaking on a sleepless night.

Simple

On the musical "Dear John" letter, a resigned Jones sings of "folding my hand." You learn why in the ensuing 11 songs, as the rough outlines of a betrayal story emerge.

She worked with Brian Burton, the producer known as Danger Mouse whose edgy imprint was evident on discs by Gnarls Barkley, Broken Bells, the Black Keys and Beck. She had asked him to produce music she had written for a previous album, but he declined. That was not how he does things.

He liked to go into the studio with nothing written and see what hap-

"And I was like, 'what?" Jones said. She had never worked that way. That seems, to an outsider, a little

disorganized, haphazard. They col-

laborated mostly alone in a studio for two months and the strengths of that approach became evident. The songs are simple, direct and tell a cohesive story both lyrically and musically.

At the beginning of the process, Burton asked whether Jones was willing to go someplace darker than she'd previously been. Under his direction, she told the stories in a

"He likes that kind of dark music, but I was just up for anything, you know?" she said. "I felt so comfortable with him because we were already friends, and we had already spent the last few years meeting up every once in a while, having a drink, talking about relationships and stuff.

"So it didn't feel like going into this vulnerable place with a stranger," she said. "That made it so much

Mesmerisina

The work culminated in the song "Miriam," at once mesmerizing and kind of creepy, where she fantasizes about killing her rival. "Miriam, it's such a pretty name," she sings. "And

I'll keep saying it, until you die."

When done, Burton told Rolling Stone magazine that the album was "obviously very different than anything Norah's ever done. I don't know what people will think. I hope they like it, and she doesn't lose a bunch of fans."

What one critic, Mark Saleski, found even more stunning than the musical shift was "this mind-boggling idea: Somebody cheated on Norah Jones.'

"It happens to the best of us," Jones said over lunch in an outdoor cafe. "It's part of life."

No, the real woman's name isn't Miriam. And, no, Jones is no murderer. Songs aren't always literal. She's resisted referring to this as a heartbreak album — even though "broken hearts" appears in two song titles — because Jones worries that characterization overshadows the music and misses some of the play-

Her reticence is evident when Jones is asked about how the real people who inspired the stories felt about the album. She didn't like those questions then — or now

"Why do you need me to talk about my relationships?" she said. "I've just given you a whole album encapsulating the emotions and the inner workings of my brain. People are so nosy and it's so funny. It's like, I'm bleeding into this album. What more can I say that would be better than that?"

There's a rich history of artists pouring romantic torment into songs or albums.



This image released by Max shows John Wilson in a scene from the series 'How To With John Wilson.' (AP)



Singer-songwriter Norah Jones poses for a portrait in upstate New York on June 8, 2020. For Jones, the 'Little Broken Hearts' album is a lesson in making the most of a bad experience. Now a decade old, the album stands out as a little gem. (AP)



Carponelli

Variety

SIOUX CITY, Iowa: What bills itself as "the world's longest, largest and oldest recreational bicycle touring event" was more like the world's biggest traffic jam as riders, packed together in a sinewy stream of brightly colored erseys and shorts, churned across the Loess Hills on the western edge of Iowa.

It's called RAGBRAI - the Register's Annual Great Bicycle Ride Across Iowa - and it promised to be bigger than ever this year, as the brainchild of two writers from The Des Moines Register celebrated its golden anniversary with a route similar to its first.

That meant a start in Sioux City, where ambitious riders ceremonially dipped their rear tires in the Missouri River, and a finish for those with the legs and the temerity to last that long seven days later in **Davenport** on the Missis sippi River.

Along the way there is plenty of pie and countless spaghetti dinners served in church basements in tiny towns that dot the heartland. There are riders on bikes that cost the equivalent of a down payment on a house, others on handme-downs that announce their arrival with every creaking pedal stroke. The riders themselves come from all corners of the globe, including one intrepid group from Australia, and repre

sent just about every **US** state.
"Participating in RAGBRAI is an extraordinary experience. It's truly a source of pride for many of us in the cycling community, especially if you call anywhere in Iowa home," said **Lisa** Carponelli, who along with business partner **Kim Hopkins** used the ride in 2015 to help launch their business, Velorosa, which produces cycling gear for women.

"You'll meet countless interesting people in every town and along every stretch of pavement," she said. (AP)

WASHINGTON: Diageo says it's cutting ties with rapper and entrepreneur Sean "Diddy" Combs following his move to sue the company over allegations of racism in the handling of his brands, according to court filing.

Combs' lawsuit, filed with the New York

Supreme Court in **Manhattan** last month. Combs, who is Black, said Diageo leadership told him that his race was one of the reasons it limited distribution to "urban" neighborhoods and stunted sales growth of his brands. According to the suit, which seeks billions of dollars in damages in other legal proceedings against Diageo, Combs was also told that some Diageo leaders resented him for making too much

Television

Wilson on Al's impact on filmmaking

'How To' exploits the weird

LOS ANGELES, July 31, (AP): As John Wilson gears up to premiere the third and final season of his cult documentary series, "How To With John Wilson," the filmmaker reflected on how a video camera changes people's behavior - and how he exploits that for his show.

Each episode of the Emmy-nominated series starts off as a kind of "how to" video, but inevitably devolves into a hilariously bizarre and shocking portrait of humanity. In an interview with The Associated Press, Wilson shared how his style of cinematography was influenced by his time working for a private investigator, as well as his thoughts on how artificial intelligence will impact the future of film-

Season three of "How To" premiered July 28 on HBO and Max. The interview has been edited for clarity and brevity.

AP: How are you feeling going into this

Wilson: I cannot wait for it to come out. I have been sitting on this for a few months now, and there's just so much I want to talk about with it. I think it's the best season yet. I can't wait.

AP: I used to be a videographer and I covered breaking news for AP for a long time. The whole idea of that job is I'm coming into a situation with a camera trying to document it and I'm trying to not change it. But I've thought a lot about the ways that bringing a camera into a situation inherently does change it. I'm curious

about the ways you've thought about that. Wilson: I've spent a lot of time in the documentary world and reading interviews and talking to people and studying what people do. And I just find it so weird when people try to ignore the fact that the presence of a camera does fundamentally change the energy in a room. And so rather than trying to disguise that, I really like to lean into that instead, because the tension that a cameraperson creates, I find really interesting. And being able to have that be an element that makes something more dramatic is something I'm surprised more people don't do.

AP: So you're saying you like to exploit

Wilson: Yeah. I personally try to remove as much artifice as I can within the work and that's a huge part of it. It's kind of funny. Sometimes I'll interview someone and they already know the show and they may have even seen it. But other times, I'll get through an entire interview with someone, and they'll ask, 'So who's the host of this show?' And I'll be like, 'Oh, it's me.' And they'll be like, 'Why don't you have a cameraperson? Can you not afford one?' And I'm just like, 'Oh, no, I prefer this.' And in their eyes, they just think that I'm like a really talkative cameraperson that's about to lose their job because I keep interrupting the shot.

AP: Do you go through each episode chronologically when you're making it, or is it like you have all these different threads that you're balancing at once?

Wilson: Everything is happening at the same time. I'll have six different episode titles in my head. And maybe Î'll see someone underneath scaffolding, for example, and I'll maybe start talking to them about scaffolding and maybe they don't have a very interesting take on it. So then I cycle through five episodes worth of questions because maybe I can still use them for something. And I have other people to help, other producers and stuff. And then it doesn't really begin to congeal or take any shape until we're in the edit. But I'm always shooting and editing with the editor simultaneously, and I have to tell them exactly what everything is for. So everything is happening at the same time. That's the only way it can really happen.

AP: În light of conversations about AI that are obviously big right now, I'm curious about your thoughts on the future of filmmaking as it relates to that.

Wilson: I feel like AI is this unstoppable thing in a way. And I think it's up to the the filmmakers and the people creating this stuff moving forward to deliberately make human work. And I think people respond really well to that for a reason. I feel like there is eventually going to be some kind of division about what we choose to consume. And that may mean that the human stuff is made for no money because nobody wants to make it anymore. But that's just the choice that creators will have to make.

AP: I know this is going back kind of far, but I was curious about how you got the job for the private investigator after film school.

Wilson: I found it on the etc. section of Craigslist classifieds, the place where they put work that can't be categorized into any other area. It was for a video editor. And I went in and interviewed and I got the job and then when I asked what the company even was, they told me it was a private investigation agency. And that's when I realized I wanted to stay.

AP: And you feel like that experience informs how you think about and do your work now?

Wilson: Yeah. I mean, it made me kind of want to shoot everything in a similar style or from a certain distance. There was just something really electrifying about watching people from a certain perspective that I wanted to mimic somehow.

AP: You and "How To" executive producer Nathan Fielder seem like you have very similar affects. Did you guys hit it off immediately?

Wilson: Yeah, Nathan and I have similar personalities. I think we connected on the kind of stuff that inspires us and the kind of media we consume and stuff like that. And I was obviously a huge fan of his show. It took me a minute to figure out who he really was because I had this idea from watching his show and and it just took me a moment to kind of separate that from who Nathan actually is. Ĥe's very smart and sensitive and has a very good work ethic and just does not settle. The intensity he brings to a project is really cool and the show would have been a mess if I was the only person at the head of it. Together, we set what the rules were for the show and that was a really cool thing to understand what our value systems were and pairing those together.

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REMEDY

This Recall is run pursuant to articles (42, 43, 44, 45, 46, and 47) of no. (39/2015) issuing the excutive bylaws of law no. (39/2014) on Consumer Protection

RECALL VEHICLES

TOYOTA VELOZ

(MY 2023)

VIN: MHFAB1BY9P3046446 TO MHFAB1BY1P3047588

Due to malfunction in the airbag control

may not operate in the event of a collision

module the airbag and seatbelt pretensioners

ALSAYER will contact the involved vehicles customers and

inform them to bring to our service centers to perform check

and do needful replacement of ECU, when necessary,

money. "Cloaking itself in the language of diversity and equality is good for Diageo's business, but it is a lie," reads the May 31 complaint filed on behalf of Combs Wines and Spirits LLC. Meanwhile, Diageo has denied the accusa-

tions and called Combs

resorting to "false and reckless" allegations "in an effort to extract additional billions" from the

Diageo also said it was ending its brand part-nerships with the music mogul - noting that the company had served the Combs parties a notice of intent to arbitrate breaches of the DeLeón agreement and a notice of termination for their Cîroc relationship. (AP)

suit a "sham action." In the filing, which calls

on the court to compel arbitration or dismiss

Combs' complaint, Diageo accuses Combs of

Climate

Suffer without AC

Heat waves illuminate plight of poorest in US

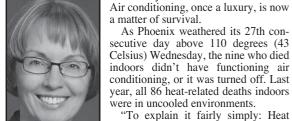
DENVER, July 31, (AP): As Denver neared triple-digit temperatures, Ben Gallegos sat shirtless on his porch swatting flies off his legs and spritzing himself with a misting fan to try to get through the heat. Gallegos, like many in the nation's poorest neighborhoods, doesn't have air conditioning.

The 68-year-old covers his windows with mattress foam to insulate against the heat and sleeps in the concrete basement. He knows high temperatures can cause heat stroke and death, and his lung condition makes him more susceptible. But the retired brick layer, who survives on about \$1,000 a month largely from Social Security, says air conditioning is out of reach. "Take me about 12 years to save up for something like that,"

he said. "If it's hard to breath, I'll get down to emergency."

As climate change fans hotter and longer heat waves, break-

ing record temperatures across the US and leaving dozens dead, the poorest Americans suffer the hottest days with the fewest defenses.



were in uncooled environments.

"To explain it fairly simply: Heat kills," said **Kristie Ebi**, a University of Washington professor who researches heat and health. "Once the heat wave starts, mortality starts in

about 24 hours."

It's the poorest and people of color, from Kansas City to Detroit to New York City and beyond, who are far more likely to face grueling heat without air conditioning, according to a Boston University analysis of 115 U.S. metros.

"The temperature differences ... between lower-income neighborhoods, neighborhoods of color and their wealthier, whiter counterparts have pretty severe consequences," said Cate Mingoya-LaFortune of Groundwork USA, an environmental justice organization. "There are these really big consequences like death. ... But there's also ambient misery."

Propane

Some have window units that can offer respite, but "in the dead of heat, it don't do nothing," said Melody Clark, who stopped Friday to get food at a nonprofit in Kansas City, Kansas, as temperatures soared to 101, and high humidity made it feel like 109. When the central air conditioning at her rental house went on the fritz, her landlord installed a window unit. But it doesn't do much during the day.

So the 45-year-old wets her hair, cooks outside on a propane grill and keeps the lights off indoors. She's taken the bus to the library to cool off. At night she flips the box unit on, hauling her bed into the room where it's located to sleep.

As far as her two teenagers, she said: "They aren't little bitty. We aren't dying in the heat. ... They don't complain."

While billions in federal funding have been allocated to subsidize utility costs and the installation of cooling systems, experts say they often only support a fraction of the most vulnerable families and some still require prohibitive upfront costs. Installing a centralized heat pump system for heating and cooling can easily reach \$25,000.

President Joe Biden announced steps on Thursday to defend against extreme heat, highlighting the expansion of the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, which funnels money through states to help poorer households pay utility bills.

While the program is critical, said Michelle Graff, who studies the subsidy at Cleveland State University, only about 16% of the nation's eligible population is actually reached. Nearly half of states don't offer the federal dollars for summer cooling.

"So people are engaging in coping mechanisms, like they're turning on their air conditioners later and leaving their homes hotter," Graff said.

While frigid temperatures and high heating bills birthed the term "heat or eat," she said, "we can now transition to AC or eat, where people are going to have to make difficult decisions."

As temperatures rise, so does the cost of cooling. And temperatures are already hotter in America's low-income neighborhoods like Gallegos' Denver suburb of Globeville, where people live along stretches of asphalt and concrete that hold heat like a cast-iron skillet. Surface temperatures there can be roughly 8 degrees hotter than in Denver's wealthier neighborhoods, where a sea of vegetation cools the area, according to the environmental advocacy group American Forests.

This disparity plays out nationwide. Researchers at the University of San Diego analyzed 1,056 counties and in over 70%, the poorest areas and those with higher Black, Hispanic and Asian populations were significantly hotter.

About one in 10 U.S. households have no air conditioning, a disparity compounded for marginalized groups, according to a study by the Brookings Institution. Less than 4% of Detroit's white households don't have air conditioning; it's 15% for Black households.

At noon on Friday, Katrice Sullivan sat on the porch of her rented house on Detroit's westside. It was hot and muggy, but even steamier inside the house. Even if she had air conditioning, Sullivan said she'd choose her moments to run it to keep her electricity bill down.

The 37-year-old factory worker pours water on her head, freezes towels to put around her neck, and sits in her car with the air conditioner on. "Some people here spend every dollar for food, so air conditioning is something they can't afford," she said.

Shannon Lewis, 38, lived in her Detroit home for nearly 20 years without air conditioning. Lewis's bedroom was the only place with a window unit, so she'd squeeze her teenager, 8-year-old and 3-year-old-twins into her queen-size bed to sleep, eat meals and watch television.

Landlords

"So it was like cool in one room and a heat stroke in another," Lewis said. For the first time, Lewis now has air conditioning through a local non-profit, she said. "We don't have to sleep or eat in the same room, we are able to come out, sit at the dining room table, eat like a family."

After at least 54 died during a 2021 heat wave, mostly elderly people without air conditioning, in the Portland area, Oregon passed a law prohibiting landlords from placing blanket bans on air conditioning units. By and large, however, states don't have laws requiring landlords to provide cooling.

In the federal Inflation Reduction Act, billions were set aside for tax credits and rebates to help families install energy-efficient cooling systems, but some of those are yet to be available. For people like Gallegos, who doesn't pay taxes, the available credits are worthless.

The law also offers rebates, the kind of state and federal point-of-sale discounts that Amanda Morian has looked into for her 640-square-foot home.

Morian, who has a 13-week-old baby susceptible to hot weather, is desperate to keep her house in Denver's Globeville suburb cool. She bought thermal curtains, ceiling fans and runs a window unit. At night she tries to do skin-to-skin touch to regulate the baby's body temperature. When the back door opens in the afternoon, she said, the indoor temperature jumps a degree.

"All of those are just to take the edge off, it's not enough to actually make it cool. It's enough to keep us from dying," she said.

She got estimates from four different companies for installing a cooling system, but every project was between \$20,000 and \$25,000, she said. Even with subsidies she can't afford it.

"I'm finding that you have to afford the project in the first place and then it's like having a bonus coupon to take \$5,000 off of the sticker price," she said.



Horseshoe Crabs spawn during at Pickering Beach in Dover, Del., Sunday, June 11, 2023. The biomedical industry is adopting new standards to protect a primordial sea animal that is a linchpin of the production of vital medicines. (AP)



This undated photo provided by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shows a female Lone Startick, which despite its Texas-sounding name, is found mainly in the Southeast. At least 100,000 people in the US have become allergic to red meat since 2010 because of a weird syndrome triggered by tick bites. That's according to a new government report. But health officials believe more have the problem and don't know it, and the actual number is more than than four times higher. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on Thursday, July 27, released two reports on the growing tick-borne allergy problem. (AP)



Zuchtriegel

gel

Meloni

Variety

'Our bears are real': A zoo in eastern China is denying suggestions some of its bears might be people in costumes after photos of the animals standing like humans circulated online.

The sun bears from Malaysia are small-

er than other bears and look different but are the real thing, the Hangzhou Zoo said Monday on its social media account. "Some people think I stand like a per-

son," said the posting, written from the bear's point of view. "It seems you don't understand me very well."

An employee who answered the phone

at the zoo declined to talk about the bears but said visits were being arranged for reporters Monday to see them. Internet users questioned whether the

zoo's bears were real after photos circulated showing one standing upright on slender hind legs.

"Because of the way they stand, some

people online question whether they are 'humans in disguise,'" the newspaper Hangzhou Daily said.

Sun bears are the size of large dogs,

standing at most 1.3 meters (50 inches) tall on their hind legs, compared with up to 2.8 meters (9 feet) for grizzlies and other species, according to the zoo.

Other Chinese zoos have been accused of trying to pass off dogs dyed to look like wolves or African cats, and donkeys painted to look like zebras. (AP)

Still-life fresco discovered: A still-life fresco discovered recently in the Pompeii archaeological site looks like a pizza, but it's not, experts at the archaeo-

They noted that key ingredients needed to make Italy's iconic dish — tomatoes and mozzarella — were not available when the fresco was painted some 2,000 years ago.

Tometoes were only introduced to Fig.

logical site said.

Tomatoes were only introduced to Europe from the Americas a few centuries ago, and some histories have it that the discovery of mozzarella led directly to the invention of pizza in nearby Naples in the 1700s.

he image is instead believed to be a focaccia covered with fruit, including pomegranate and possibly dates, finished with spices or a type of pesto, experts said. In the fresco, it is served on a silver plate and a wine chalice stands next to it.

The contrast of the frugal meal served in a luxurious setting, denoted by the silver tray, is not unlike modern-day pizza, "born as a poor-man's dish in southern Italy, which has won over the world and is served even in starred restaurants," said **Gabriel Zuchtriegel**, director of the

Health

A declining bird needs horseshoe crabs for food

Crab blue blood vital for medicine

PORTLAND, Maine, July 31, (AP): A primordial sea animal that lives on the tidal mudflats of the East Coast and serves as a linchpin for the production of vital medicines stands to benefit from new protective standards.

But conservationists who have been trying for years to save a declining bird species - the red knot - that depends on horseshoe crabs fear the protections still don't go far enough.

Drug and medical device makers are dependent on the valuable blue blood of the crabs - helmet-shaped invertebrates that have scuttled in the ocean and tidal pools for more than 400 million years - to test for potentially dangerous impurities. The animals are drained of some of their blood and returned to the environment, but many die from the bleeding.

Recent revisions to guidelines for handling the animals should keep more alive through the process, regulators said. The animals - not really true crabs but rather more closely related to land-dwelling invertebrates such as spiders and scorpions - are declining in some of their East Coast range.

"They were here before the dinosaurs," said Glenn Gauvry, president of Ecological Research & Development Group, a Delaware-based nonprofit that advocates for horseshoe crab conservation. "And they're having problems because the new kids on the block, us, haven't learned to appreciate the elders."

The harvest of horseshoe crabs, which are also caught for bait in the commercial fishing industry, has emerged as a critical issue for conservationists in recent years because of the creature's role in coastal ecosystems. The crabs' eggs are vitally important food for a declining subspecies of a bird called the red knot - a rust-colored, migratory shorebird listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act.

The birds, which migrate some 19,000 miles (30,577 kilometers) roundtrip from South America to Canada and must stop to eat along the way, need stronger protection of horseshoe crabs to survive, said Bethany Kraft, senior director for coastal conservation with the Audubon Society. Kraft and other wildlife advocates said the fact the guidelines for handling crabs are voluntary and not mandatory leaves the red knot at risk.

"Making sure there is enough to fuel these birds on this massive, insanely long flight is just critical," Kraft said.

The Coldiretti ag lobby immediately

seized on the discovery of the fresco to

promote pizza — invented as a quick

meal for the working poor — as a na-

Pompeii archaeological site.

"There's very clear linkage between horseshoe crabs and the survival of the red knot in the coming decades."

The horseshoe crabs are valuable because their blood can be manufactured into limulus amebocyte lysate, or LAL, that is used to detect pathogens in indispensable medicines such as injectable antibiotics. The crabs are collected by fishermen by hand or via trawlers for use by biomedical companies, then their blood is separated and proteins within their white blood cells are processed. It takes dozens of the crabs to produce enough blood to fill a single glass tube with its blood, which contains immune cells sensitive to bacteria.

Management

There are only five federally licensed manufacturers on the East Coast that process horseshoe crab blood. The blood is often described by activist groups as worth \$15,000 a quart (liter), though some members of the industry say that figure is impossible to verify.

Regulators estimate about 15% of the crabs die in the bleeding process. In 2021, that meant about 112,000 crabs died, said Caitlin Starks, a senior fishery management plan coordinator with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. The bait fishery for horseshoe crabs, which are used as bait for eels and sea snails, killed more than six times that, she said.

Still, the fisheries commission in May approved new best management practices for the biomedical industry's harvesting and handling of the crabs. Those include minimizing exposure to sunlight and keeping crabs cool and moist, Starks said.

"The goal is to give the crabs that are bled a better chance of surviving and contributing to the ecosystem after they are released," she said.

That's exactly what the new guidelines will do, said Nora Blair, quality operations manager with Charles River Laboratories, one of the companies that manufactures LAL from horseshoe crab blood. Blair was a member of a working group that crafted the updated guidelines alongside other industry members, conservationists, fishery managers, fishermen and others.

Blair said the industry is working toward a synthetic alternative - an outcome conservationists have been pushing for years. However, for now the wild harvest of horseshoe crabs

tional treasure. Today, pizza represents

one-third of the food budget of foreign

visitors and generates total annual rev-

enues of 15 billion euros (\$16.4 billion)

in Italy. Italy's prime minister is Giorgia

remains critically important to drug safety, Blair said.

"The critical role of horseshoe crab in the biopharmaceutical supply chain and coastal ecosystem makes their conservation imperative," he said.

The Atlantic horseshoe crab, the species harvested on the East Coast, ranges from the Gulf of Maine to Florida. The International Union for Conservation of Nature lists the species as being "vulnerable" based on a 2016 assessment.

One of the most important ecosystems for horseshoe crabs is the Delaware Bay, an estuary of the Delaware River between Delaware and New Jersey. The bay is where the crabs breed and the red knots feed.

The density of horseshoe crab eggs in the bay is nowhere near what it was in the 1990s, said Lawrence Niles, an independent wildlife biologist who once headed New Jersey's state endangered species program. Meanwhile, the population of the rufa red knot, the threatened subspecies, has declined by 75% since the 1980s, according to the National Park Service

The birds need meaningful protection of horseshoe crab eggs to be able to recover, Niles said. He tracks the health of red knots and horseshoe crabs and has organized a group called Horseshoe Crab Recovery Coalition to advocate for conservation measures.

Niles and volunteers he organizes have been counting the horseshoe crab eggs since the 1980s and tagging birds since the 1990s. In mid-June, as he was wrapping up this year's tracking in southern New Jersey, he described the eggs as "good and consistent" through the month.

"What we want is the harvest to

stop, the killing to stop, and let the stock rebuild to its carrying capacity," Niles said.

The horseshoe crabs have been harvested for use as bait and medicine from Florida to Maine over the years, though the largest harvests are in Maryland, Delaware, Massachusetts and Virginia. According to federal fishery statistics, the crabs were worth about \$1.1 million in total at the docks in 2021.

That figure is dwarfed by seafood species such as lobsters and scallops, which are routinely worth hundreds of millions of dollars. However, horseshoe crab fishers are dedicated stewards of a fishery that supplies a vital product, said George Topping, a Maryland fisherman.

Meloni. (AP)



Trader Joe soup recalled: Trader Joe's is recalling a broccoli cheddar soup that may contain insects and cooked falafel that may contain rocks, about one week after the grocery chain recalled two cookie products over similar concerns.

The soup recall impacts Trader Joe's Unexpected Broccoli Cheddar Soup with "Use By" dates ranging from July 18 to Sept. 15, according to a Thursday announcement from the company. The grocer announced that Trader Joe's Fully Cooked Falafel sold in 35 states and Washington, D.C., was also under recall.

Washington, D.C., was also under recall.
On July 21, Trader Joe's announced that it was recalling Trader Joe's Almond Windmill Cookies and Trader Joe's Dark Chocolate Chunk and Almond Cookies with "sell by" dates ranging from Oct 17 to Oct 21. Like the falafel, the cookies

may also contain rocks, the company said. When asked for further information about how the insects and rocks may have gotten into these products, a Trader Joe's spokesperson said that "there was an issue in the manufacturing processes in the facilities." Suppliers alerted Trader Joe's of the possible foreign material for each

recall, the company said.

"We pulled the product from our shelves as soon as we were made aware of the issue. Once we understood the issue we notified our customers," the spokesperson said in a statement sent to The Associated Press Saturday. (AP)



Gigi Kennedy pets her dog in her home in Denver's Globeville neighborhood on Monday, July 24, 2023. Kennedy said her landlord told her she could not set the air conditioning below 75 degrees Fahrenheit (23.8 Celsius). Her home consistently reaches temperatures in the 80s. America's poorest residents and people of color are far more likely to face grueling heat without air conditioning to keep their body temperatures down, according to a Boston University analysis of 115 US cities. (AP)

Olson drives in 5 runs as Braves sweep Brewers

Reds take sole possession of first place in NL Central

ATLANTA, July 31, (AP): Matt Olson drove in five runs with two homers, including a go-ahead, tworun blast in the eighth, and the Atlanta Braves beat the Milwaukee Brewers 8-6 on Sunday to cap their sweep of the high-scoring series.

Orlando Arcia led off the eighth with a double to left field off Joel Payamps (4-2). With one out, Olson's 35th homer landed in the Atlanta bullpen in right-center, giving the Braves the lead. It was the first earned runs allowed by Payamps, who took a 1.68 ERA into the game, since June 8.

Kirby Yates (5-0) pitched a scoreless eighth. Raisel Iglesias earned his 20th save by striking out the side in the

BASEBALL

Atlanta rookie AJ Smith-Shawver, recalled from Triple-A Gwinnett before the game, allowed three runs on four hits and four walks in five innings. Collin McHugh blew the 5-3 lead by giving up three runs in the sixth.

Orioles 9, Yankees 3

In Baltimore, Adam Frazier hit a three-run homer as part of a seven-run first inning for Baltimore, and the Orioles took two of three in the weekend series

The Orioles led 6-0 before they even made an out against Luis Severino (2-5). The win kept Baltimore 1 1/2 games ahead of Tampa Bay atop the AL East. The Yankees are 3 1/2 behind the last playoff spots in the American League after missing a chance to gain on Houston and Toronto.

Severino allowed nine runs and 10 hits in 3 1/3 innings as his ERA rose to

Orioles starter Dean Kremer couldn't make it through five innings, so Mike Baumann (8-0) was credited with the win. After Baltimore's big first inning, Kremer retired Kyle Higashioka on a bases-loaded grounder for the third out of the second.

Rays 8, Astros 2 In Houston, Brandon Lowe hit a two-run homer and drove in three, Josh Lowe capped a four-run first with a three-run double and Tampa Bay

beat Houston. The Rays got to Houston starter Brandon Bielak (5-6) for four runs in the first, with Yandy Díaz scoring on a fielding error by José Abreu before Josh Lowe hit his three-run double. Bielak allowed six runs - three earned - on eight hits with four strikeouts in five innings.



Atlanta Braves' Ozzie Albies hits a double during the eighth inning of a baseball game against the Milwaukee Brewers in Atlanta. (AP)

Zack Littell (1-2), making his fourth start of the season, yielded two runs on eight hits with four strikeouts in a career-high five innings.

Reds 9, Dodgers 0

In Los Angeles, Elly De La Cruz, Joey Votto and Matt McLain homered, and Cincinnati took over sole possession of first place in the NL Central.

De La Cruz went 4 for 5 and scored twice as the Reds rapped out 14 hits in taking two of three from the NL Westleading Dodgers. It was LA's worst loss since a 15-0 defeat to San Francisco on June 17.

Graham Ashcraft (6-7) scattered five hits over six innings and struck out

Dodgers shortstop Miguel Rojas made his first career pitching appearance in the ninth. He nearly hit Votto before the designated hitter answered with an RBI double that made it 9-0. Rojas then hit Christian Encarnacion-

Dodgers starter Michael Grove (2-3) got hit hard over the first three innings. Grove gave up eight runs and 10 hits in six innings. The rookie right-hander struck out a career-best 10 and walked one on a career-high 96 pitches.

Padres 5, Rangers 3 In San Diego, Gary Sanchez homered twice, Juan Soto doubled in Fernando Tatis Jr. from first base and left-hander Blake Snell had another strong start for San Diego, who beat

Texas for a three-game sweep.

Josh Hader retired Josh Jung with the bases loaded in the ninth inning for his 25th save in 29 chances.

Snell (8-8), who has been mentioned as a trade possibility, along with Hader, lowered his big league-leading ERA to 2.50 by holding the Rangers to an unearned run and four hits in five innings. He struck out nine and walked four. The only run he allowed came on his throwing error in the fourth.

Sanchez homered leading off the fourth against Jose Leclerc (0-2) for a 2-1 lead and connected again with two outs in the fifth off Brock Burke for a 4-1 lead. He has 12 this season.

Angels 3, Blue Jays 2, 10 innings In Toronto, Hunter Renfroe hit a two-run home run in the 10th inning and Los Angeles beat Toronto to avoid a three-game sweep.

Renfroe's 17th home run of the season came off Blue Jays right-hander Yimi García (3-4). It was the Angels' first hit with a runner in scoring position in the series. Renfroe went 3 for 4 and drove in all three runs.

Carlos Estévez (5-1) pitched the final two innings for the win. Vladimir Guerrero Jr. drove in automatic runner Bo Bichette with a leadoff single in the 10th, but the Blue Jays couldn't tie it.

Giants 4, Red Sox 3, 11 innings In San Francisco, Joc Pederson singled in Patrick Bailey in the 11th inning, and San Francisco earned its first home series win against Boston since 2004.

Bailey began the inning at second base. After Casey Schmitt was hit by a pitch from Mauricio Llovera (1-1), Brandon Crawford attempted to sacrifice the runners over. But Boston catcher Connor Wong was unable to field the ball and Crawford reached on an infield single. Pederson then lined a 1-2 sinker from Llovera into right field.

Boston missed a chance to take the lead in the top of the 10th when Tristan Beck (2-0) got Yu Chang to strike out swinging with two runners on.

One of San Francisco's top offseason acquisitions, Ross Stripling pitched 4 1/3 innings of one-run ball in relief of opener Scott Alexander. Stripling retired 13 of his 17 batters. He allowed four hits, struck out three and walked

Pirates 6, Phillies 4, 10 innings

In Pittsburgh, Josh Palacios hit a two-run home run in the 10th inning, and Pittsburgh rallied twice from two runs down to clinch the three-game

With Jared Triolo on as the automatic runner, Palacios led off the 10th by driving a slider from Andrew Vasquez (2-1) 367 feet to right. He celebrated his 28th birthday with his second homer of the season as the Pirates took two of three from the Phillies.

Alec Bohm singled to start the 10th for Philadelphia and went to second on a throwing error by Triolo, putting automatic runner Bryce Harper on third. Harper hesitated to run when Trea Turner flew out to right, ultimately charging home when catcher Endy Rodriguez threw to second with Bohm scrambling back to the base. Nick Gonzales' throw back to Rodriguez beat Harper for the second out. Angel Perdomo (2-1) struck out Edmundo Sosa to end the threat.

Marlins 8, Tigers 6 In Miami, Garrett Cooper and Jean Segura homered, newly acquired relievers Jorge López and David Robertson played key roles and Miami beat Detroit.

López (5-2) got the last two outs in the seventh and Robertson closed with a perfect ninth in his Marlins debut for

his 16th save.

Tigers star slugger Miguel Cabrera doubled and walked in his last appearance in Miami. The 40-year-old Cabrera, who will retire at the end of the season, played his first five seasons with the Marlins. He was replaced for a pinch-runner after reaching on a walk in the seventh and received one final round of cheers.

Cooper's two-run shot in the seventh put the Marlins ahead 7-6. He drove a 1-2 pitch from Tigers' reliever Tyler Holton (0-2) over the wall in leftcenter for his 13th homer.

Mariners 4, Diamondbacks 0 In Phoenix, Luis Castillo threw six

sharp innings, J.P. Crawford connected for a solo homer and Seattle took two of three games in the weekend series.

Castillo (7-7) gave up just two hits, striking out seven and walking one while throwing 102 pitches. The righthander has a 2.88 ERA this season.

Crawford homered in the second his ninth long ball of the season - to make it 3-0. The shortstop added a double in the ninth and scored for the third time on Eugenio Suárez's single. Kelly (9-5) managed to shake off his

41-pitch first inning to deliver a decent outing. The right-hander gave up three runs and seven hits over five innings, striking out six while walking two. Royals 2, Twins 1

In Kansas City, Freddy Fermin hit a homer, Maikel Garcia had an RBI double, Ryan Yarbrough gave up one run over seven innings and Kansas City completed a sweep of Minnesota.

Yarbrough (4-5) had his best start of the season going seven innings, allowing one earned run and giving up seven

hits while fanning five. Kenta Maeda (2-6) went five innings and gave up two earned runs on four hits and struck out seven. It's the first time in over a month that the Twins lost a game he started.

Carlos Hernandez shut down the Twins in the ninth for the first save of

Cardinals 3, Cubs 0

In St. Louis, Steven Matz and two relievers combined on a five-hitter, and St. Louis snapped Chicago's eightgame winning streak.

Tyler O'Neill, Andrew Knizner and Paul Goldschmidt drove in runs in the first two innings for the Cardinals before the pitchers took it from there.

Matz (2-7) allowed four hits in six innings with two strikeouts and no walks. He has not allowed an earned run over his last two starts, covering 12 innings. Giovanny Gallegos tossed two hitless innings. JoJo Romero threw a scoreless ninth to pick up his first save.

St. Louis salvaged the final game of the four-game set and had lost its previous six home games to the Cubs.

Chicago starter Kyle Hendricks (4-5) allowed three runs on eight hits over seven innings. He entered the

MLB Results/Standings

WASHINGTON, July 31, (AP): Results and standings from the MLB games on Sunday. Toronto 10 inn Chicago W. Sox Kansas City Tampa Bay Houston Oakland San Diego Texas Boston 11 inn NY Yankees Milwaukee Washington Chicago Cubs Philadelphia 10 inn Pittsburgh LA Dodgers American League East Division

W L P
64 41 .6
64 44 .5
59 47 .5
56 49 .5
55 50 .5 Pct .610 .593 .557 .533 .524 Central Division
W L Pct
54 53 .505
53 53 .500
47 59 .443
43 64 .402
7 32 75 .299
West Division
W L Pct
60 46 .566
59 47 .557
5 55 51 .519
54 51 .514
30 77 .280 Minnesota Cleveland Detroit National League East Division

W L
67 36
57 49
56 49
50 55
44 62 .650 — .538 11-1/2 .533 12 .476 18 .415 24-1/2 Pct .542 .538 .505 .448 .439 GB **L**49
49
52
58
60 Cincinnati Milwaukee -1/2 45 48 50 54 64 Los Angeles 59 San Francisco 58 Arizona 56 San Diego 52 Colorado 41 .491 .390

contest with a 13-3 career mark against

Guardians 5, White Sox 0 In Chicago, José Ramírez homered twice and drove in three runs, helping Aaron Civale and Cleveland earned a

split of the four-game series. Steven Kwan also homered in manager Terry Francona's 1,927th win, breaking a tie with Casey Stengel for 13th on the career list.

Civale (5-2), a potential trade target ahead of Tuesday's deadline, pitched six innings in his second straight win. He allowed three hits, struck out four and walked two. Envel De Los Santos, Trevor Stephan and Emmanuel Clase each pitched an inning after Civale departed, completing a four-hitter.

White Sox right-hander Michael Kopech (4-10) allowed three runs and four hits in five innings. He struck out two and walked five.

Mets 5, Nationals 2

earned his 250th career victory in what could be his final start for New York. Francisco Lindor homered and had

three hits for the fourth-place Mets, who took three of four from last-place Washington. Pete Alonso drove in two Verlander (6-5) allowed one run in

5 1/3 innings to become the 49th major league pitcher to reach 250 wins.

Ălonso had an RBI single and lifted one of New York's two sacrifice flies in a three-run third against former teammate Trevor Williams (5-6).

Lindor homered in consecutive games for the fourth time this year. He reached base four times. Jeff McNeil hit a go-ahead triple and Omar Narváez also had a sacrifice fly in the third.

Rockies 2, Athletics 0 In Denver, Ty Blach tossed five

strong innings, Ryan McMahon had two hits and drove in both runs, and Colorado salvaged the final game of the three-game series.

Matt Koch, Brent Suter and Daniel Bard each pitched an inning before Justin Lawrence capped the shutout with a clean ninth to earn his eighth

Ramón Laureano had two hits and Luis Medina (3-8) allowed two runs in 5 1/3 innings for the Athletics.

Blach (1-0), making his second straight start, went a season-high five innings and threw just 11 balls in his 52 pitches. He allowed three hits and only one runner past first base.



Cincinnati Reds starting pitcher Graham Ashcraft (51) throws during the first inning of a baseball game against the Los Angeles Dodgers in Los Angeles. (AP)

Liberty overcome Sparks

Aces top Wings to avenge most recent loss and improve to 23-2

LAS VEGAS, July 31, (AP): Kelsey Plum scored 28 points, Chelsea Gray added 27 points and eight assists, and the Las Vegas Aces beat the Dallas Wings 104-91 on Sunday to im-

prove to 23-2. A'ja Wilson had 22 points and six blocks as the Aces avenged one of their two losses this season. They have won seven games in a row, dating to an 80-78 loss in Dallas on July 8, and 16 of their last 17.

Alysha Clark scored 12 points and tied her career high of four 3-pointers on four attempts.

Wilson made a driving layup 40 seconds into the game for the first basket and the Aces led the rest of the way. Plum made two free throws to extend the lead to 79-61 late in the third quarter but Crystal Dangerfield and Arike Ogunbowale made back-to-back 3-pointers in a 15-0 run, capped when Dangerfield hit a pullup jumper that pulled Dallas within three points with 8 1/2 minutes to go.

Dallas (14-11) lost for just the second time since Natasha Howard made two last-second free throws to beat the Aces about three

weeks ago. Teaira McCowan scored a season-high 25 points on 11-of-14 shooting and grabbed 14 rebounds - eight offensive - for the Wings. Satou Sabally scored 19 points, Howard added 13 points and 11 rebounds, and

Change Name

Passport No. t2806564 do hereby change to abbas kothari (as Given name) abbas (and Surname) kothari for all purposes, I wil henceforth be known in the name abbas kothari and I also undertake to carry out this name change in all my documents,

Kalani Brown had 10 points. **Liberty 87, Sparks 79**

In Los Angeles, Breanna Stewart scored 25 points and grabbed nine rebounds, Jonquel Jones added 13 points and 13 boards and New York never trailed in the Liberty's win over the Los Angeles Sparks.

Marine Johannes made 5 of 7 from 3-point range and finished with 15 points for the Liberty (19-6). Sabrina Ionescu added 14 points, six rebounds and five assists and Courtney Vandersloot scored eight points with nine assists and six rebounds.

New York, which played its seventh game in 12 days, is off to the best 25-game start in franchise history. The Liberty have won five of their last six.

Ionescu and Johannes each hit two 3-pointers in a 19-0 run that made it 21-2 with 2:52 left in the first quarter. Nneka Ogwumike scored for the Sparks to make it 2-2 but they went scoreless for the next nearly-six minutes, missing 12 straight field-goal attempts.

Angeles (9-16), Los which had won back-toback games over the Indiana Fever, has lost nine of its last 11.

Dearica Hamby scored 21 points, Jordin Canada added 17 and Azurá Stevens 13 for the Sparks. Ogwumike had 10 points.

Sky 104, Mercury 85 In Chicago, Kahleah Copper scored 24 points on 9-of-11 shooting, Marina Mabrey hit four 3-pointers and finished with 23 points and the Chicago Sky beat the Phoe-

nix Mercury . Courtney Williams made 9 of 13 from the field, scored 19 points and had nine assists and Alanna Smith added 10 points for Chicago (10-15). Robyn Parks, a 31-year-old rookie who went undrafted out of VCU in 2014, hit four 3-pointers and scored 14 points - both career highs.

Mabrey and Copper hit back-to-back 3-pointers to

cap a 9-0 run that made it 20-8 midway through the first quarter. Phoenix, which led for just 43 seconds, twice trimmed its deficit to six points but got no closer. Williams hit a 3-pointer that made it 64-53 with 8:34 left in the third quarter and the

> the rest of the way. Diana Taurasi, missed the Mercury's last three games (quad/toe), hit five 3-pointers and scored 24 points. The 41-year-old three-time WNBA champion is just 47 points shy of 10,000 for her illustrious career, which includes 14 All-WNBA selections (10 first

Sky led by double figures

BASKETBALL

(2009, 2014).

team) and two Finals MVPs

Storm 85, Fever 62

In Indianapolis, Jewell Loyd scored 26 points with eight assists, Jordan Horston made 7 of 11 from the field and finished with 15 points to help the Seattle Storm beat the Indiana Fever.

Seattle (6-19), which snapped a franchise-record 10-game losing streak with a 97-74 win Friday over the Chicago Sky, has won backto-back games for the first time this season.

Indiana (6-19) has lost four games in a row and 12 of its last 13 to fall into a tie with the Storm for last in the WNBA standings - a halfgame behind the Phoenix Mercury.

Loyd made 4 of 6 from the field, 3 of 4 from 3-point range, and 4 of 4 from the free-throw line in the first half and had 15 points and four assists as the Storm took a 47-27 lead into halftime. Indiana went scoreless for six-plus minutes in the second quarter as Seattle scored 15 points to open its biggest lead of the game at 44-19 with 2:32 left in the first half.

Dream 80, Mystics 73 In College Park, Allisha Gray tied her career high with 27 points, Nia Coffey had a season-high 16 points, nine rebounds, five assists and two blocks to help the Atlanta Dream beat the

the field, 3 of 6 from 3-point range and 8 of 8 from the free-throw line. Rhyne Howard added 11 points, five rebounds, five steals and two blocks and Cheyenne Parker also scored 11 for Atlanta (14-11).

Parker hit a mid-range jumper and Gray followed with a pull-up 3-pointer to make it 53-48 midway through the third quarter and the Dream led the rest of the way. Cyesha Goree made a jumper that trimmed Washington's deficit to 58-57 with 8:38 to play but Coffey answered with a 3-pointer 19 seconds later to spark a 10-4 spurt - including five points by Gray - to make it 68-61 with 4:57

thereon to seal the victory.

Lynx 87, Sun 83

points, Jessica Shepard had 12 points and 14 rebounds, and Dorka Juhász added 11 points for the Lynx. Minnesota (13-13) has

won three games in a row including an 88-83 victory over the Eastern Conference-leading New York Liberty on Friday. Connecticut (18-7), which had its three-

Washington Mystics. Gray made 8 of 11 from

remaining. Brittney Sykes made a driving layup to pull the Mystics within three points with 25.1 seconds left but the Mystics were called for a take foul before the inbounds pass. Aari Mc-Donald made the ensuing technical free throw and the Dream hit 4-of-4 foul shots

In Uncasville, Kayla Mc-Bride hit four 3-pointers and finished with 19 points on 7-of-10 shooting, Lindsay Allen added 16 points and six assists, and the Minnesota Lynx beat the Connecticut

Aerial Powers scored 14

game win streak snapped, is a half-game behind New York in the standings.

Keselowski, despite being winless this season, is still mathematically in contention

Buescher wins at Richmond and secures spot in NASCAR playoffs

RICHMOND, Va., July 31, (AP): Chris Buescher was already in good position to qualify for NASCAR's

playoffs. Now, even something remarkable over the last four races of the regular season won't keep him out.

Buescher pulled away on a restart with three laps to go to win at Richmond Raceway on Sunday and snag one of the final spots in NASCAR's playoff field.

Buescher led 88 laps and was ahead by nearly 6 seconds when a caution came out with under 10 laps to go. That erased his lead over Virginia native Denny Hamlin, who was booed by his hometown crowd before the race.

But Hamlin got a poor final restart and Buescher easily pulled away for his first Cup Series win of the season, third of his career.

"I knew that last restart was going to be tough, but I knew we had the

speed in this thing," Buescher said.

He and RFK Racing teammate Brad Keselowski led a combined 190 of the 400 laps in their Fords. Keselowski, now a part owner of the team, led 102 laps on the 0.75-mile

Buescher started 26th and had to drive through the field for the win that locked him into the 16-driver playoff field. Buescher became the 13th race winner this year and there are three playoff spots up for grabs over the next month.

It was the 139th Cup win for primary team owner Jack Roush, second since Keselowski joined the

CAR RACING

ownership group.

Ford now has 723 wins in NAS-CAR's top Cup Series.

"Everybody at RFK Racing who has worked so hard to get us to this point," said Buescher.

Hamlin, winner last week at Pocono, finished second in a Toyota for Joe Gibbs Racing. Kyle Busch was third in a Chevrolet for Richard Childress Racing, followed by the Fords of Joey Logano from Team Penske and Ryan Preece of Stewart-Haas



Chris Buescher raises the Cook Out 400 Trophy in Victory Lane after winning a NASCAR Cup Series auto race in Richmond, Va. (AP)

"One win is good, but you get three or four or five and then you feel a lot better," Keselowski said. "It sure beats not having any at all, but we want to keep going. It's nice to have one car locked in the playoffs. We need to get both cars locked in the playoffs. We have a good points gap, but we want wins and this is where we need to be."

Keselowski, despite being winless this season, is still mathematically in contention for the playoffs.

The race was slowed just three times by caution flags, with the final yellow sending the leaders to pit road for four tires with eight laps to go. When the green flag was shown again, Buescher used the inside line to pull away for his third career vic-

Hamlin's bid for the victory ended on the second lap of the final sprint when he drove in too deep in the first turn and slid up the track. He finished 0.549-seconds behind Buescher.

"I got a bad restart," Hamlin said. "I had to recover too much ground from what I lost on the front stretch. Almost got to the outside, and then in turn four, almost got to the outside again, and then in turn one, I was like 'I'm just going to ship it in there and try to get to the outside one more time' and I just carried way too much speed and locked up the left front tires.'

Kyle Larson, angered last week when Hamlin caused him to hit the wall while leading while Hamlin

tournament history.

could be in big trouble.

to play in this tournament.

The United States needs to either win or draw against Portugal, one of eight teams playing in its first World Cup, to ensure the Americans continue

"I think we feel like we have to win everything all the time," said American star Megan Rapinoe. "That's the

expectation for ourselves. That's the

expectation playing for U.S. national

team. It's just kind of like, 'Why would

you come into the World Cup if you

don't think that you should win it, and

if you don't think that you can win it?""

tournament opener, and a 1-1 draw with the Netherlands last Thursday in

Wellington. The Dutch are tied with

the U.S. on points, but the Americans

SOCCER

Portugal lost to the Dutch in its

have the tie-breaker on goals scored.

The United States sits atop the group after a 3-0 victory over Vietnam in the

laps down when he nudged Hamlin out of the way with 70 laps to go during Sunday's race.

Larson, who won at Richmond in

April, finished 19th. "I think he was having a frustrating day," Hamlin said. "It's all

good. With temperatures in the mid-80s, it was about 15 degrees cooler than Saturday, when the temperature approached 100 and the heat index was

at least 105. Nevertheless, points leader Martin Truex Jr. still struggled.

"It was definitely really, really hot," he said. "It felt longer than 400 laps. I'll be honest, when we got to the end of stage two -- I thought there was no way. I thought that was the checkered flag. It just felt really, really long.'

Truex finished seventh.

England in very good shape

All 36 cars that started the race were still running at the end.

The series moves to Michigan where Kevin Harvick, winless so far in this his final season, is the defending champion.



KUNA photo.

Kuwait's jet ski racers celebrate after the race. **Kuwait's jet ski racers star at Waterjet World Series**

Kuwait's jet ski racers snatched the first and second places of the Pro Run GP category in the Waterjet World Series 2023 Round Two race, held in the

French city of vichy during the period July 27-30.

Kuwaiti racer Mohammad Burabyea came first in the Pro Run GP category, while his compatri-

ot Mohammad Al-Baz came second place in the same category to maintain his lead in the general standings for the 2023 title.

The promising racer Fahad Al-Raves was ranked third in the Novice Run Stock category. In statements to KUNA following the race, Burabyea said that these results demonstrated the ability of Kuwaiti youth to vie for the top positions in international sports events.

He affirmed his and fellow racers' determina tion to continue ascending the podiums and raising the country's flag high. (KUNA)

rallied for a 1-under 71 for a two-shot

victory in the Japan PGA

Championship on the Japan Golf Tour.

Taiga Semikawa and Takumi Kanaya

tied for second. One week after

Brandon Robinson Thompson made

the cut in the British Open, he won his

first Challenge Tour title on Sunday by

closing with a 4-under 67 for a two-

Davis Shore closed with a 4-under

67 and won the Osprey Valley Open

by one shot over Myles Creighton on

the PGA Tour Canada. ... Peter Kamis

closed with a 2-under 70 for a one-shot

victory in the FNB Eswatini Challenge

on the Sunshine Tour in South Africa.

... Kokona Sakurai shot 6-under 66

and won the Rakuten Super Ladies by

one shot on the Japan LPGA.

shot victory in the Irish Challenge.

Boutier wins first LPGA major

Domunant Hodges earns maiden PGA tour victory

EVIAN-LES-BAINS, France, July 31, (AP): Céline Boutier became the third woman from France to win a major championship when she closed with a 3-under 68 for a six-shot victory in the Evian Championship.

The outcome was never really in doubt as Boutier began the final round with a three-shot lead and opened with two birdies. Brooke Henderson of Canada had a 70 to finish second.

Boutier is the first Frenchwoman to win the Amundi Evian Championship, which was designated an LPGA major

in 2013. She finished at 14-under 270. The other two French women to win LPGA majors were Patricia Meunier-Lebouc in the 2004 Kraft Nabisco Championship and Catherine Lacoste, who won the 1967 U.S. Women's Open as an amateur.

Nasa Hataoka of Japan, who started the final round in second place, could only manage a 70 and tied for third with former U.S. Women's Open champion Yuka Saso (70), Celine Borge (68) Gaby Lopez (68) and A Lim Kim (69).

GOLF

Rose Zhang closed with a 68 and tied for ninth, her third top 10 in a major since she turned pro in June.

Lee Hodges shot 4-under 67 in the final round for a wire-to-wire victory Sunday in the 3M Open and his first PGA Tour victory, setting tournament records with a 260 and a seven-shot

The victory gets Hodges into the Masters next year and moved him to No. 33 in the FedEx Cup with one tournament left before the postseason.

Hodges, who led by five at the start of the round, led by three over J.T. Poston going to the par-5 18th. Poston took a risky shot trying to make eagle and went into the water, leading to triple bogey and a 69. He went from second place alone to a three-way for second, costing him \$260,000 and 92

points in the FedEx Cup. Martin Laird and Kevin Streelman also tied for second.

Tony Finau, the defending champion and highest-ranked player at 10th in the FedEx Cup standings participating in this field, shot a 70 to land in a threeway tie for seventh.

Alex Cejka defeated Padraig Harrington with a birdie on the second playoff hole Sunday to win the Senior British Open at Royal Porthcawl.

Cejka, who closed with 5-over 76, birdied the second extra hole to claim his third senior major title after he and Harrington (75) tied at 5-over 289 in miserable wet and windy conditions.

Harrington, who also finished runner-up to Darren Clarke last year, narrowly missed an eagle putt on the first extra hole at No. 18. Returning to the 18th, the Irishman duffed a chip from the back of the green and had to settle

Cejka began the final round with a double bogey on the first and dropped another shot on the fourth, but battled back to hold a two-shot lead with two holes to play. But he bogeyed the 17th hole, and Harrington caught him with a birdie on the par-5 18th.

Vijay Singh shot 77 and finished two shots out of the playoff. Conditions were so difficult that Y.E. Yang and Rob Labritz were the only players to match par.

Trace Crowe made a 20-foot birdie on the first extra hole to extend the playoff, then won with a par on the second playoff hole to capture the NV5 Invitational for his first Korn Ferry Tour victory.

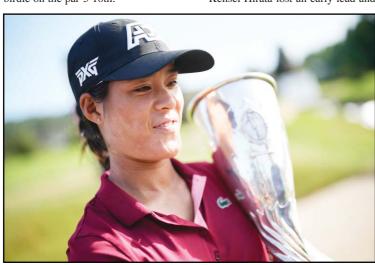
Patrick Fishburn made a 30-foot eagle putt on the 18th hole in regulation for a 7-under 64 that got him into the playoff with Crowe, who overcame a triple bogey on the second hole with eight birdies for a 66. They finished at 259.

Crowe had to made a 20-footer to match birdies with Fishburn on the first playoff hole. Back to the 18th, Fishburn took two shots from the bunker and made bogey.

Ryan McCormick birdied the last two holes for a 66 to finish one shot out of the playoff.

Bryan Kim made a 7-foot birdie on the 35th hole and went on to a 2-up victory over Joshua Bai in the raindelayed U.S. Junior Amateur. The victory gives the 18-year-old Kim, an incoming freshman at Duke, a spot in the U.S. Open next year at Pinehurst

Kensei Hirata lost an early lead and



France's Celine Boutier poses with her trophy after winning the Evian Championship women's golf tournament in Evian, eastern France. (AP)

ppener but then beat Vietnam 2-0. So if the Portuguese beat the United States, they'll move on, and the Americans would then need Vietnam to beat the Dutch in Dunedin - while keeping their advantage on goal differential - to ad-

"One thing is for sure, that we have a job to do and that's first and foremost to take care of our game, so our main focus right now it our performance, our team, and Portugal," said U.S. coach Vlatko Andonovski. "What happens on the other side is something we can't control. We have to stay focused on the things we can control.'

Portugal could use a swarming defense to try to prevent the United States from scoring the way Vietnam - unsuccessfully - played the Americans in the opener.

Portugal defender Ana Borges said her team will be prepared.

"This is the stage where we want to be. It's against these teams that we want to play because we're going to learn and grow from them," Borges said. "Not saying anything about the other team, but if we weren't prepared for this challenge, we wouldn't be playing football.

England is in very good shape headed into its Group D finale against China, needing only a draw Tuesday night in Adelaide, Australia to win the group



Ireland's goalkeeper Courtney Brosnan (left), grabs the battle during the Women's World Cup Group B soccer match between Ireland and Nigeria in Brisbane, Australia. (AP)

and advance to the round of 16.

Even a loss would be OK and push England through as group winners so long as Denmark doesn't beat Haiti. If Denmark won and England lost, the group winner would be decided by FIFA tiebreakers.

England edged out a 1-0 victory over Haiti to open the tournament, then beat Denmark by the same score.

China lost 1-0 to Denmark in the opener but rebounded with a 1-0 win over Haiti and is now trying to keep its streak intact of advancing out of group play in all eight of its World Cup ap-

It will be a tough task: China can advance to the round of 16 if the Chinese beat England. But if Denmark beats Haiti, coupled with a China win, then FIFA tiebreakers would come into a play. A loss would mean China's only chance at advancing would be if Haiti

beat Denmark. England and China meet for just the fifth time, but first since a 2-1 China victory in 2015.

England has scored in each of its last 15 matches at the Women's World Cup for a tally of 25 goals since 2015. A goal against China would make England the first team to score in 16 consecutive matches in the tournament.

China is looking to win consecutive World Cup games for the first time since 1999.

The Netherlands want to win every match in the Women's World Cup but none more so than Tuesday's game against Vietnam.

At stake: avoiding Sweden in the knockout round.

The Dutch, the tournament runnerup in 2019, need only a win or a draw in the Group E match played in Dunedin, New Zealand. And even a loss would be OK so long as the United States beats Portugal in a game being played simultaneously.

Fritz clinches sixth career ATP Tour title

ATLANTA, July 31, (AP): Taylor Fritz won his sixth career title Sunday, beating Aleksandar Vukic of Australia 7-5, 6-7 (5), 6-4 at the Atlanta Open.

The top seed and highest-ranked American at No. 9 tuned up for the U.S. Open with his second victory of the season on hard courts, having won the Delray Beach title in February.

He appeared en route to winning this title easily, reaching the final without dropping a set and then holding two match points while leading 6-5 in the second with Vukic serving. But the Australian erased those and then won the tiebreaker to force the deciding set. Fritz, 25, recovered to take the third and deny Vukic

his first ATP Tour title. The 27-year-old Vukic, who played collegiately at Illi-

nois, will rise to a career-high No. 62 in the ATP rankings. He would have climbed into the top 50 with a victory.

Alexander Zverev won the Hamburg European Open for the first time by beating **Laslo Djere** 7-5, 6-3.

It's the 26-year-old Zverev's first title since winning in Turin, Italy, in November 2021 and he achieved it without dropping a set at his hometown tournament.

"I was born here, I grew up on these courts, I first picked up a tennis racket in Hamburg, so to win here is bigger than winning a regular ATP event," Zverev told

The fourth-seeded Zverev began the week denying allegations of assault after the public prosecutor's office in Berlin applied for a penalty order to be made against him. Zverev said the matter was being handled by his lawyers.

He progressed to the final with wins over Alex Molcan, Maximilian Marterer, Luca van Assche, and Ar-Zverev converted three of his four break points to beat

the 57th-ranked Djere in 1 hour, 50 minutes.

Dutch player Arantxa Rus won the women's title on

Top-ranked Iga Swiatek won her fourth title of the year and her first at home by routing Laura Siegemund 6-0, 6-1 in the final of the Poland Open.

The French Open champion didn't lose a set over the course of the tournament. Swiatek has also won at Doha and Stuttgart this year.

TENNIS

"I want to thank my team and my family. It's not easy to play in Warsaw, but I'm so happy that we could manage and do everything we could today, after a pretty tiring day yesterday," the Polish player said.

"I wanted to put it all in and go for it. I'm pretty happy that I did.'

Swiatek only advanced to the final earlier Sunday after finishing off her semifinal match against Belgium's Yanina Wickmayer, 6-1, 7-6 (6). That match had been suspended on Saturday night due to darkness at 6-1, 5-5.

Swiatek had a much easier time in the 68-minute final, breaking her German opponent five times and never facing a break point.



Spain's Mariona Caldentey (left), and Japan's Honoka Hayashi vie for the ball during the Women's World Cup Group C soccer match between Japan and Spain in Wellington, New Zealand

Sports

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Australia qualify, knock Canada out of WC

Nigeria into round of 16, Japan remain perfect as Zambia earn first win

MELBOURNE, Australia, July 31, (AP): Haley Raso scored her first career Women's World Cup goals at just the right time, with a first-half brace in Australia's 4-0 win over Canada in Monday's pivotal group-stage finale.

The Matildas, who also got goals from Mary Fowler and Steph Catley in the second half, clinched top spot in Group B and a place in the round of 16 at the expense of the Olympic champion.

Australia needed a win to guarantee it advanced. Canada needed to avoid defeat to avoid elimination.

After missing two group-stage matches with a calf injury sustained on the eve of the tournament, Australia striker Sam Kerr was available on the bench but did not play in the match.

In front of a vocal, pro-Australia crowd of 27,706 in Melbourne, Canada became the first reigning Olympic champion to be eliminated in group play in the subsequent Women's World Cup.

SOCCER

Australia's progression ensured this year's Women's World Cup would not be the first without a host nation in the knockout stage.

Australia jumped out to an early lead in the ninth minute with Raso's first goal: a shot from the back post off a cross from Catley. Initially ruled offside, the goal held up under VAR review, and Raso fell to her knees to celebrate

The Matildas responded to a disallowed goal from Australia forward Mary Fowler - ruled offside by VAR in the 34th minute - when Raso poked in a failed clearance after Kyra Cooney-Cross' corner, doubling Australia's lead in the 39th.

Off another left-wing cross from Catley, Fowler added Australia's third goal in the 58th. She returned to the Matildas' starting lineup after missing their upset 3-2 loss to Nigeria last week with a mild concussion.

After two assists, Catley scored in stoppage time, burying her second penalty kick of the tournament after Canada midfielder Jessie Fleming fouled Katrina Gorry at the edge of the

Canada forward Adriana Leon, who scored Canada's clincher in a 2-1 win over Ireland, came off in the 64th minute with a head injury.

With its win over Canada and Nigeria's 0-0 draw with Ireland, Australia finished first in Group B with six points. Nigeria finished second with five points.

The Matildas, as hosts, stay alive in a tournament that has seen recordbreaking ticket sales, especially in Australia's host cities and for the Matildas' matches. Home fans will look to see if Kerr will make her tournament debut in the round of 16.

Co-host New Zealand's 0-0 draw on Sunday with Switzerland eliminated the Football Ferns from knockoutround contention.

Australia will face the second-place finisher in Group D in the round of 16 next in Sydney. Tuesday's simultaneous matches between England and China and Denmark against Haiti will determine Australia and Nigeria's

round of 16 opponents.
Canada returns home unable to win medals in back-to-back tournaments. Canada forward Christine Sinclair, 40, the leading international goal-scorer with 190, finishes her World Cup campaign without a goal in Australia.

Nigeria 0, Ireland 0

In Brisbane, Nigeria used a score-less draw against Ireland on Monday to advance to the round of 16 of the Women's World Cup. The pre-tournament underdogs finished second in Group B behind co-host Australia.

After a relatively quiet first half, the Nigerians picked up the intensity in hopes of scoring the goal that would move the them to the top of the group. A diving save from Ireland's Courtney Brosnan in the 52nd minute kept her clean sheet intact and secured Ireland's first point in its debut appearance at the tournament.

Nigeria came closest to breaking the deadlock when Toni Payne found the head of Uchenna Kanu. A diving save by Courtney Brosnan was needed to keep the game scoreless.

Each team's best chance to score in the first half came within the first 15 minutes from their respective star players. Ireland's Katie McCabe was just off target with a left-foot shot in the 5th minute and Asisat Oshoala, the star of Nigeria's 3-2 upset win over Australia last week, couldn't convert off a breakaway that came nine min-



World Cup Standings

						`				
BRISBANE, Jul				W	omei	n's V	Vorld			
Cup standings on Monday.										
	P	rou W	р А D	L	GF	GA	Pts			
g-Switzerland	3	1	2	0	2	0	5			
q-Norway	3	1	1	1	6	1	4			
e-New Zealand	3	1	1	1	1	1 8	4			
e-Philippines		irou	-	2	- 1	0	3			
	Ρ	W .	D	Ļ	GF	GΑ	Pts			
*-Australia	3	2	0	1	7	3	6			
q-Nigeria e-Canada	3	1	2	0	3	2 5	5 4			
e-Ireland	3	Ó	i	2	1	3	1			
		rou					_			
* lanen	P	W	D 0	Ĺ	GF 11	GA	Pts			
*-Japan q-Spain	3	3 2	0	0	8	0	9			
e-Zambia	3	1	Ö	2	3	11	3			
e-Costa Rica	3	0	0	3	1	8	0			
	P	irou W		L	GF	GA	Pts			
England	2	2	D	0	2	0	6			
Denmark	2	1	Ö	1	1	1	3			
China	2	1	0	1	1	1	3			
Haiti	2	0	0	2	0	2	0			
	Р	rou W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts			
United States	2	1	1	0	4	1	4			
Netherlands	2	1	1	0	2	1	4			
Portugal	2	1	0	1	2	1 5	3			
Vietnam		irou	0 n F	2	U	Э	U			
	P	W	Ď	L	GF	GA	Pts			
France	2	1	1	0	2	1	4			
Jamaica Brazil	2	1	1	0	1 5	0	4			
Panama	2	0	0	2	0	5	0			
· anama	G	rou		_	·	-	-			
	P	W	D	Ĺ	GF	GA	Pts			
q-Sweden Italy	2	2	0	0	7 1	1 5	6 3			
South Africa		0	1	i		4	1			
Argentina	2	Ö	i	i	3 2	3	i			
		rou								
Colombia	P 2	W 2	D 0	0	GF 4	GA 1	Pts 6			
Germany	2	1	0	1	7	2	3			
Morocco	2	1	Ō	1	1	6	3			
e-South Korea	2	0	0	2	0	3	0			
Note 1: Standings read as played, won,										
drawn, lost, goals for, goals against and points.										
Note 2: denotes qualified as group winners										
for the knockout stage.										
Note 3: q denotes qualified for the knockout										

utes later.

With the point earned from the draw, Nigeria is into the round of 16. The 40th-ranked team in the world avoided defeat in all three of its groupstage matches, including the shocking win over Australia.

Note 4: e denotes eliminated

Nigeria's run is all the more surprising given the turmoil surrounding the team prior to the tournament. T he team was able to put an ongoing pay dispute behind it and qualify for the knockout stage for the third time in its history.

Ireland's women's team heads home after earning one point in its first major global tournament. The team will look to use the experience gained to its advantage as it attempts to qualify for its first ever Women's European Championship in 2025.

Japan 4, Spain 0

In Wellington, Japan scored three times from lightning breaks in the first half, once in the second and defended resolutely to trounce Spain 4-0 and top Group C at the Women's World

Hinata Miyazawa scored twice, Riko Ueki scored once and both were instrumental in each other's goals as Japan switched swiftly from defense to counter-attack and scored from its only three attempts on goal before halftime.

Mina Tanaka came off the bench to score the last in the 82nd minute as Japan, with only 22% of possession, turned on a counter-attacking master class in front of 21,000 fans.

Both teams had already clinched places in the round of 16, Japan for the fourth World Cup in succession and Spain for the second. Both had beaten Zambia 5-0 and Spain had the better goal differential after both teams beat Costa Rica. A draw would have been enough to see Spain finish atop a group for the first time in its history.

Asian teams in World Cup matches, losing to South Korea in 2015 and drawing with China in 2019. The loss Monday was its first against Japan and its heaviest in 11 years.

Japan now will play Group A runner-up Norway on Saturday in the round of 16 and Spain will play Group A winner Switzerland.

Spain coach Jorge Vilda admitted his team's failings were not only in defense but also on attack - it had to wait almost to the end of the first half for its first corner.

wind at its back in the first half and that added carry to long balls forward which helped catch the Spain defense

Spain had an overwhelming majority of possession in the half; by the 25-minute mark it had enjoyed 68% and had more than 230 completed passes to Japan's 43. But it was timid, reluctant to go forward and played mostly around the middle of the field, keeping the ball on the ground in the

depth and to counter-attack. It sprang the trap for the first time in the 12th. From just inside the Spain half and curling ball forward which fell for Miyakawa, who neatly slipped her

looned over Rodriguez.

But Spain has struggled against

Japan played with a strong and cold in retreat.

face of the wind.

Japan was content to defend in wide on the left Jun Endo sent a long, shot past Misa Rodriguez.

In the 23rd Moeka Minami cleared from the edge of the Japan area. Ueki nodded the ball back for Nagano to send Miyazawa away on the right. She passed across the goal to Ueki, who took the ball on her left foot, propped to her right and unleashed a shot which deflected off Irene Paredes and bal-

Yellow cards for confronting referees part of tougher sanctions for English soccer season

bad behavior in matches in the upcoming English soccer season, with a

Zambia in Hamilton, New Zealand. (AP)

LONDON, July 31, (AP): Players and big change seeing referees being encoaches will face stricter sanctions for couraged to issue a yellow card when two or more players confront them.

The measures are part of a new

Ueki celebrated the goal a day after

her 24th birthday.

In the 40th it was Ueki's turn to deliver for Miyazawa. She broke incisively on the left, passed across to the right as the Spain defense, backpedaling, tried to regroup and Miyazawa finished clinically with her left foot.

Each goal fell into the same pattern and each was executed with the same precision. Spain had few chances before halftime, perhaps its best was Jennifer Hermoso's header from Ona Batlle's cross.

Tanaka's goal was a magnificent solo effort. She beat Rocio Galvez near halfway, eluded Batlle and Paredes and then drove the ball powerfully into the top left corner. Japan's four goals came from only five attempts.

Among the fans at Sky Stadium were some from Palmerston North, the provincial town 100 miles (160 kilometers) north of Wellington which was Spain's base until they quit it suddenly last week.

Japan was a surprise winner of the World Cup in 2011 and was runner-up to the United States in 2015. With 11 goals from three group matches this time, they again loom as a title con-

Zambia 3, Costa Rica 1 In Hamilton, Lushomo Mweemba

scored the fastest goal at this year's

Women's World Cup, and Barbra Banda added the 1,000th goal in tournament history, as tournament newcomer Zambia earned its first ever win with a 3-1 victory Costa Rica on Monday.

The victory sent Zambia home from its first World Cup on an emotional high. Both teams had already been eliminated from the knockout stage before the match.

The Copper Queens' opening goal, the first in their history, came after just 2 minutes and 11 seconds off Avell Chitundu's corner kick. Mweemba lofted a volley into the roof of the net

over goalkeeper Daniela Solera. Banda scored the milestone goal in the 31st minute on a penalty kick. The referee gave the penalty after the 23-year-old striker appeared to be taken down in the box by Katherine Alvarado.

The referee handed out five yellow cards and called a total of 30 fouls in the fast-paced match.

In the 47th minute, Melissa Herrera knocked a cross over the line with her chest for Costa Rica's lone goal. Costa Rica later saw both a potential penalty and a goal taken away by offsides

More than 8,000 spectators were at Waikato Stadium, which holds 18,009.



Australia's Hayley Raso (right), celebrates after scoring her side's second goal during the Women's World Cup Group B soccer match between Australia and Canada in Melbourne, Australia. (AP)

Monday by England's soccer aua "reset" in how those who play and watch the game conduct themselves.

As part of the charter, match officials have been empowered to take tougher action against unacceptable behavior and have been backed up by stronger disciplinary action from the Football Association.

Serious and repeat offenders can expect to face increased financial penalties, while referees will be encouraged to book a player if they are surrounded by two or more from the

Captains will be expected to take responsibility for their teammates by encouraging them to play fairly and

show respect toward match officials and their decisions. Last season, Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp was twice handed a

touchline ban for verbally abusing

SOCCER

officials and Fulham striker Aleksandar Mitrovic was suspended for eight games for pushing a referee.

There is no indication authorities will follow grassroots soccer in England in issuing points deductions to teams for serious or repeated instances of bad behavior by their players or coaches.

Off the field, clubs in the Premier League and the English Football League will seek stronger sanctions against anyone found to be involved in tragedy abuse, such as chanting about the Hillsborough disaster.

Clubs will also continue efforts to issue sanctions to pitch invaders, the use of pyrotechnics, those who bring drugs to games and those who engage in discriminatory abuse in the stands and online.

"Football has the power to unite and inspire all those that play and watch the game. However, sometimes, this can be negatively impacted by a small minority of players, coaches and fans," FA chief executive Mark Bullingham said.

"Our collective approach is to reset this behavior on the pitch and from the sidelines, whilst giving our referees the respect and protection that they deserve."

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