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baseball Page 15

REFORM GAP WIDENS SINCE 2015 OIL PRICE SHOCK Kuwait among least diversified in Gulf



People enjoy swimming in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, Wednesday, July 5, 2023. (AP)

Political wrangling stalls reform

KUWAIT CITY, July 6: Moody's Investors Service has reported that despite two severe oil price shocks since 2015, the Kuwaiti government has shown limited ability to control or reduce spending to curb the fiscal deficit, reports Al-Rai daily.

Kuwait-Riyadh train 'on track'

KUWAIT CITY, July 6: The rapid rail link project between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia entered the implementation phase when the Ministry of Public Works chaired a meeting that was attended by government agencies, including the ministries of Finance, Electricity and Water, Defense, Oil, and the Kuwait Municipality, to complete the procedures related to the project, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Informed sources told the daily the link will be via a high-speed train, or the so-called magnetic train or "bullet train", between Kuwait and the Saudi capital, Riyadh.

The sources added that the advisory study for the project will take 6 months following which a joint agreement is expected to be signed between the two countries.

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CBK nods to post pay rule

KUWAIT CITY, July 6, (KUNA): The Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) issued Wednesday new regulations for post-pay as part of efforts to provide innovative high value financial services for clients.

The regulations include a maximum of payment of up to KD 500 (about USD 1,650) for every beneficiary from service providers, according to a CBK tweet.

This included the instructions directed to local banks, funding companies and electronic money service providers, it added.

Under the regulations, the customer pays back the money in four months without paying any interest or profits in exchange for the service, it added.

This step should be linked to the Credit Information Network, C-Net, to help inquire about the credit limit of the customer and inform about the funds given to him/her.

Kuwait details oil investment

VIENNA, July 6, (KUNA): Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister and Oil Minister Dr. Saad Al-Barrak has said that Kuwait has invested more than USD 300 billion in energy for the long term (until 2040).

The world currently needs annual investments worth USD 500 billion in the energy field, the minister suggested in remarks to KUNA and KTV on the fringes of OPEC talks in Vienna.

In 2022, it only invested USD 300 billion leaving an over 40 percent gap, thus creating difficulties in the global energy market.

He urged a greater increase in the volume of these investments to protect from price fluctuations and to achieve stability in the global economy.

Speaking about the OPEC International Seminar, themed "Towards a Sustainable and Inclusive Energy Transition," which he attended, the minister said it enriched discussion and views, particularly in relation to the dialogue between producers and consumers.

He went on to highlight the role played by Kuwait in the field of energy since OPEC's founding in 1960, as a founding member which has contributed significantly to the strengthening of stability across global markets.

Kuwait and other OPEC member states have made many sacrifices to control and determine production levels according to market needs and to prevent price fluctuations in order to serve the interests of oil-producing and consuming countries, he added.

Opinion

Your Highness the Prime Minister ... shield 'defense' from arms brokers

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

A COUNTRY cannot rise without modern and good infrastructure. It also cannot reform if its legislations are backward, propelled by the conviction among officials that the country is in a transitional mode.

Unfortunately, such conviction becomes permanent and entrenched in the minds of officials, let alone the politicians, while the reality is completely the opposite. Therefore, bringing about change becomes difficult, and whatever rhetoric the officials adopt becomes almost impossible to implement in reality.

There is no doubt that the current government has a lot of momentum that qualifies it to change the work method that prevailed in the country for nearly 30 years. It also has a good opportunity to get out of the bottle of daily routine.

However, if it does not take advantage of this opportunity, it will have to work on consolidating its inability to keep pace with the developments of time, and should accept facing arrows from all directions.

Today, this government has the opportunity to develop the infrastructure including roads, airports, transportation, communications, and agricultural and industrial security. It must also look at the labor force in the country in a positive light, and employ all this in order to get it out of the impasse it has been living in since 1992.

This opportunity can be successfully used by deviating from the bad habit of assigning projects to a group of local companies, which unfortunately did not work on developing themselves and took the easy way by building a deep state of institutions, the mission of which is to restrict projects to five or six of them or to monopolize them through the so-called local proxy.

In most countries of the world particularly the Gulf, governments seek the help of international companies directly without any intermediaries, and grant them privileges that help them complete the work entrusted to them efficiently. They sometimes finance projects that are either related to housing cities, roads, bridges, and other infrastructure requirements in the state.

This is what the Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain and Oman did, but Kuwait is still operating with an outdated mentality that caused the in-

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News watch

TEL AVIV: The United Arab Emirates pledged Thursday to give \$15 million to help rebuild the Jenin refugee camp after the most intense Israeli military operation in the occupied West Bank in nearly two decades.

The funding promise comes after the two-day offensive destroyed the camp's narrow roads and alleyways. The operation, meant to crack down on Palestinian militants after a series of recent attacks on Israelis, sent thousands of people fleeing their homes. Twelve Palestinians and one Israeli soldier were killed in the fighting.

The UAE's state-run WAM news agency reported that the money would be granted to UNRWA, the U.N. agency that assists Palestinian refugees, to rebuild damaged homes and businesses and for the agency's services. UNRWA has struggled recently to raise the funding it needs to keep its day-to-day operations helping millions of people across the Middle East. (AP)

BEIRUT: Israeli forces shelled a southern Lebanese border village on Thursday after several explosions were heard in a disputed area where the borders of Syria, Lebanon and Israel meet.

Tensions continue to flare in the border area over two tents erected by the militant group Hezbollah and Israel's building of a wall around the Lebanese part of a village that Israeli troops captured during the 2006 Israel-Hezbollah war.

A Lebanese military official who spoke on the condition of anonymity because of not being cleared to provide information to journalists said one rocket was fired toward Israel from the border town of Kfar Chouba and that Israeli forces responded with two rocket attacks.

The Israeli Defense Forces first said no explosion took place in its territory and only on the Lebanese side of the border near Ghajar. Minutes later, it said a Lebanese rocket landed in Israeli territory near the border and that Israeli forces had since shelled parts of Kfar Chouba. (AP)

BERLIN: Nine people from Central Asia were arrested in Germany and the Netherlands on Thursday over alleged plans to carry out attacks in Germany and for collecting money for the Islamic State group, authorities said.

Seven men arrested in Germany were accused of founding a "domestic terrorist group" and of supporting IS, federal prosecutors said. All had known each other for a long time, had radical Islamic views and came to Germany more or less simultaneously from Ukraine shortly after Russia launched its full-scale invasion last year, the prosecutors alleged.

A year ago, the suspects allegedly formed a group that aimed to carry out attacks in Germany. According to prosecutors, the group was in contact with members of an IS offshoot active in and around Afghanistan, Islamic State Khorasan Province. (AP)

JERUSALEM: A dual Israeli-Russian academic who has been missing in Iraq for months is being held by an Iran-backed militia in Iraq, the office of Israel's prime minister said Wednesday.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said Elizabeth Tsurkov, who disappeared in late March, is still alive "and we hold Iraq responsible for her safety and well-being."

Netanyahu said Tsurkov is being held by the Shiite group Kataeb Hezbollah or Hezbollah Brigades, a powerful Iran-backed group that the U.S. government listed as a terrorist organization in 2009. The group's leader and founder Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis was killed in an American airstrike near Baghdad's international airport in January 2020 along with Gen. Qassem Soleimani, the commander of Iran's elite Quds Force and the architect of its regional military alliances. (AP)



KUNA photo Kuwait's Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Al-Sabah at the Non-Aligned Movement summit in Baku.

'Cooperation needed' Kuwait, Iran FMs meet at NAM talks

KUWAIT CITY, July 6, (KUNA): It behooves the international community to step up cooperation in the face of the "volatile" events taking place in the region and beyond, Kuwait's Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Al-Sabah told a Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) summit on Wednesday.

Thanking host nation, Azerbaijan, for the initiative to hold the talks at such a "critical juncture," the Kuwaiti foreign minister called for more "prudence" in efforts to find lasting solutions to conflicts in the region, lamenting the misery induced by an abundance of crises and disasters seen in the region.

Highlighting the necessity of "unity" in the face of these growing challenges, he said more cooperation was needed to bring the aspirations of the people in the region to fruition, highlighting the "Palestinian cause" as the Arab and Islamic world's chief concern.

On the conflict in Sudan, the Kuwaiti top diplomat said he was confident that the country's warring factions are cognizant that Khartoum's best interests take precedence over individual gain, underlining Kuwait's backing for global efforts aiming to restore peace and stability to Sudan.

He went on call for more "global action" against a growing wave of Islamophobia, in the wake of the burning of the Holy Quran by a protestor in Sweden, reiterating Kuwait's condemnation of such inflammatory incidents.

Kuwait's Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Al-Sabah held talks on Wednesday with his Iranian counterpart Hossein Amirabdollahian, on the sidelines of ministerial-level talks bringing together Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) member states in Azerbaijan's capital Baku.

The encounter comes a month after Tehran's top diplomat visited Kuwait for high-level talks, said a foreign ministry statement, highlighting a broad consensus among both sides over the need for more cooperation in a bid to preserve regional peace and security.

Sheikh Salem also met on Wednesday his Iraqi counterpart Fouad Mohammad Hussein on the sidelines of the ministerial meeting of the Non-Aligned movement in the Azerbaijani capital city of Baku.



A super moon rises behind Camlica mosque in Istanbul, Turkey, on July 3, 2023. (AP)

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Day by Day

ABU Dhabi and Dubai are the two best cities to live in among the cities of the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, and they are also one of the ten best cities in the world, and there are other countries preparing to make their cities among the best in the world, such as Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Oman and Bahrain, and the question remains: When will Kuwait be among the best countries?

It seems we still feel drowsy. One wonders whatever happened to the 'Pearl of the Gulf' and the 'Paris of the Gulf'.

All the privileges that Kuwait enjoyed have vanished in thin air because of the prevailing thought of backwardness which continues to drive us into the unknown.

... Yet tomorrow is another day.

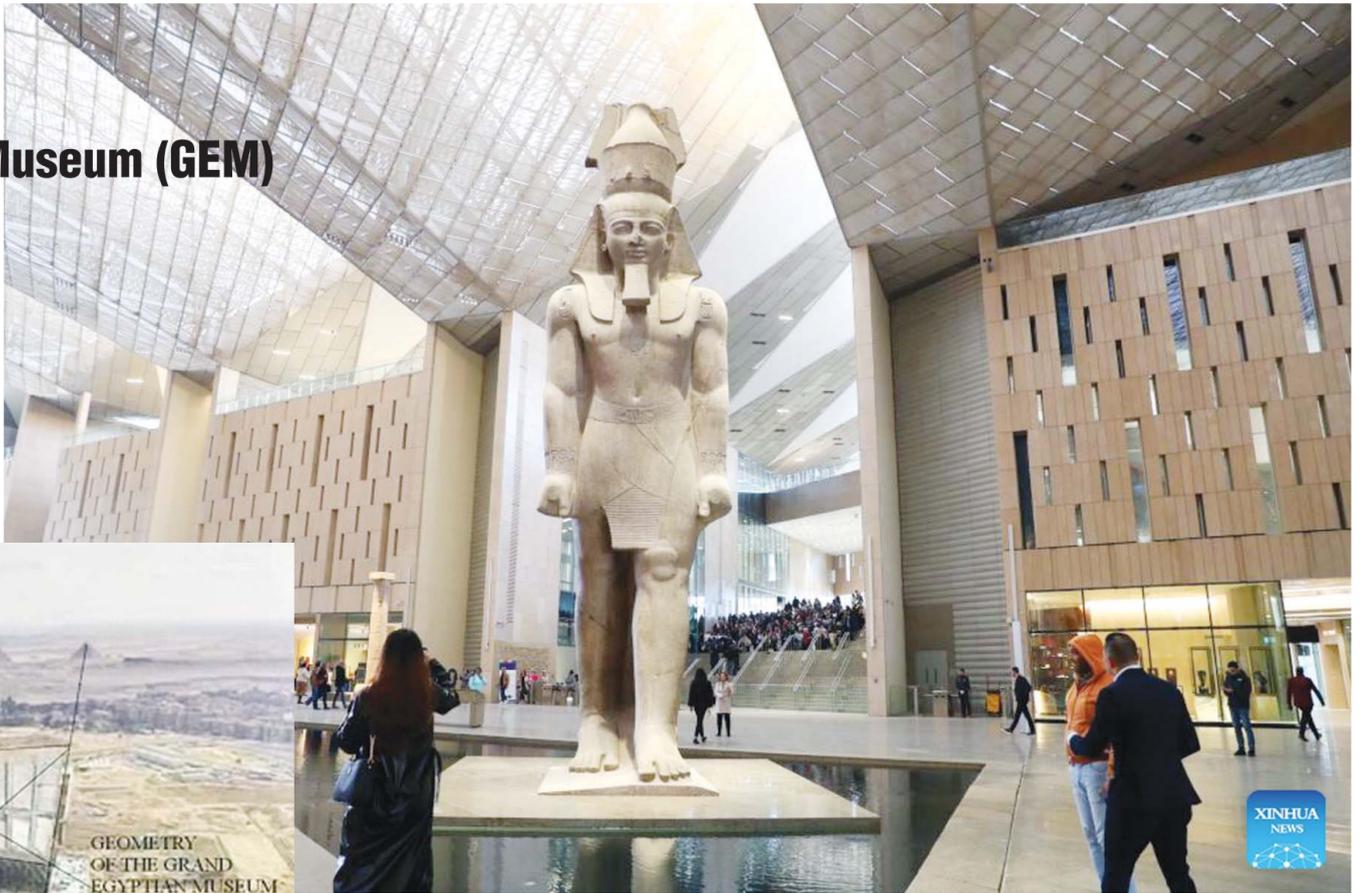
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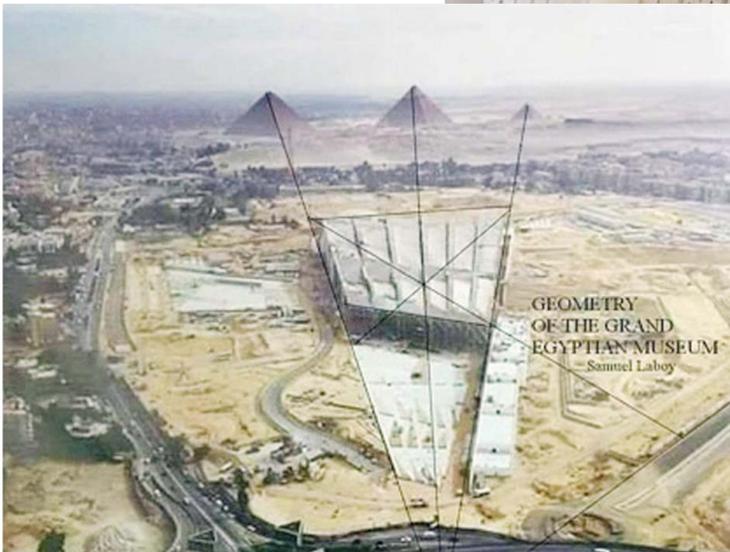
SPECIAL REPORT

Grand Egyptian Museum (GEM)

The dialogue the museum establishes with the pyramids is not only aesthetically effective but also very symbolic.



The museum's Great Hall with a statue of King Ramsey II



Aligned with the pyramids

Prof. Andrea Lauria (right) is an Italian museologist graduated from Rome's Academy of fine arts. He also holds a History of Art degree from University di Roma Tre in Rome. Andrea Lauria lectures a Masters course in museology at Rome's Universities Tor Vergata and American Temple University (Rome Campus). In 2020 he has become a published author of the book: "From the Renaissance studio to the contemporary museum" which is also his course manual. Lauria's field of research is the phenomenon of hyper-museums with special attention to the Arabian countries in comparison with the western world.



The Grand Egyptian Museum located near the Giza Pyramids

G a gem E M

AN EFFECTIVE SYNTHESIS BETWEEN PAST AND PRESENT

By Andrea Lauria

In my column I have mainly explored museums in the Arabian Peninsula except when I have written about the National Museum of Egyptian Civilization (NMEC). In addition to the Gulf countries, the phenomenon of hyper-museums also began in Egypt which, despite not having the same economic resources as the Gulf countries has nevertheless understood the media power of hyper-museums and how through the hyper-museums they can change the image of their country.

The two Egyptian hyper-museums are the National Museum of Egyptian Civilization (NMEC) inaugurated in 2021, that I have already mentioned, and the Grand Egyptian Museum (GEM) that has been established in March 2023, both are located in Cairo.

Also known as the Giza Museum, The Grand Egyptian Museum GEM is an archaeological museum located next to the Giza Pyramids. The museum was inaugurated in March 2023 but in fact it was only partially opened because as is the practice the Egyptian museums are opened in stages, not when the museums are completely ready.

We don't know how there are going to be galleries but when the Museum will be completed it will host over 100,000 artifacts that belong to the ancient Egyptian civilization, including the complete Tutankhamun collection, and is set to be the largest archaeological museum in the world. The GEM will also be hosting permanent exhibition galleries, temporary exhibitions, special exhibitions, children museum and virtual and large format screens with a total floor area of 32,000 square meters.

Temporarily only the central museum's Great Hall is accessible to the public, the latter is impressive due to its large size which is emphasized by the presence of the huge statue of King Ramses II. The Statue of Ramses II, depicting him standing, is made from limestone, weighs 83 tons and is 3,200 year old. It was discovered in 1820 at the Great Temple of Ptah near Memphis, Egypt by Italian Giovanni Battista Cavaglia –explorer, navigator and Egyptologist, one of the pioneers of Egyptian

archeology of his time. He was influential in the excavation of the Sphinx of Giza near Cairo.

From the Grand Hall, when the museum will be completely open, visitors will begin their journey to discover different facets of Ancient Egyptian history, through thousands of unique artifacts and video and audio presentations. What makes the museum extraordinary is that many pieces in its collection will be displayed for the first time.

If we cannot talk about the internal set up because it is not finished yet, we can analyze the museum's structure and project. For sure the GEM is an important landmark that has a strong impact on the territory where it is located.

The museum is sited on a plot of land of about 490,000 square meters (5,300,000 sq ft) which makes it the world's biggest museum, approximately 2 kilometers (1.2 miles) from the Giza pyramid complex and was built as part of a new master plan for the Giza Plateau called Giza 2030.

The history of the project started in January 2002, when the Egyptian government announced a global competition for the design of a new museum complex to house the enormous historical and artistic heritage of Egypt that has not found a place in the Egyptian museum in Tahrir Square.

The following year, in 2003, the victory of the Irish studio Heneghan Peng Architects was announced, a studio founded by Róisín Heneghan and Shih-Fu Peng. The company was founded in New York in 1999, but later moved to Dublin in 2001 and as of 2021 is based in Dublin and Berlin.

The Heneghan Peng Architects studio has won several important commissions for important architectural works which have also made the studio win important architectural awards such as the RIBA European Award in 2006 with the L'Áras Chill Dara project in Kildare, in 2013 for the design of the Giant's Causeway Visitors' Center won the RIBA Na-

tional Award, a project which was also nominated for the Stirling Prize in 2013. In 2019 the studio won the Aga Khan Award for architecture for the Palestinian Museum project.

The landscape and site masterplan was designed by West 8, The exhibition masterplan, exhibition design and museology were designed by Atelier Brückner.

As I told you before even if the Egyptian hyper-museums are different from the Gulf hyper-museums, they are still interesting to analyze from a museographic and architectural perspective; but let's see together why the Egyptian museums are different from the museums of the Gulf.

If one of the main features of the hyper-museum is that it is the principal work of art of the collection with a strong artistic identity and a shape that recall a sculpture, as in the case of the Louvre Abu Dhabi, we cannot find these features in the GEM. However the museum is huge spectacular and definitely a strong landmark is and the dialogue with the territory and the pyramids of Giza is amazing.

The building is shaped like a chamfered triangle in plan. It sits on a site 2 kilometres west of the pyramids, near a motorway interchange. The building's north and south walls line up directly with the Great Pyramid of Khufu and the Pyramid of Menkaure.

When an architect has to design a contemporary building in a district, a city or an area of historic-artistic value is never easy, designing a contemporary architecture in such a fragile and historically artistically important area next to The Giza pyramid complex is a very challenging task.

Regardless of this I must say that the project designed by the Irish studio Heneghan Peng Architects is very effective. Although being huge building and with impulsive volumes the museum fits perfectly and harmoniously into the territory Giza pyramid complex. The dialogue it

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editor's choice



Prayer Timings

Fajr 03:20 Asr 15:27
 Sunrise... 04:54 Maghrib .. 18:51
 Zohr 11:53 Isha 20:22

Local

Expected weather for the next 24 hours:

By Day: Very hot with light to moderate northwesterly wind with speeds of 12-35 km/h and some high clouds will appear.
By Night: Hot to rather hot with

Weather

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec	Wind	Direction
Kuwait City	48	35	light to moderate	northwesterly
Kuwait Airport	48	30	wind to light variable	wind with
Abdaly	48	30	speeds of 08-32 km/h.	
Jahra	49	33		
Salmiyah	45	35		
Ahmadi	44	35		
Nuwaisib	47	34		
Wafra	48	32		

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

'Unnecessary hurdles to make matters worse'

Lack of issuing permits hikes price of cod fish: KFU chairman

KUWAIT CITY, July 6: During the last two days, the fish market in Sharq witnessed an unprecedented hike in the price of cod fish, the fishing season of which began at the beginning of this month. This is because the quantity caught is so less that the market is devoid of them, which pushed its price to an unbelievable level that baffled the consumers, reports Al-Rai daily.

Previously, this type of fish used to be sold at KD 1 for six kilograms but today the price has flipped to KD 6 per kilogram due to its scarcity, amidst the astonishment of the market goers who visited the market yesterday morning to buy the "scarce" cod fish only to be surprised by its absence and the high price. This resulted in great discontent among the consumers over this outrageous price hike.

When asked about the reasons for this phenomenon, Head of the Kuwait Fishermen Union Dhafer Al-Soyyan attributed the matter to the delay of the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR) in issuing fishing permits due to the Eid holidays.

He said, "The union had earlier applied for 22 fishing licenses, but they were not issued until the end of the working hours yesterday".

The annual permits were no less than 50 fishing permits, but the small number of fishermen and the failure to open the way by the Ministry of Interior to issue entry visas for them have contributed to the reduced level of fishing, despite the many

appeals that were submitted to His Highness the Prime Minister and the Minister of Interior.

With the closing of the door for issuance of permits for fishermen, and the opening of the field for fishing, the price of a basket of cod fish will reach KD 200 in the coming days. This is because the areas permitted for fishing do not contain abundant catches, in addition to the piracy that fishermen are exposed to, all of which are factors that make fishermen refrain from fishing.

Regarding the lack of fish supply in the market, Al-Soyyan stressed that, "The authority has not issued any fishing permits, and the small amount of fish that exists is the product of illegal fishing. Most fishermen will sell their catch outside the market due to its high price, as it is sold to restaurants and food companies, all at the expense of the consumers. The solution is to open the way for fishing in Kuwait Bay."

He called on those concerned to talk to the union for developing an action plan that promotes the fish market and achieves the public interest in providing fish of all kinds at the right price.

At the Sharq market on Tuesday, a citizen Abdullatif Al-Hantush affirmed that he was shocked to see the price of one kilo of mead fish reached KD 6, even though the season for fishing has begun.

Another citizen Walid Al-Fadhli said, "People have been patiently waiting for the cod season, but who will buy it at this price?"

A fact that no one can believe is that earlier, six kilograms of cod fish was sold for KD 1, but now the figures have reversed, and one kilogram of cod fish is being

sold at KD 6.

Few days ago, the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR) had announced that it is permissible to fish for "meed" (cod) in the Kuwaiti territorial waters starting from July until the 30th of November, except in the Kuwait Bay area and the three miles of coasts and around the Kuwaiti islands, reports Aljarida daily.

The Deputy Director-General of Fisheries Mohsen Al-Mutairi told KUNA that the eastern part within the three miles of the coast of Bubiyan Island from Ras Al-Barsha in the south to Ras Al-Qayed in the north is excluded, unless this is contrary to any other decisions.

He said fishing is also excluded around the islands of Miskan, Failaka and Awaha within an area of three miles from the coast of these islands.

Al-Mutairi highlighted the ban on the fishing and trading of cod fish during the off-season.

He stressed the need to apply a number of conditions and controls when fishing for cod fish in the excluded areas, including obtaining a seasonal permit to do so from the competent department of the authority.

Al-Mutairi revealed that the fishing period was set to be from 6:00 am to 6:00 pm, adding that the authority has the right to withdraw the fishing permit in the event of any violation.

He called on everyone to abide by the regulations and laws, stressing that anyone who violates the provisions of this decision will be subject to the penalties stipulated in Law No. 46/1980 regarding the protection of fish wealth.



Al-Suwayan



KUNA photo

Fahad Hajji, First Secretary, Kuwait's Permanent Delegation to the United Nations.

'Protect kids caught in war'

'Italy-Kuwait partnership vital'

By Mahdi Al-Nimr

ROME, July 6, (KUNA): Italian Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani has affirmed significance of the strategic partnership with the State of Kuwait for it "plays a credible role" in ensuring security and stability of the Gulf and the Middle East.

Minister Tajani was speaking in an exclusive interview with KUNA on heels of his meeting with the visiting Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

On the six-decade diplomatic relations between Kuwait and Rome, Tajani said Kuwait is a strategic partner for Italy in the Middle East, indicating that one of the memoranda of understanding, inked during the current visit by the Kuwaiti foreign minister, aimed at holding deep and strategic dialogue between the two countries.

Tajani has affirmed that Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber's visit to Italy aimed at boosting the bilateral relations at the political, economic, commercial, environmental, scientific and cultural levels.

"We also desire to broaden teaching the Italian language and cultural activities" in Kuwait, Tajani said, expressing readiness to host gifted Kuwaiti graduates at Italian universities.

On the Ukraine issue, Tajani said, "the Russian aggression (on Ukraine) constitutes a threat to the world stability and the international community must stand united

for halting it and it is important the Arab nation act robustly for achieving just peace as soon as possible."

"We hope that Kuwait that has taken a constructive stand at the United Nations toward this cause, along with other Gulf States, send a clear message of peace to Moscow to nudge President (Vladimir) Putin to stop the military operations and sit at the negotiating table," Tajani added.

"Italy in general views the Gulf region with renewed interest and is I aware that it can count on friendship of the key players such as Kuwait, for we are confident that your country can play a crucial role for ensuring the greatest possible stability and security in the region," the Italian deputy prime minister and foreign minister said.

On the mutual cooperation, Tajani said there are enormous potentials for building a solid economic partnership between Italy and Kuwait, noting that trade exchanges between the two countries grew, in 2022, by more than 53 percent. Moreover, Italy is the number-one exporting country to Kuwait, he added.

Noting that a number of Italian companies have been operating in several key sectors in Kuwait, he affirmed that Kuwait 2035 development strategy provides more opportunities for the Italian investors.

Protection of children

The State of Kuwait affirmed that the inability of the international community to address the Palestinian issue remains the biggest failure in the history of the United Nations in general and the Security Council in particular.

This came during the State of Kuwait's statement delivered by First Secretary Fahad Muhammad Hajji at the Security Council's open debate on "Children and Armed Conflict".

"We are discussing today the annual report issued by the Secretary-General of the United Nations on children and armed conflict, with such regrettable and alarming information and figures".

"While we are calling for the protection of civilians and children in armed conflicts, the report revealed a completely different realistic picture of what we call for", he noted.

"The report revealed cases of children exploitation in wars and armed conflicts, and their exposure to kidnapping, rape, displacement and starvation, which destroy their innocence and rights to live in dignity", Hajji added.

Kuwait gripped with intense heat: expert

KUWAIT CITY, July 6, (KUNA): The meteorology department declared on Thursday that the weekend would witness intense heat particularly during the days amid the seasonal Indian wave coupled with very hot winds.

Abdulaziz Al-Qarawi, the weather monitor, said in remarks to KUNA that today's temperature would hit the 46-48 level. The lowest forecast heat at night would be at 31-33 degrees.

On Friday, the weather will be very hot and humid in coastal regions with the forecast temperature is at 47-49 degrees maximum and 31-33 degrees minimum.

On Saturday, the intense heat wave persists with the heat highest level would be at 47-49 degrees and the lowest at 32-33 degrees.

'Do more to tackle cancer'

Transform Kuwait into regional center: MPs

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh
Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 6: MPs Hamad Al-Elyan, Soud Al-Asfour, Mehalhal Al-Mudhaf, Abdullah Al-Anbaei and Hamad Al-Medlej have submitted a bill on amending National Assembly Law number 12/1963.

Article One of the bill states that the National Assembly is the only institution authorized to decide on the MP's resignation. The resignation should be submitted in writing to the Speaker. On the 10th day, the resignation is considered accepted unless the MP withdraws it before the 10-day period ends.

Article Two states that if the MP is absent without excuse and leaves the session without the permission of the Speaker, his absence will be published in Kuwait Gazette and two daily newspapers at his own expense. If the absence is repeated for five consecutive times or 10 times sporadically within one parliamentary year, his absence is published as per the above-mentioned manner and the period of his absence is cut from his salary. He is notified about the decision before the session slated for imposing the penalties. In case the absence of the MP is repeated again, he is considered resigned without the need to issue a decision on his resignation.

If the MP is absent from parliamentary committee meetings for three consecutive times or five sporadically in one parliamentary year, he is considered resigned from the committee and his absence is published in Kuwait Gazette and two daily newspapers at his own expense.

Article Three states that members of the National Assembly Office include the Speaker, Deputy Speaker, Secretary, Observer, Financial and Economic Affairs Committee Chairman and the Legislative and Legal Affairs Committee Chairman. They are elected through public voting (viva voce). In case two or more candidates obtain the same number of votes, a lottery is conducted to determine the winner.

The session's quorum is half of the total number of MPs — whether they include any of the ministers or all of them are elected MPs. Decisions are taken based on the voting results and they are ratified through the approval of the majority (half plus one), except the decisions which require a special majority.

The bill stipulates that the committees' meetings are broadcasted by audio and visual media within 48 hours, unless the chairpersons request for holding a meeting behind closed doors. The Speaker has the right to prevent the broadcasting of such meetings without the need to discuss the issue.

Any lawmaker has the right to attend any of the committees' meetings, but he is not allowed to interfere in the meetings or be part of discussions unless he is a member.

Parliamentary sessions are open; unless the Prime Minister, 10 MPs or Assembly Speaker request for a secret session. The sessions are broadcasted live by audio and visual media, unless the speaker decides otherwise.

The Speaker informs the Prime Minister and the concerned minister about grilling motions as soon as he receives them. The grilling motions are discussed within eight days, unless there is a request to discuss them earlier.

The Prime Minister or the concerned minister can request for postponement of the grilling motions for some weeks. The Prime Minister or the concerned minister can request for another two weeks postponement and the Assembly can approve or reject the request.

The Assembly can postpone the discussion of a grilling motion for two more weeks according to the voting results. Grilling motions can no longer be postponed after this.

Related grilling motions can be merged with the approval of the concerned minister and the MPs who filed the motions.

The Assembly has the right to reject the grilling motion if proven it has no merit for discussion.

Meanwhile, MPs Fares Al-Otaibi, Mubarak Al-Hajraf, Badr Nashmi Al-Anzi, Khalid Al-Otaibi and Majed Al-Mutairi have submitted a proposal to transform Kuwait into a regional center for cancer treatment.

The MPs pointed out that due to the rising number of cancer patients, the Ministry of Health must expedite the completion of the second phase of the National Cancer Center project and increase its capacity. They said the ministry should hire doctors specialized in cancer treatment and ensure ample supply of medicines for this disease.

MPs Dawoud Maarefi, Hassan Jawhar, Hamd Al-Medlej, Abdullah Al-Anbaei and Abdulwahab Al-Essa submitted a bill on the establishment of the national fund for the compensation of the owners of small and medium enterprises for their operation expenses (rent and salaries) during the total lockdown at the height of the COVID-19 crisis.

The budget for the compensation will be covered by the National Fund for Small and Medium Enterprises; while the maximum amount of compensation for each enterprise is KD500,000.

The Council of Ministers will assign the concerned minister to chair the fund whose members are from all the concerned ministries.



Mubarak Al-Hajraf



Fares Al-Otaibi

Other Voices

Admit they are the best

By Ahmad alsarraf

Spain has an area of 504 thousand square kilometers, the second in area after France, in Western Europe, and the largest country, perhaps in the world, in terms of the number of foreigners who own homes there, and consider it their second home, as it spreads along its sunny coasts throughout the year, its mountains, plateaus and islands, with thousands of huge residential complexes.



alsarraf

Spain was unified only in the fifteenth century, with the expulsion of Muslims and Jews, and the unification of its Catholic kingdoms in 1492.

On the other hand, Spain was an important source of influence in other regions during modern times, when it became a global empire that left a legacy of more than 500 million Spanish speakers, making it the second most widely used mother tongue. It is a wealthy country and ranks tenth in terms of quality of life in the world.

The Romans controlled peninsular Spain for six centuries, and left a lot of monuments (210 BC), and brought with them many things of civilization.

The majority of the Spanish peninsula fell into the hands of the Muslim armies, in the period 711-718, and Christians and Jews were treated as dhimmis -- Historically, dhimmi status was originally applied to Jews, Christians, and Sabians, who are considered to be "People of the Book" in Islamic theology. This status later also came to be applied to Zoroastrians, Sikhs, Hindus, Jains, and Buddhists. The first and strongest of these was among the Berbers, who "always" formed the backbone of the invading armies and the Umayyad leadership.

Cordoba became the capital of the Islamic Caliphate, and with time it became the largest, richest, and most developed city in Western Europe. Muslim and Jewish scholars played a role in this development, and in reviving and expanding the knowledge of Greek civilization. In the 11th century, Andalusia entered the era of the kings of the warring sects, which allowed the Christian

states to expand their influence.

The return of Andalusia to its people took several centuries, and it began with the Battle of Covadonga in 772, followed by the strategic fall of Toledo in 1085, which constituted a shift in the balance of power, then Cordoba followed in 1236, and Seville, leaving only the Emirate of Granada in the south.

And with the unification of the crowns of the kingdoms of Castile and Aragon in 1469 with the marriage of Isabella to King Ferdinand II of Aragon, in 1492 they were able to seize Granada and end 781 years of Islamic rule. This was followed by the arrival of the Spanish in the New World, after which Spain became unified and the first world power.

This caused several losses, the last of which was the Rif War in Morocco to undermine the monarchy, and a period of authoritarian rule of the "Primo de Rivera" dictatorship (1923-1931) ended with the establishment of the Second Spanish Republic, which granted autonomy to the Basque regions, Catalonia and Galicia, and then the civil war broke out (1936-1939) in which Franco won, supported by the Nazis and fascists, in which half a million Spaniards perished, and the like fled abroad.

The monarchy returned with Franco's death in 1975, and much of the state's powers were gradually transferred to the autonomous regions.

The number of visitors to Spain has finally crossed the threshold of 71 million tourists, and this did not happen in vain, as it has everything a tourist is looking for in terms of beauty, food, weather, sports, sea, mountains, music, museums, art, Picasso, Ronda, Cordoba, Valencia, Seville, Barcelona, Basque Country, Rioja, and Ribera del Duero!

For many reasons I have always liked the idea of living in Spain, but I recently discovered that the most important reason, apart from the ease of life in it, is due to the lack of strictness of its people, the ease of solving any problem, and their welcome to the stranger, compared to Switzerland, Britain or France, where people of my age, status and background feel culturally more easy in dealing with the Spaniard. They are also the Sista and Minana group!

□ □ □
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GEM

Continued from Page 2

establishes with the pyramids is not only aesthetically effective but also very symbolic.

The Giza pyramid complex hosts the Great Pyramid, the Pyramid of Khafre, and the Pyramid of Menkaure. They were built during the Fourth Dynasty of the Old Kingdom of ancient Egypt, between 2600 and 2500 BC.

These pyramids represent the old Egyptian old heritage. Conversely the new museum designed by Heneghan Peng Architects represents the contemporary Egypt. The visual dialogue that architects have created lining up the building's north and south walls directly with the Great Pyramid of Khufu and the Pyramid of Menkaure is extraordinary and a cool idea.

As I have already said in the past I do not understand the management of Egyptian museums and their choice of partial openings of their contemporary museums. Despite this I am convinced that after the opening of all the GEM's halls, this place (area) will become an effective synthesis between the past, pyramids, and the present, the new Grand Egyptian museum and its rich and important historical and artistic heritage.

Egypt does not have collections of modern or contemporary art but only an immense archaeological heritage which inevitably attracts only a certain type of tourists interested in archeology. Investing in contemporary architecture by creating contemporary museums as National Museum of Egyptian Civilization (NMEC) and the Grand Egyptian Museum (GEM) two powerful landmarks is an excellent idea to project Egypt into 21st century museography.



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LOCAL

15pc of Kuwaitis millionaires, shows World of Statistics list

'Education' allows to put 8 courses for scholarships

KUWAIT CITY, July 6: According to a list of the countries with the most millionaires vis-a-vis population prepared by the World of Statistics Switzerland ranked first in the world, with 15.5 percent of the population being millionaires, reports Al-Rai daily quoting Al Arabiya.net.

Hong Kong ranked second with a score of 15.3 percent and Kuwait is placed third on the list, with a slight difference, as World of Statistics pointed out that about 15 percent of Kuwaitis are millionaires.

Singapore came in fourth place with about 12.7 percent of the population being millionaires, while Australia was the last country in which the number of millionaires exceeded 10 percent of the population, specifically at 11.2 percent.

The number of millionaires in the United States of America reached about 9.7 percent of its population, despite the high inflation rates, which may not make

being a millionaire the ultimate escape from suffering and a sense of financial security, knowing that the number of millionaires in the world is about 48 million, most of them in terms of number in the United States, they represent nearly 10 percent of the world's millionaires, according to World Population. Qatar ranked 22nd in the world, and second in the Arab world, with millionaires representing 3 percent of the population.

Maximum 8 courses: The Ministry of Higher Education confirmed that the students, who applied for scholarship, were allowed to put eight courses maximum in their application as per the conditions for each course in each country, in order to increase the chance of admission to the scholarship program for academic year 2023/2024, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The ministry added that registration for the annual scholarship program ended at 2:00 pm on Wednesday.

'Take legal action': Assistant Foreign Affairs Minister for Arab World Affairs Ambassador Ahmed Al-Bakr has handed over to Egyptian Ambassador to Kuwait Osama Shaltout the request of the country to take legal action against the person behind the burning of the Kuwaiti flag in a video clip that went viral on social media, reports Al-Jarida daily.

In a related development, the Embassy of Kuwait in Cairo sent an official request to the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to refer the issue to the competent authorities in Egypt in order to take the necessary legal measures against those in charge of the social media account that uploaded the video.



Fire engulfs a car on Maghreb Highway.

Al-Anba photo

Reckless driver put behind bars for 3 months

Car reduced to ashes on Maghreb Highway

KUWAIT CITY, July 6: Wednesday afternoon, firefighters put out a fire that broke out in a car on the Maghreb Highway opposite Bayan area, which caused traffic disruption, reports Al-Anba daily.

Firefighters from Al-Bairaq and Al-Qurain brought the fire under control and helped the General Traffic Department to restore normal traffic flow after removing the car debris from the middle of the road.

Meanwhile, a collision between a car and a lorry on the Sixth Ring Road caused traffic disruption Tuesday afternoon opposite the Farwaniya Hospital, reports Al-Anba daily.

Police patrols and ambulances rushed to the spot and helped remove the damaged saloon car and the overturned half lorry from the middle of the road and restore traffic flow.

In the meantime, the Directorate-General of Traffic organized several traffic campaigns in Capital, Farwaniya and Al-Ahmadi governorates during which 262 traffic violations were issued, reports Al-Anba daily.

The violators included those who had installed special car exhausts in their vehicles that emit loud noises, shading of windows above the permissible percentage and parking trucks on the sidewalk inside residential areas.

On the other hand, a reckless motorist was put behind bars for 3 months with hard labor after he was caught for reckless driving and endangered the lives of others.

The arrest came after someone documented the act and published it in the social media.



The ambassador with the minister of commerce.

Indian envoy calls on Minister Al-Aiban

The Indian Ambassador to Kuwait HE Dr Adarsh Swaika called on Kuwait's Minister of Commerce HE Mohammad Othman Al-Aiban.

During the discussion the Indian en-

voy apprised the minister of the increasing trend in bilateral trade and prospects for greater diversification. India was the biggest importer of oil from Kuwait during the 3rd quarter of last financial year.

diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

'Constitutional flaw ... hits some proposals'

"IN LIGHT of the National Assembly's urgency to complete a law related to the Constitutional Court, and to ensure that the law is issued in a sound manner, away from the deviation and shortcomings that accompany the legislative process, we put before the members of the parliament and the government a set of philosophical and legislative orientations and starting points on which the Kuwaiti constitution build the system of control over the constitutionality of laws and regulations, and it should take into account any law that comes to organize this oversight taking into consideration what adheres to it so that it is compatible with the Kuwaiti constitution, its constitutional purposes, and its legislative philosophy," columnist **Dr. Mohammad Maqatei** wrote for Al-Jarida daily.



Maqatei

"The adoption of the Kuwaiti constitution to monitor the constitutionality of laws did not come from a vacuum, but was built on constitutional purposes, and within the framework of a legislative philosophy as adopted by the constitutional and political systems of any country.

"The political and constitutional aims and legislative philosophy that the Constitution took care of and embraced the Article 173 which adopted the idea of a special court tasked with monitoring the constitutionality of laws, outside the framework of the hierarchical organization of the various courts.

"This is a constitutional and regulatory approach pursued by some constitutional systems, and related to this type of control is the introduction of the principle of central control over the constitutionality of laws, so it is confined to one court, and other courts are prevented from carrying out their tasks, and their role is limited to examining the defenses of unconstitutionality by examining their seriousness or not, and then referring them to the competent constitutional court or not to refer it.

"This includes adopting the principle of subsequent control over the issuance of laws, and the court does not undertake prior control, which includes giving advisory or explanatory opinions, which was excluded in the Kuwaiti constitutional regulation option to monitor the constitutionality of laws. It is the constitutional flaw that taints some parliamentary proposals.

"Given the mixed nature of the jurisdiction exercised by the Constitutional Court, the Kuwaiti constitutional legislator called it a judicial body, intending from that to highlight the need for its formation due to the nature of the legal and political considerations and adaptations that this court undertakes, which is confirmed by the explanatory memo of the constitution in highlighting the mixed composition of the court, and its current status in Law No. 14 of 1973 is not compatible with the constitution, which must be taken into account in the parliamentary proposals.

"The Kuwaiti constitution also embraced the idea of exclusive jurisdiction in the task of the constitutional judicial authority, which is limited to examining the constitutionality of laws, regulations and all legislation without extending its competence to other issues, such as researching the constitutionality of the decrees dissolving and calling for elections, and electoral appeals, which are not included in the number of legislation or regulations, which makes it lose its

nature in terms of specialization, focus and interruption to this great task.

"Also, among the approaches adopted by the Kuwaiti constitution is to open the door wide to submit appeals to the constitutionality of laws and regulations for all interested parties to carry out their responsibilities to preserve the constitution and the political and democratic system decided by its provisions.

"This cannot be achieved if the constitutional lawsuit is limited to parties and the exclusion of others. And the Kuwaiti constitution granted it in an absolute manner to every concerned person, and from that emerges a principle associated with the generality of interest in the constitutional lawsuit, which is not to restrict it to having a personal interest as long as the purpose established by the constitution in its aforementioned philosophy is to protect the supreme interest of the state and its constitutional and political system in accordance with the provisions stipulated in the constitution.

"Finally, the legislative and constitutional approach to supervising the constitutionality of laws in Kuwait adopted the idea of the retroactive effect of the ruling of the Constitutional Court, which nullifies legislation whatever it is, whether it is a law or a decree by law or a regulation from the day of its issuance when the court decides that it is unconstitutional, and the attempt of the proposal to restrict the effect and make it effective immediate contradicts the express text of the Constitution.

"Based on the foregoing, we hope that the Legislative and Legal Affairs Committee in the National Assembly will take into account all of this when it considers proposals for laws to establish and reorganize the Constitutional Court in Kuwait."

Also:

The Acting Dean of Student Affairs at Kuwait University, Dr. Dhari Adel Al-Huwail, honored the outstanding students for the academic year 2021/2022, which was held under the auspices and in the presence of the Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education, Dr. Hamad Al-Adwani, and the Acting Director of Kuwait University, Dr. Fahd Al-Rashidi, at the Sabah Al-Salem University City Conference Center," columnist **Dr. Saad Ghazi Al Mutairi** wrote for Al-Anba daily.

"On this occasion, the Acting Dean of Student Affairs, Dr. Dhari Al-Huwail, extended his warmest congratulations and blessings to the students for their academic excellence during the academic year 2021/2022, calling on them to arm themselves with science and knowledge to serve our dear country, and noting that Kuwait University's strategy supports youth and outstanding students and encouraging them to excel in educational attainment, in order to ensure that it assumes its responsibility towards the dear country, and fully fulfills its mission to develop human wealth.

"Dr. Dhari Al-Huwail extended his sincere thanks to the Minister of Education and the Minister of Higher Education for his generous sponsorship of this ceremony, and to the Acting Director of Kuwait University for his constant support of the students of Kuwait University, and thanks are extended to all the unknown soldiers who are in charge of the ceremony, and he also congratulated the parents of outstanding students, and thanked them for their care and support to their children.

"The number of the first outstanding students this year reached 214 male and female students from all faculties at Kuwait University."

— Compiled by Mai Elsoukary



July

Room Promotion






Weekdays (Saturday - Wednesday)	
Queen Cabana (2 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.	2 Bedroom Chalet (4 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.
NOW	NOW
BHD 61.000/-net	BHD 136.198/-net
Weekdays (Saturday - Wednesday)	
Queen Cabana (2 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.	2 Bedroom Chalet (4 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.
NOW	NOW
BHD 69.000/-net	BHD 153.222/-net

Promo period from 4th – 31st July 2023

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Photos during the ground-breaking ceremony of Sadu House exhibition for traditional crafts in Kuwait.

Manifold narratives embrace Kuwait's heritage

Sadu House hub for designers, craftspeople and researchers

By Chaitali B. Roy
Special to the Arab Times

Over the years, Sadu House has become a bastion for traditional crafts in Kuwait. Apart from being home to one of Kuwait's once-disappearing traditions – the art of weaving, the museum, under Sheikha Bibi Duaij Al Sabah, Chairperson of Sadu House, is now a creative hub for designers, craftspeople and researchers. This was what Sheikha Altaf Salem Ali Al Sabah, Founding member and Patron of Al Sadu Weaving Cooperative, dreamt of when she embarked on the arduous task of resurrecting Sadu.

One of the oldest built structures in Kuwait, its manifold narratives embrace Kuwait's heritage as a pearling, shipping and trading nation. "Sadu House has so many different stories to narrate," Sheikha Altaf Al Sabah told Arab Times a few years back. "There is the story of commercial, cultural exchange between Kuwait, India and Iran, a story of traditional architecture, the social history it has witnessed and more recently, a story of traditional craft and creative expression. The house has witnessed Kuwait's movement from the desert to an urban life-style, and its positive energy reaches out to those who enter its space. Through workshops, artist residency,

exhibitions, diwanis and lectures, Sadu House is producing a creative legacy. It is a reservoir of creative and artistic talent and a valuable resource centre for researchers, students, textile and traditional craft enthusiasts."

Post lockdown, Sadu House was one of the few organisations in Kuwait that moved fast to gather momentum after the forced inactivity of two years. In June 2022, in cooperation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugee Affairs and Made51, Sadu House started training and setting up a production unit with refugee women from Syria, Yemen, Sudan, and South Sudan in Alexandria, Egypt. These women produced over 260 pieces for the local and international markets last year. With the introduction of new designs, the initiative is poised to grow and create more opportunities for these women. Called the 'Sustainable Cooperation Initiative', this project aims to teach the craft of Sadu weaving to refugee women, thus empowering them and providing them with economic opportunities.

Last month, Sadu House celebrated this partnership between itself and the UNHCR with an event that marked the displaying of the products created by the refugee women whom Sadu House trained. This event was marked by many prominent personalities, includ-



Sadu House – producing a creative legacy for traditional crafts in Kuwait.

ing Sheikha Altaf Salem Al Sabah, Sheikha Bibi Al Sabah, Sheikha Intisar Al Sabah, Kelly Clements, Deputy High Commissioner of the United Nations for Refugee Affairs and Nisreen Rubaian, UNHCR Representative in Kuwait. It must be remembered that the world's refugee population includes a wealth of talented artisans

who have been forced to leave their homes with nothing but their skills, traditions and centuries of cultural heritage, and harnessing these may help give them back a sense of home.

Speaking at the event, Kelly Smith, the Deputy High Commissioner, expressed her appreciation of the 'visionary initiative' and 'unwavering sup-

port' of Sheikha Altaf Al Sabah and Sheikha Bibi Duaij Al Sabah. "This ground-breaking endeavour truly embodies our collective dedication to preserving cultural heritage, empowering women, and fostering sustainable livelihood for refugee women," said Ms Smith. "Their commitment is an inspiration to us all." Speaking of the plight of refugees, she said, "For many refugees, finding a way to restore dignity and independence is one of the most powerful ways they can find hope away from home. In particular, one of the most effective ways people can rebuild their lives while living in forced displacement is through the opportunity to work, earn a living and become self-reliant. Self-reliance is one of the few solutions to reduce refugee dependence on humanitarian assistance, which is already stretched far too thin." Smith lauded initiatives like the Sustainable Cooperation initiative made in collaboration with Made51, as an innovative example of how opportunities can be created in partnership with local and global companies. "Thanks to Al Sadu Society's support and collaboration with MADE51, we will be seeing items that showcase the rich cultural heritage of traditional Bedouin weaving, which was reintroduced to Syrian refugees living in Alexandria, Egypt, by Al Sadu Society of Kuwait.

In her remarks at the launch of the initiative, Sheikha Bibi Al Sabah, the very hands-on Chairperson of Sadu House, said, "Today we celebrate a partnership that transcends territories and government through crafts and cultural relevancy we have given the refugees sustainable livelihood and connection to parts of their culture and home country, keeping it alive within them." She thanked the UNHCR and Made51 for providing the platform, framework, and continued support in realising this work and maintaining the relationship. "We are proud to be both sustaining one of the traditional crafts of Kuwait and providing financial sufficiency for these families."

Nisreen Rubaian, UNHCR Representative to the State of Kuwait, said, "This collaboration is unique and innovative in its way, as it focuses on empowering creative female refugees and helping them establish self-reliance mechanisms and give back to communities. We are proud of our collaboration with Al Sadu House as we share a common vision, which combines the importance of empowering refugees' self-reliance through innovative opportunities towards the preservation of heritage and identity. This has become possible with thanks to H.E Sheikha Altaf Al Sabah and Sheikha Bibi Al Sabah founders of Al Sadu House"



From left: U.S. Air Force Col. Damion Holtzclaw, 386th Air Expeditionary Wing deputy commander, Lord Mark Lancaster, member of the United Kingdom House of Lords, and Ambassador Belinda Lewis, British Ambassador to Kuwait, and Royal Air Force Capt. Nick Lloyd, pose for a photo at Ali Al Salem Air Base, Kuwait, July 4, 2023.



From left: Royal Air Force Capt. Nick Lloyd, Lord Mark Lancaster, member of the United Kingdom House of Lords, Ambassador Belinda Lewis, British Ambassador to Kuwait, and U.S. Air Force Col. Damion Holtzclaw, 386th Air Expeditionary Wing deputy commander, take a tour of a hangar at Ali Al Salem Air Base, Kuwait, July 4, 2023.



(U.S. Air Force photos by Staff Sgt. Kevin Long) From left: Ambassador Belinda Lewis, British Ambassador to Kuwait, Lord Mark Lancaster, member of the United Kingdom House of Lords, and U.S. Air Force Col. Damion Holtzclaw, 386th Air Expeditionary Wing deputy commander, embark on a tour of the installation at Ali Al Salem Air Base, Kuwait, July 4, 2023.

UK leaders visit Kuwait to foster working relationship

A group of U.K. leaders traveled to Kuwait to foster the working relationship between the U.K. and their Kuwait partners, and the visit also provided

the opportunity for the U.S. to further the connection with our coalition partners on a strategic level.

Your Highness

Continued from Page 1

fracture to be underdeveloped, and ended in road disasters, severe loss of life and property, and waste of time.

Real reform begins with a firm decision that does not provide protection for anyone, because the interest of the state is above all considerations. This is what King Salman bin Abdulaziz did when he issued directives to the Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman when the process of cleaning the state from the corrupt and bribe-takers began. The country was hence able to recover about USD 200 billion in the purge operation that was dubbed as "Operation Ritz Riyadh".

That operation also helped in recovering more than 3.5 billion square meters of land from the so-called "Shabak princes". The UAE had settled this matter a long time ago when it began a difficult accountability for some of the corrupt. Qatar imprisoned its minister of finance and some officials because they encroached on public money.

This can happen in Kuwait, through which the state can regain its health. It can also benefit from the experience of direct contracting with international factories and companies without an intermediary.

In this regard, we have a best example in the "Drone" military deal. This

is credited to the acting Minister of Defense Sheikh Talal Al-Khalid. We are also optimistic about the current Minister of Defense Sheikh Ahmed Al-Fahad, who seems to be following in the footsteps of his predecessor.

Unfortunately, we wake up daily to one scandal and sleep to another, making it seem as if Kuwait was infected with the virus of misappropriation of public funds, institutions, and corruption that made Lebanon a failed state along with Iraq and Iran.

We, as a state and people, have the ability to get out of this impasse if there is a definite desire to develop the infrastructure, which is an essential part of sovereign wealth.

Kuwait-Riyadh

Continued from Page 1

The MPW said in its letter to the parties participating in the meeting, of which Al-Qabas obtained a copy, "Given the importance of the strategic agreement on the railway link project, it is necessary to expedite coordination between the competent authorities to remove any obstacles that may hinder the project."

The letter indicated the importance of facilitating the procedures taken in this regard to speed up its completion. It is worth noting that the Saudi Council of Ministers had approved, in

its meeting on May 23, authorizing the Minister of Transport and Logistics Services or his representative to discuss with the Kuwaiti side a draft agreement between the governments of the two countries regarding the railway link project between Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

Kuwait among

Continued from Page 1

Kuwait is a net importer of gas since 2009.

Moody's pointed out that the Kuwaiti economy remains one of the least diversified economies in the GCC, with the oil sector (hydrocarbons) accounting for an estimated 52 percent of nominal GDP and more than 80 percent of exports in 2022, noting the non-oil sector is considered vulnerable to fluctuations in oil and gas production or its prices, because a large part of it depends on the government, directly or indirectly, through the distribution of oil gains through public sector salaries.

The agency emphasized that the low level of economic diversification away from oil leads to large fluctuations in the growth of real GDP, especially nominal GDP, during periods of fluctuating global oil prices, indicating that the volatility in real GDP growth

Government to phase out PART to reduce spending

Draft to repeal law

KUWAIT CITY, July 6: The government has referred to the National Assembly a draft law to repeal Law No. 115 of 2014 regarding the establishment of the Public Authority for Roads and Land Transport, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The draft stipulated in its first article that the aforementioned law be repealed, while its second reads thus, "The departments that transferred their affiliation and competencies to the authority will be returned to the authorities from which they were transferred, and all rights and obligations of the authority will be transferred to the Ministry of Public Works.

Proposal

"Article Three stipulates that the Council of Ministers, based on the proposal of the Minister of Public Works, shall issue a decision as to the entities to which the employees of the Authority shall be transferred, while retaining all their rights and job grades, and the Minister shall issue the necessary decisions to implement the provisions of this law."

The explanatory memo of the project said within the framework of reforms and changes aimed at by the government's approach to merging and abolishing some government bodies, institutions and agencies with the aim of developing government services, ensuring their effectiveness and balance, non-interference in their competencies, reducing government expenditures, burdening the state budget with additional payments, and working to reduce procedures in order to reduce the procedures of the documentary cycle between government bodies and agencies for the speedy completion of projects and not delaying their implementation, in light of what the



Photo from the event.

Dasman Diabetes Institute partakes in Int'l Sleep Apnea scientific event

KUWAIT CITY, July 6: After the successful visit of Professor Nicholas de Vries to Dasman Diabetes Institute, who is a prominent Dutch researcher in Obstructive Sleep Apnea, which is a prevalent under-diagnosed disorder associated with the development of Type 2 Diabetes. The Dutch Sleep Apnea team invited a group from Dasman Diabetes Institute which was founded by Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences, headed

by Dr. Qais Alduwairi, the Director-General, Professor Fahd Almula Chief Scientific Officer and Dr. Abdulmohsen Alterki, ENT and Sleep Apnea Consultant, to attend and present their discovery of novel biomarkers of Sleep Apnea in the presence of hundreds of leading specialized companies. The Kuwaiti team were welcomed in Arabic by H.E. Khadija Arib, former Speaker of the house of representatives of the Netherlands.

practical reality has shown that the Public Authority for Roads and Land Transport has not achieved the desired goal for which it was established.

Therefore, it was considered to cancel Law No. 115 of 2014 and its amendments regarding the establishment of the Authority and to submit a draft of this law.

private sector.

"Although the government provides employment support to citizens working in the private sector to equalize wages, the differences in unpaid benefits (working hours and paid leave) are still significant. These differences would discourage citizens from working in the private sector," says Moody's, noting that the private sector mainly employs expatriates, while the public sector mostly employs Kuwaiti citizens.

Moody's stated that Kuwait's infrastructure is less developed than its regional counterparts such as the UAE and Qatar, pointing out that Kuwaitization and the lack of skilled technicians also restrict the economy's competitiveness and diversification

prospects.

Meanwhile, Moody's pointed out in its analysis that the parliament's disagreement extends to financing issues, as delays in approving the new public debt law continue to limit government financing options, although this is more relevant when the government is facing a fiscal deficit, big.

Moody's stated that Kuwait's credit position is supported by the country's exceptionally large financial reserves, as well as huge oil and gas reserves with low production costs and very high levels of income.

Moody's assumes that no major reform measures can be implemented until the relationship between the government and the National Assembly becomes constructive.

TRAVEL

Business Plus



An unplanned excursion into the nightmare zone

Wait for US passports creating travel purgatory



The cover of a U.S. passport is displayed in Tigard, Ore., Dec. 11, 2021. Seeking a valid U.S. passport for that 2023 trip? Buckle up, wishful traveler, for a very different journey before you step anywhere near an airport. A much-feared backup of U.S. passport applications has smashed into a wall of government bureaucracy as worldwide travel rebounds toward record pre-pandemic levels — with too few humans to handle the load.

Inset: Marni Larsen and her son, Damon Rasmussen of Holladay, Utah, wait their turn in line hoping to snag her son's passport outside the Los Angeles Passport Agency at the Federal Building in Los Angeles on Wednesday, June 14, 2023. Larsen applied for her son's passport two months earlier and spent weeks checking for updates online or through a frustrating call system. (AP)

“With COVID, the bottom basically dropped out of the system,”

Antony Blinken told a House subcommittee March 23. When demand for travel all but disappeared during

the pandemic, he said, the government let contractors go and

reassigned staff that had been dedicated to handling passports. Around the same time, the government also halted an online renewal system “to make sure that we can fine tune it and improve it,” Blinken said. He said the department is hiring agents as quickly as possible, opening more appointments and trying to address the crisis in other ways.



Blinken

Seeking a valid U.S. passport for that 2023 trip? Buckle up, wishful traveler, for a very different journey before you step anywhere near an airport.

A much-feared backup of U.S. passport applications has smashed into a wall of government bureaucracy as worldwide travel rebounds toward record pre-pandemic levels - with too few humans to handle the load. The result, say aspiring travelers in the U.S. and around the world, is a maddening pre-travel purgatory defined, at best, by costly uncertainty.

With family dreams and big money on the line, passport seekers describe a slow-motion agony of waiting, worrying, holding the line, refreshing the screen, complaining to Congress, paying extra fees and following incorrect directions. Some applicants are buying additional plane tickets to snag in-process passports where they sit - in other cities - in time to make the flights they booked in the first place.

So grim is the outlook that U.S. officials aren't even denying the problem or predicting when it will ease. They're blaming the epic wait times on lingering pandemic-related staffing shortages and a pause of online processing this year. That's left the passport agency flooded with a record-busting 500,000 applications a week. The deluge is on-track to top last year's 22 million passports issued, the State Department says.

Stories from applicants and interviews by The Associated Press depict a system of crisis management, in which the agencies are prioritizing urgent cases such as applicants traveling for reasons of “life or death” and those whose travel is only a few days off. For everyone else, the options are few and expensive.

So, 2023 traveler, if you still need a valid U.S. passport, prepare for an unplanned excursion into the nightmare zone.

‘Plenty of time’ to ‘we’ll still be OK’ to big problems

It was early March when Dallas-area florist Ginger Collier applied

for four passports ahead of a family vacation at the end of June. The clerk, she said, estimated wait times at eight to 11 weeks. They'd have their passports a month before they needed them. “Plenty of time,” Collier recalled thinking.

Then the State Department upped the wait time for a regular passport to as much as 13 weeks. “We’ll still be okay,” she thought.

At T-minus two weeks to travel, this was her assessment: “I can’t sleep.” This after months of calling, holding, pressing refresh on a website, trying her member of Congress - and stressing as the departure date loomed. Failure to obtain the family’s passports would mean losing \$4,000, she said, as well as the chance to meet one of her sons in Italy after a study-abroad semester.

“My nerves are shot, because I may not be able to get to him,” she said. She calls the toll-free number every day, holds for as much as 90 minutes to be told - at best - that she might be able to get a required appointment at passport offices in other states.

“I can’t afford four more plane tickets anywhere in the United States to get a passport when I applied in plenty of time,” she said. “How about they just process my passports?”

The American government has a culprit: COVID

By March, concerned travelers began asking for answers and then demanding help, including from their representatives in the House and Senate, who widely reported at hearings this year that they were receiving more complaints from constituents on passport delays than any other issue.

The U.S. secretary of state had an answer, of a sort.

“With COVID, the bottom basically dropped out of the system,” Antony Blinken told a House subcommittee March 23. When demand for travel all but disappeared during the pandemic, he said, the government let contractors go and reassigned staff that had been dedicated to handling passports.

Around the same time, the

government also halted an online renewal system “to make sure that we can fine tune it and improve it,” Blinken said. He said the department is hiring agents as quickly as possible, opening more appointments and trying to address the crisis in other ways.

Passport applicants lit up social media groups, toll-free numbers and lawmakers’ phone lines with questions, appeals for advice and cries for help. Facebook and WhatsApp groups bristled with reports of bewilderment and fury. Reddit published eye-watering diaries, some more than 1,000 words long, of application dates, deposits submitted, contacts made, time on hold, money spent and appeals for advice.

It was 1952 when a law required, for the first time, passports for every U.S. traveler abroad. Now, passports are processed at centers around the country and printed at secure facilities in Washington, D.C. and Mississippi, according to the Government Printing Office.

But the number of Americans holding valid U.S. passports has grown at roughly 10% faster than the population over the past three decades, according to Jay Zagorsky, an economist at Boston University’s Questrom School of Business.

After passport delays derailed his own plans to travel to London earlier this year, Zagorsky found that the number of U.S. passports per American has soared from about three per 100 people in 1989 to nearly 46 per 100 people in 2022. Americans, it turns out, are on the move.

“As a society gets richer,” says Zagorsky, “the people in that society say, ‘I want to visit the rest of the world.’”

For Americans and others abroad, it’s no picnic either

At U.S. consulates overseas, the quest for U.S. visas and passports isn’t much brighter.

On a day in June, people in New Delhi could expect to wait 451 days for a visa interview, according to the website. Those in Sao Paulo could plan on waiting more

than 600 days. Aspiring travelers in Mexico City were waiting about 750 days; in Bogota, Colombia, it was 801 days.

In Israel, the need is especially acute. More than 200,000 people with citizenship in both countries live in Israel. It’s one appointment per person, even for newborns, who must have both parents involved in the process, before traveling to the United States.

Batsheva Gutterman started looking for three appointments immediately after she had a baby in December, with an eye toward attending a family celebration in July, in Raleigh, N.C.

Her quest for three passports stretched from January to June, days before travel. And it only resolved after Gutterman paid a small fee to join a WhatsApp group that alerted her to new appointments, which stay available for only a few seconds. She ultimately got three appointments on three consecutive days - bureaucracy embodied.

“We had to drive the entire family with three small children, an hour-and-a-half to Tel Aviv three days in a row, taking off work and school,” she said. “This makes me incredibly uneasy having a baby in Israel as an American citizen, knowing there is no way I can fly with that baby until we get lucky with an appointment.”

Recently, there appeared to be some progress. The wait for an appointment for a renewed U.S. passport stood at 360 days on June 8. On July 2, the wait was down to 90 days, according to the web site.

Frustrating tales emerge from the trenches

Back in the U.S., Marni Larsen of Holladay, Utah, stood in line in Los Angeles, California, on June 14, in hopes of snagging her son’s passport. That way, she hoped, the pair could meet the rest of their family, who had already left as scheduled for Europe, for a long-planned vacation.

She’d applied for her son’s passport two months earlier and spent weeks checking for updates online or through a frustrating call system. As the mid-June vaca-

tion loomed, Larsen reached out to Sen. Mitt Romney’s office, where one of four people he says is assigned full-time to passport issues were able to track down the document in New Orleans.

It was supposed to be shipped to Los Angeles, where she got an appointment to retrieve it. That meant Larsen had to buy new tickets for herself and her son to Los Angeles and reroute their trip from there to Rome. All on a bet that her son’s passport was indeed shipped as promised.

“We are just waiting in this massive line of tons of people,” Larsen said. “It’s just been a nightmare.”

They succeeded. But not everyone has been so lucky.

Miranda Richter applied in person to renew passports for herself and her husband, as well as apply a new one on Feb. 9 for a trip with their neighbors to Croatia on June 6. She ended up canceling, losing more than \$1,000.

Her timeline went like this: Passports for her husband and daughter arrived in 11 weeks, while Richter’s photo was rejected. On May 4, she sent in a new one via priority mail. Then she paid a rush fee of \$79, which was never charged to her credit card. Between May 30 and June 2, four days before travel, Richter and her husband spent more than 12 hours on the national passport line while also calling their congressman, senators and third-party couriers.

Finally, she showed up in person at the federal building in downtown Houston, 30 minutes before the passport office opened. Richter said there were at least 100 people in line.

“The security guard asked when is my appointment, and I burst out in tears,” she recalls. She couldn’t get one. “It didn’t work.”

Finally: A happy ending

“I just got my passports!” Ginger Collier texts.

She ended up showing up at the passport office in Dallas with her daughter-in-law at 6:30 a.m. and being sorted into groups and lined up against walls. Finally they were called to a window, where the agent was “super nice” and pulled all four of the family’s applications - paperwork that had been sitting in the office since March 17. More than seven hours later, the two left the office with directions to pick up their passports the next day.

They did - with four days to spare.

“What a ridiculous process,” Collier says. Nevertheless, the reunion with her son in Italy was sweet. She texted last week: “It was the best hug ever!”

Also:

BEIJING: The U.S. recommended Americans reconsider traveling to China because of arbitrary law enforcement and exit bans and the risk of wrongful detentions.

No specific cases were cited, but the advisory came after a 78-year-old U.S. citizen was sentenced to life in prison on spying charges in May.

It also followed the passage last week of a sweeping Foreign Relations Law that threatens countermeasures against those seen as harming China’s interests.

China also recently passed a broadly written counterespionage law that has sent a chill through the foreign business community, with offices being raided, as well as a law to sanction foreign critics.

“The People’s Republic of China (PRC) government arbitrarily enforces local laws, including issuing exit bans on U.S. citizens and citizens of other countries, without fair and transparent process under the law,” the U.S. advisory said.

“U.S. citizens traveling or residing in the PRC may be detained without access to U.S. consular services or information about their alleged crime,” it warned. (AP)

editor's choice



more Americans apply for jobless benefits, but layoffs are not rising

The number of Americans applying for jobless benefits rose last week, but remains at healthy levels despite the Federal Reserve's attempt to cool the labor market by raising interest rates.

U.S. applications for jobless claims rose by 12,000 to 248,000 for the week ending July 1, from 236,000 previous week, the Labor Department reported Thursday.

The four-week moving average of claims, which evens out some of the week-to-week volatility, fell by 3,500 by 253,250.

Jobless claim applications are seen as a proxy for the number of layoffs in a given week.

For three weeks in late May and early June, jobless claims had appeared to reach a sustained, higher level, above 260,000. Even so, that increase may not have been enough for Fed officials to pivot from raising its main rate at its next meeting.

The U.S. economy has added jobs at a furious pace since more than 20 million jobs vanished when the COVID-19 pandemic hit in the spring of 2020.

Americans have enjoyed unusual job security as companies have been reluctant to shed staff in a worker-friendly labor environment.

U.S. employers added a better-than-expected 339,000 jobs in May, surprising economists and painting a mostly encouraging picture of the labor market, even though the unemployment rate rose to a still-healthy 3.7%. Fed officials have said that the unemployment rate needs to rise well past 4% to bring inflation down. (AP)



A hiring sign is shown in Wheeling, Ill., Sunday, March 19, 2023. On Thursday, the Labor Department reports on the number of people who applied for unemployment benefits last week. (AP)

Market Movements

06-07-2023

	Change	Closing pts		Change	Closing pts		
UAE	- DFM	+0.97	3,962.42	JAPAN	- Nikkei	-1.70	32,773.02
PAKISTAN	- KSE 100	+1.51	44,211.72	PHILIPPINES	- PSEI	-0.59	6,474.26
SAUDI	- Tadawul	+0.05	11,597.91	EGYPT	- EGX 30	-1.60	17,102.30

Business

Users looking for an alternative targeted

Meta takes aim at Twitter with the launch of rival app Threads

Meta has unveiled an app called Threads to rival Twitter, targeting users looking for an alternative to the social media platform owned - and frequently changed - by Elon Musk.

Threads is billed as a text-based version of Meta's photo-sharing app Instagram that the company says provides "a new, separate space for real-time updates and public conversations."

It went live late Wednesday in Apple and Google Android app stores, with CEO Mark Zuckerberg saying 10 million people had signed up in the first seven hours. There were some early glitches, including Zuckerberg's posts - or Threads as they're dubbed - not loading in several places including the United Kingdom, India and Lebanon. But his replies to other users did appear.

Threads launched in more than 100 countries - including the U.S., Britain, Australia, Canada and Japan - and has already drawn celebrity users like chef Gordon Ramsay, pop star Shakira and actor Jack Black as well as accounts from Airbnb, Guinness World Records, Netflix, Vogue magazine and other media outlets.

The Twitter-like microblogging experience suggests that Meta Platforms has been gearing up to directly challenge the platform after Musk's tumultuous ownership has resulted in a series of unpopular changes that have turned off users and advertisers.

Zuckerberg said in some early replies on Threads that he's focused on making the app "a friendly place," which will "ultimately be the key to its success."

"That's one reason why Twitter never succeeded as much as I think it should have, and we want to do it differently," he wrote.

On Threads, there are buttons to like, repost, reply to or quote a thread, and users see the number of likes and replies that a post has received.

Posts are limited to 500 characters, which is more than Twitter's 280-character threshold, and can include links, photos and videos up to five minutes long.

Despite that, Meta said its "vision is that Threads will be a new app more focused on text and dialogue, modeled after what Instagram has done for photo and video."

Instagram users will be able to log in with their existing usernames and follow the same accounts on the new app. New users will have to set up an Instagram account.

Meta emphasized measures to keep users safe, including enforcing Instagram's community guidelines and providing tools to control who can mention or reply to users.

Meta's new offering, however, has raised data privacy concerns.

Threads could collect a wide range of personal information, including health, financial, contacts, browsing and search history, location data, purchases and "sensitive info," according to its data privacy disclosure on the App Store.

Twitter co-founder Jack Dorsey pointed it out in a snarky tweet saying, "All your Threads are belong to us" that included a screenshot of the disclosure. Musk replied "yeah."

One place Threads won't be rolled out is in the European Union, which has strict data privacy rules.

Meta has informed Ireland's Data Privacy Commission that it has no plans yet to launch Threads in the 27-nation bloc, commission spokesman Graham Doyle said. The Irish watchdog is Meta's main privacy regulator for the EU because the company's regional headquarters is based in Dublin.

The company is working on rolling the app out to more countries but pointed to

regulatory uncertainty for its decision to hold off on a European launch.

Analysts said its success is far from guaranteed, citing Meta's track record of starting standalone apps that were later shut down. Also in question is whether it's the right move for Meta, which announced tens of thousands of layoffs over the past year amid a tech industry slowdown.

Zuckerberg also has been focusing on the metaverse, investing tens of billions of dollars in the virtual reality concept.

Meta risks "spreading itself too thin," said Mike Proulx, a research director at Forrester, a global market research company. "Meta is banking on a moment in time amidst peak Twitter frustration. However, this window of opportunity is already flooded with Twitter alternatives including Bluesky, Mastodon, Spill, Post, News and Hive, which are all competing for Twitter's market share."

Even so, Threads could be a fresh headache for Musk, who acquired Twitter last year for \$44 billion.

He's made a series of changes that have triggered backlash, the latest being daily limits on the number of tweets people can view to try to stop unauthorized scraping of potentially valuable data. He also is now requiring paid verification for users to access the online dashboard TweetDeck.

Musk's rivalry with Zuckerberg could end up spilling over into real life. In an online exchange the two tech billionaires seemingly agreed to a cage match face-off, though it's unclear if they will actually make it to the ring.

Amid the Threads launch, Musk responded to a tweet showing a screenshot of him saying he deleted Instagram in 2018 because it was "weak sauce."

"It is infinitely preferable to be attacked by strangers on Twitter, than indulge in the false happiness of hide-the-pain Instagram," he said. (AP)

New center to strengthen co's global network

Bahrain set to unveil PwC ME latest regional service center

MANAMA, Bahrain, July 6, (PR Newswire): PwC Middle East, is set to establish a new service delivery center in Manama, Bahrain during the first quarter of 2024. The service centre will offer strategic compliance and advisory services to a wide range of global institutions. In line with PwC Middle East's objective to expand its market presence regionally, this new centre will strengthen PwC's global network of 328,000 people working in 152 firms around the world. Located at the heart of the Gulf and providing an accessible gateway into Saudi Arabia, Bahrain is strategically placed to facilitate the regional success of the new service centre.

As a leading global firm, specialising in taxation, legal, deals, assurance (audit) and consultancy services, the new delivery center will continue supporting its diverse client portfolio, comprising of the public sector, financial institutions, health-care providers, manufacturers, Telco providers, and more from its Bahrain office.

Leveraging on its established international strategies as an extension of its capabilities from its global network, PwC Middle East anticipates 50 new job opportunities for Bahrainis for the launch, with an overall operational target of 250 for the centre. The regional service centre in Bahrain will be working closely with the other centres in the region, with initial plans already in place to serve the region's client base.

Hani Ashkar, Middle East Senior Partner at PwC Middle East, said, "Beyond its competitive operating costs and strategic location provid-

ing facilitated access to serve the region, Bahrain's highly talented bi-lingual workforce is an undeniable asset against the backdrop of a growing economy that is witnessing impressive and consistent growth."

He added: "We are a community of solvers combining human ingenuity, expertise, technology and innovation to deliver sustained outcomes."

His Excellency Khalid Humaidan, Chief Executive at the Bahrain Economic Development Board, added, "PwC's decision to establish its regional service centre in Bahrain is a testament to the Kingdom's thriving financial ecosystem. Over the years, Bahrain has built solid financial foundations that today enable the efficient delivery of established business services. Owing to a world-class infrastructure and a talented workforce that merges local insight with global perspectives, Bahrain continues to create global success stories and support the expansion plans of leading industry players. We look forward to supporting PwC's latest initiative throughout their investment journey."

In line with the Economic Recovery Plan (ERP, 2021) which aims to develop Bahrain's economy with a focus on strategic high-impact sectors, the regional hub is set to emerge as an influential contributor to diversification efforts. Recently overtaking the oil and gas industry as the highest contributor to GDP growth at 17.5% as of 2022, Bahrain's financial services sector continues to showcase steady growth and is home to a balanced portfolio of leading local, regional, and global financial institutions.

Wall St stumbles after hot jobs data raises threat of high rates



A currency trader walks by the screens showing the Korea Composite Stock Price Index (KOSPI), (left), and the foreign exchange rate between U.S. dollar and South Korean won at a foreign exchange dealing room in Seoul, South Korea, Wednesday, July 5, 2023. Asian stock markets sank Wednesday after a survey showed Chinese industrial activity weakening. (AP)

Canada to stop 'advertising' on Facebook and Instagram

OTTAWA, Ontario, July 6, (AP): Canada's government has said it would stop advertising on Facebook and Instagram, in response to Meta's decision to block access to news content on their social platforms as part of a temporary test.

Heritage Minister Pablo Rodriguez announced Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's government's decision at a news conference.

Canada's move is the latest episode in a dispute that started after Trudeau's administration proposed a bill that would require technology companies to pay publishers for linking to or otherwise repurposing their content online.

Meta promised at the time to block Canadian news content on its Facebook and Instagram platforms to address Canada's recently passed Online News Act.

Rodriguez said the decision from Meta was "unreasonable" and "irresponsible," and as a result Canada would stop advertising on their platforms.

He said the federal government spends about 10 million Canadian dollars (around \$7.5 million) a year to advertise on the platforms. This money, he added, will be put into other ad campaigns.

Soon after the federal announcement, Quebec Premier Francois

Legault tweeted that the province was also suspending advertising on Facebook and Instagram, and Montreal Mayor Valerie Plante said on Twitter that the city would stop ads on Facebook.

Reacting to the latest Canadian announcement, a Meta spokesperson said the Online News Act is "flawed legislation that ignores the realities of how our platforms work." He said that the company does not collect links to news content to show on their social platforms and that publishers are the ones deciding to post them on Facebook or Instagram.

"Unfortunately, the regulatory process is not equipped to make changes to the fundamental features of the legislation that have always been problematic, and so we plan to comply by ending news availability in Canada in the coming weeks," the spokesperson said in a statement sent to The Associated Press.

Google has also promised to start blocking Canadian news when the bill takes effect in six months.

Rodriguez said the government is in talks with the company and believes its concerns will be managed by the regulations that will come to implement the bill.

Asian markets extend losses

NEW YORK, July 6, (AP): Stocks were falling Thursday after reports suggested the U.S. job market remains much more resilient than expected.

The S&P 500 was 1.1% lower in afternoon trading. The Dow Jones Industrial Average was down 434 points, or 1.3%, at 33,854, as of 12:16 p.m. Eastern time, and the Nasdaq composite was 1.2% lower.

While a sturdy labor market keeps the economy out of a long-feared recession, it could also push the Federal Reserve to keep interest rates higher for longer in its campaign to defeat high inflation. That in turn could mean more pressure down the line on the economy and financial markets.

A report from ADP Research Institute suggested hiring by private employers was much stronger last month than economists expected, with nearly twice as many jobs created than forecast.

The ADP report can be volatile and "isn't necessarily a good predictor of the monthly jobs report" that is more comprehensive and due from the U.S. government on Friday, said Mike Loewengart, head

of model portfolio construction at Morgan Stanley Global Investment Office.

But it also paired with a separate report showing the number of U.S. workers applying for unemployment last week remains low relative to history, even if it was a bit higher than expected.

Other reports on Thursday offered a nuanced picture. One from the U.S. government said employers advertised fewer job openings in May than expected. That could mean less upward pressure on inflation, though the data also showed more people quit their jobs. That could be a signal of a strong job market.

Europe

Germany's DAX lost 1% to 15,773.57 and the CAC 40 in Paris gave up 1.7% to 7,190.42. Britain's FTSE 100 dropped 1.2% to 7,352.98.

Asia

Shares slipped in Asia on Thursday after Wall Street drifted downward following a rally that sent it roaring 16% higher for the year so far.

Hong Kong's Hang Seng index dropped 3% on heavy selling of Chinese banks shares after Goldman Sachs downgraded them citing concerns about

the slowing economy and lenders' exposures to debt. Japan's Nikkei 225 lost 1.7%. U.S. futures declined and oil prices were mixed.

The Hang Seng shed 550 points to 18,559.82 while the Shanghai Composite index lost 0.5% to 3,206.36. Tokyo's Nikkei 225 index gave up 565 points to 32,773.02.

Hong Kong-traded shares in the China Construction Bank Corp. lost 2.8%; China Merchants Bank dropped 1.4% and the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China sank 3.2%.

In Australia, the S&P/ASX 200 dropped 1.3% to 7,157.80 and the Kospi in Seoul lost 1.1% to 2,551.10. India's Sensex gained 0.3%, while shares fell in 1.7% Taiwan and 1.3% in Bangkok.

Oil

In other trading, U.S. benchmark crude oil shed 9 cents to \$71.70 a barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. On Wednesday it gained \$2 a gallon to \$71.79 a barrel.

Brent crude, the pricing basis for international trading, gave up 26 cents to \$76.39 a barrel.

Currencies

The dollar fell to 143.76 Japanese yen from 144.64 yen. The euro rose to \$1.0861 from \$1.0857.

German Cabinet approves a lower 2024 budget

BERLIN, July 6, (AP): Germany's Cabinet on Wednesday approved a draft 2024 budget that foresees lower spending, with defense among the exceptions, as Europe's biggest economy sticks to rules limiting borrowing that were suspended during the coronavirus pandemic.

The government's plan calls for spending of 445.7 billion euros (\$486 billion), down 6.4% from the 476.3 billion euros it expects to spend this year.

Defense spending is set to rise by 1.7 billion euros to some 51.8 billion euros, some way short of what the defense minister initially sought.

Germany plans to reach a NATO target of spending 2% of gross domestic product on defense next year, a measure on which it has long fallen short, with help from a special 100 billion-euro fund set up to modernize the German military after Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Berlin aims to meet the target by its

regular budget later this decade.

"Security, economic prosperity and industrial fitness for the future, climate neutrality and cohesion are the most important characteristics of a budget that of course is challenged by the fact that many in recent years have got used to the big dimensions" associated with measures to tackle the effects of the pandemic and Russia's war in Ukraine, Chancellor Olaf Scholz told lawmakers.

AUB congratulates winners of Al-Hassad Weekly Draw

Ahli United Bank (AUB) congratulates the winners of Al-Hassad Weekly Draw of Al-Hassad Islamic account, which was held on 05 July at the bank's head office in the presence of a representative of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

The Bank Announced 10 Winners of KD 1,000 As Follows: Kaneezah A K Al-Bloushi, Saleh Abdulla Othman Al-Kouh, Ahmad Awadh Ayedh Al-Mutairi, Abdulkareem Abdullah Baqer Ashkanani, Abdulwahab H A Sheshter, Saad Abdulla Mohamad Al-Freih, Hassan El-Sadek &/Or Nadeen El-Sadek (joint account), Nawal Ali Jassim Al-Azran, Helene Sioufi And Mubarak F M Al-Nuwaif.

In its new package, Al-Hassad Islamic Saving Account presents a broader variety of rewards. Customers could now participate in the draw to win a monthly KD 100,000 prize, in addition to 10

weekly prizes of KD 1,000 each. The grand quarterly prize of KD 250,000 in cash for the winner remains the most important aspiration of customers. It is a real chance for them to realize their life dreams. In addition to this attractive package, there will be the annual expected profits on the basis of a Wakala contract that increases the attractiveness of the Al-Hassad Islamic Saving Account to customers.

SUPCON, a trailblazer in process automation and digital transformation in China, has announced a series of project wins across Saudi Arabia and the Gulf. The company has been awarded the Workforce & Assets Tracking Solution Project by International Maritime Industries (IMI), the largest full-service shipyard in the MENA region powered by Aramco, Bahri, Lamprell, and HHI, followed by the Instrumentation Contract from

SUPCON gains momentum in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf

Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) and the Smart Safety & Site Monitoring Solution for the Aramco Academy Construction Project.

These recent project wins demonstrate SUPCON's capability to provide a wide range of solutions from instrumentation, automation & information to top-level management solution. The company has been expanding into the Gulf region with ambitious planning and preparation, leveraging the

increasingly strong economic ties between China and Saudi Arabia, especially under the backdrop of Belt & Road Initiative and Vision 2023.

Last week, Alhumam Emad Abdulaziz A, SVP of IMI Corporate Services and Alangari Salem Abdulaziz M, VP of IMI Digitalization & Innovation visited SUPCON headquarters in Hangzhou, China for an in-depth communication around intelligent shipyard solutions.

Alshamlan, Al-Ruwaieh and Al-Sulaymani in a group photo with the honorees.



KFH honors 120 high school toppers

Kuwait Finance House (KFH) organized an honoring ceremony to celebrate 120 high school toppers in literature, science and religious studies, in addition to top achievers from special education schools for the academic year 2022/2023.

The ceremony was held under the patronage of Minister of Education, Dr. Hamad Al-Adwani, and in the presence of the Secretary of the Educational Development and Activities Sector, Dr. Ghanim Al-Sulaimani representing Minister of Education, KFH Group Chief Retail and Private Banking Officer, Khaled Alshamlan, and Group Deputy General Manager Public Relations and Media, Yousef Al-Ruwaieh.

Alshamlan congratulated in his speech the high school toppers, students' parents and families who supported them and stood by their side during the academic year until they reaped the fruits of their diligence and dedication, praising their great role in the excellence of their children.

Alshamlan also thanked and appreciated the sponsor of the ceremony, His Excellency the Minister of Education, Dr. Hamad Al-Adwani, and members of the administrative and teaching staff for their efforts throughout the academic year, pointing out that they are certainly partners of success and the main pillar in supporting students and the success of the educational process in general.

Alshamlan added: "This excellence that you are living today is not the

ultimate destination, but rather the beginning of a journey filled with hope and hard work. This journey must be accompanied by many factors that must be taken into account to sustain success, such as choosing a university major that suits your ambition and passion, setting clear goals for your future in academic and professional terms, continuing to learn and develop skills as knowledge and skills open the doors to opportunities, and finally contributing to the community by participating in social and voluntary activities."

Alshamlan stressed KFH's keenness to organize this ceremony on an annual basis to honor the outstanding students, as part of the "You are our Pride" program, which falls within the strategy of social responsibility and the interest in young talents, science and learning.

"This ceremony has become an important date for the distinguished students in high school in its various departments, and an opportunity to appreciate them for the exceptional results they have achieved at Kuwait's level" He added.

Alshamlan also expressed his hope that students will maintain this excellence in the coming stages of education, as well as in various stages of academic and professional life to serve Kuwait and its people.

"Having a track record of remarkable achievements in supporting the education and youth, KFH is one of the first and largest supporters of youth,

and students. This reflects its belief that young national talents are the real wealth of the country, and the basis for the process of development and prosperity." He added.

The representative of the Minister of Education and Secretary of the Educational Development and Activities Sector, Dr. Ghanim Al-Sulaimani, praised KFH's initiative in organizing an honoring ceremony for high school toppers on an annual basis.

Meanwhile, the MC from the Ministry of Education said: "Over the past years, KFH participated in organizing and sponsoring student activities and forums inside and outside Kuwait and supporting many purposeful student events in all their forms, whether scientific, sporting, cultural or social. KFH aims to ensure that students assume their social responsibility, and in accordance with a clear vision that the youth of Kuwait deserve all appreciation and support".

He added that students require the concerted efforts of everyone to overcome difficulties in order to obtain education to serve their country and build a better future for their society, as they are the basic building blocks in society."

Students and parents thanked KFH and praised its initiative in honoring students, which leaves a great positive impact on them and motivates future generations for more diligence and giving.

Concerns over Beijing's influence raised

A 'troubled' new power plant leaves Jordan in debt to China

ATTARAT, Jordan, July 6. (AP): Jordan's Attarat power plant was envisioned as a landmark project promising to provide the desert kingdom with a major source of energy while solidifying its relations with China.

But weeks after its official opening, the site, a sea of black, crumbly rock in the barren desert south of Jordan's capital, is instead a source of heated controversy. Deals surrounding the plant put Jordan on the hook for billions of dollars in debt to China - all for a plant that is no longer needed for its energy, because of other agreements made since the project's conception.

The result is fueling tensions between China and Jordan and causing grief for the Jordanian government as it tries to contest the deal in an international legal battle. As Chinese influence grows in the Middle East and America withdraws, the \$2.1 billion shale oil station has come to characterize China's wider model that has burdened many Asian and African states with crippling debt and served as a cautionary tale for the region.

"Attarat is a representation of what the Belt and Road Initiative was and has become," said Jesse Marks, a nonresident fellow at the Washington-based Stimson Center, referring to China's scheme to build global infrastructure and boost Beijing's political sway.

"Jordan evolves as an interesting case study not for China's success in the region but for how China engages in middle-income countries," he said.

First conceived some 15 years ago as a way to fulfill national ambitions of energy independence, the Attarat shale oil plant is now causing anger in Jordan because of its enormous price tag. If the original agreement holds, Jordan would have to pay China a staggering \$8.4 billion over 30 years to buy the electricity generated by the plant.

Laborers flown from rural China toil in the shadow of the giant station, some 100 kilometers (60 miles) south of Amman.

When Shi Changping arrived in the Jordanian desert earlier this year from the Jilin province in China's northeast, fears were mounting in the workers' dormitories that the project could grind to a halt, leaving everyone in the lurch, the 36-year-old welder said.

"It's very strange to feel that, being from China, you are not wanted here," he said.

With its meager natural resources in a region awash with oil and gas, Jordan seemed to have drawn a losing ticket. Then in the 2000s, it struck shale oil trapped in the black rock that underlies the country. With the fourth-largest concentration of shale oil in the world, Jordan had high hopes for a big pay-off.

In 2012, the Jordanian Attarat Power Company proposed to the government to extract shale oil from the desert and build a plant using it to provide 15% of the country's electricity supply. The proposal fit the government's intensifying desire for energy self-sufficiency amid the turmoil of the 2011 Arab uprisings, company officials say.

But extraction proved expensive, risky and technologically challenging. As the project lagged, Jordan struck a \$15 billion agreement to import vast amounts of natural gas at competitive prices from Israel in 2014. Interest in Attarat waned.

Attarat Power Co. board member Mohammed Maaitah said he pitched the project the world over - from the United States and Europe to Japan and South Korea. No one bit, he said.

To Jordan's surprise, Chinese banks offered Jordan over \$1.6 billion in loans to finance the plant in 2017. A Chinese state-owned firm, Guangdong Energy Group, bought a 45% stake in the Attarat Power Co., turning the white elephant into the largest private enterprise to come out of President Xi Jinping's Belt and Road Initiative outside China, according to the company.

Guangdong Energy Group did not respond to requests for comment.

The investment was part of China's wider push into an Arab world hungry for foreign investment, experts say. The money for large infrastructure projects came with few political strings attached.

"China doesn't bring with it the baggage of the United States in that we actually have some concern about democratic processes, transparency, corruption," said David Schenker, a former U.S. assistant secretary of state for Middle East policy. "For authoritarian states, there's some appeal in China."

As talk grew of American unreliability, China turned to acquiring strategic assets in the Middle East, even in economically troubled states. It bought lots of Iraqi oil, tendered a port in northern Lebanon and poured money into President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi's new capital in Egypt.

With Syrian President Bashar Assad in 2017 gaining the upper hand in his country's civil war, China had an interest in investing in the Attarat project in neighboring Jordan as a springboard, anticipating a Syrian reconstruction boom that could unlock billions of dollars in investments, experts say.

Under their 30-year power purchase deal, Jordan's state-run electricity company will have to buy electricity from the now effectively Chinese-led Attarat at an exorbitant rate that means the Jordanian government would lose \$280 million annually, the treasury estimated.

UAE focused on uniting parties in a COP of Action and a COP for All

COP28 president-designate addresses CARICOM heads of gov't

ABU DHABI, UAE, July 6, (PRNewswire): COP28 President-Designate, Dr. Sultan Al Jaber, today addressed the Conference of the Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) in Trinidad and Tobago, where he said Caribbean nations will play a critical role at COP28 in aligning support for climate action, and that old models must be challenged to ensure that climate diplomacy delivers results for Caribbean nations.

"At COP28, the Caribbean region will have a critical role in bringing countries together and contributing to a consensus-driven approach across every climate pillar," Dr. Al Jaber told delegates. "The Caribbean community, with CARICOM as its unifying voice, can help marshal support for ambitious negotiated outcomes and a transformative action agenda. Working in solidarity, we can deliver a just energy transition that embraces clean technologies, without sacrificing energy security or national prosperity."

Tribute

The COP28 President-Designate paid tribute to the work of Mia Mottley, Prime Minister of Barbados, in driving climate finance reform for vulnerable countries across the Global South.

"As Prime Minister Mottley said in Paris, the world must now bring pace and scope to the climate challenge," he said. "We need transformational progress, not incremental steps. And we need to challenge old models of doing things if we want different results."

With just seven years to go to achieve the Paris Agreement goals, "we need to shift gears across mitigation, adaptation, loss and damage, and of course climate finance," Dr. Al Jaber stated.



A cake being cut to signify opening of the event.



Some of the promotion items on display.

LuLu Hypermarket kicks off 'Summer with LuLu' promotion

LuLu Hypermarket, the leading retailer in the region, launched its annual 'Summer with LuLu' promotion on 5 July at its Fahaheel outlet. The promotion, which runs from 5 - 11 July at all LuLu Hypermarket outlets, was inaugurated by Talal Sadiq, Engineering Department, ministry of Kuwait along with the top management of LuLu Hypermarket and the event's sponsors.

Major highlights of the promotion include live mocktail preparation by mocktail specialists, cooling summer drinks, and samplings of refreshing foods. Adding to the excitement of the 'Summer with LuLu' promotion is a colorful summer garments fashion show, a special music show, and stalls set up by suppliers that exhib-

it a range of summer products, including a variety of cosmetics and eyewear collections for the hot summer months.

To make the week-long promotion equally attractive to kids, a special smoothie-making competition for children is being held to allow the young talents to show off their creativity in blending cooling smoothies.

Apart from the live entertainment and activities, the 'Summer with LuLu' promotion also offers amazing deals and discounts on a wide range of summer-related items, including coolers and air-conditioners. Enhancing the summer theme of the promotion are large displays and cutouts of summer-related activities and products.

adaptation responses."

"We must fast-track a just and equitable energy transition that leaves no one behind, triple renewable energy capacity and double hydrogen production. We must protect nature, enhance food and health systems and upgrade

Doing the latter will require "delivering the global goal on adaptation and doubling adaptation finance," the President-Designate said. "Finance underpins everything. It is essential,

of course for the fund and funding arrangements for loss and damage. And this COP will continue to put finance and IFI (International Financial Institution) reform at the top of the international agenda."

The Conversation

'Very compact and self-contained'

Splitting sound might lead to new kind of quantum computer

By Andrew N. Cleland

University of Chicago Pritzker School of Molecular Engineering

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

When you turn on a lamp to brighten a room, you are experiencing light energy transmitted as photons, which are small, discrete quantum packets of energy. These photons must obey the sometimes strange laws of quantum mechanics, which, for instance, dictate that photons are indivisible, but at the same time, allow a photon to be in two places at once.

Similar to the photons that make up beams of light, indivisible quantum particles called phonons make up a beam of sound. These particles emerge from the collective motion of quadrillions of atoms, much as a "stadium wave" in a sports arena is due to the motion of thousands of individual fans. When you listen to a song, you're hearing a stream of these very small quantum particles.

Originally conceived to explain the heat capacities of solids, phonons are predicted to obey the same rules of quantum mechanics as photons. The technology to generate and detect individual phonons has, however, lagged behind that for photons.

That technology is only now being developed, in part by my research group at the Pritzker School of Molecular Engineering at the University of Chicago. We are exploring the fundamental quantum properties of sound by splitting phonons in half and entangling them together.

My group's fundamental research on phonons may one day allow researchers to build a new type of quantum computer, called a mechanical quantum computer.

To explore the quantum properties of phonons, our team uses acoustic mir-

rors, which can direct beams of sound. Our latest experiments, published in a recent issue of Science, however, involve "bad" mirrors, called beam splitters, that reflect about half the sound sent toward them and let the other half through. Our team decided to explore what happens when we direct a phonon at a beam splitter.

As a phonon is indivisible; it cannot be split. Instead, after interacting with the beam splitter, the phonon ends up in what is called a "superposition state." In this state the phonon is, somewhat paradoxically, both reflected and transmitted, and you're equally likely to detect the phonon in either state. If you intervene and detect the phonon, half the time you will measure that it was reflected and half the time that it was transmitted; in a sense, the state is selected at random by the detector. Absent the detection process, the phonon will remain in the superposition state of being both transmitted and reflected.

Superposition

This superposition effect was observed many years ago with photons. Our results indicate that phonons have the same property.

After demonstrating that phonons can go into quantum superpositions just as photons do, my team asked a more complex question. We wanted to know what would happen if we sent two identical phonons into the beam splitter, one from each direction.

It turns out that each phonon will go into a similar superposition state of half-transmitted and half-reflected. But because of the physics of the beam splitter, if we time the phonons precisely, they will quantum-mechanically interfere with one another. What emerges is actually a superposition state of two phonons going one way and two phonons going the other - the two phonons

are thus quantum-mechanically entangled.

In quantum entanglement, each phonon is in a superposition of reflected and transmitted, but the two phonons are locked together. This means detecting one phonon as having been transmitted or reflected forces the other phonon to be in the same state.

So, if you detect, you'll always detect two phonons, going one way or the other, never one phonon going each way. This same effect for light, the combination of superposition and interference of two photons, is called the Hong-Ou-Mandel effect, after the three physicists who first predicted and observed it in 1987. Now, my group has demonstrated this effect with sound.

These results suggest that it may now be possible to build a mechanical quantum computer using phonons. There are continuing efforts to build optical quantum computers that require only the emission, detection and interference of single photons. These are in parallel with efforts to build electrical quantum computers, which through the use of large numbers of entangled particles promise an exponential speedup for certain problems, such as factoring large numbers or simulating quantum systems.

A quantum computer using phonons could be very compact and self-contained, built entirely on a chip similar to that of a laptop computer's processor. Its small size could make it easier to implement and use, if researchers can further expand and improve phonon-based technologies.

My group's experiments with phonons use qubits - the same technology that powers electronic quantum computers - which means that as the technology for phonons catches up, there's the potential to integrate phonon-based computers with electronic quantum computers. Doing so could yield new, potentially unique computational abilities. (AP)

The Conversation

'Alien intelligence'

AI an existential threat: not the way you think

By Nir Eisikovits
UMass Boston

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

The rise of ChatGPT and similar artificial intelligence systems has been accompanied by a sharp increase in anxiety about AI. For the past few months, executives and AI safety researchers have been offering predictions, dubbed "P(doom)," about the probability that AI will bring about a large-scale catastrophe.

Worries peaked in May 2023 when the nonprofit research and advocacy organization Center for AI Safety released a one-sentence statement: "Mitigating the risk of extinction from A.I. should be a global priority alongside other societal-scale risks, such as pandemics and nuclear war." The statement was signed by many key players in the field, including the leaders of OpenAI, Google and Anthropic, as well as two of the so-called "godfathers" of AI: Geoffrey Hinton and Yoshua Bengio.

You might ask how such existential fears are supposed to play out. One famous scenario is the "paper clip maximizer" thought experiment articulated by Oxford philosopher Nick Bostrom. The idea is that an AI system tasked with producing as many paper clips as possible might go to extraordinary lengths to find raw materials, like destroying factories and causing car accidents.

A less resource-intensive variation has an AI tasked with procuring a reservation to a popular restaurant shutting down cellular networks and traffic lights in order to prevent other patrons from getting a table.

Office supplies or dinner, the basic idea is the same: AI is fast becoming an alien intelligence, good at accomplishing goals but dangerous because it won't necessarily align with the moral values of its creators. And, in its most extreme version, this argument morphs into explicit anxieties about AIs enslaving or destroying the human race.

Impact

In the past few years, my colleagues and I at UMass Boston's Applied Ethics Center have been studying the impact of engagement with AI on people's understanding of themselves, and I believe these catastrophic anxieties are overblown and misdirected.

Yes, AI's ability to create convincing deep-fake video and audio is frightening, and it can be abused by people with bad intent. In fact, that is already happening: Russian operatives likely attempted to embarrass Kremlin critic Bill Browder by ensnaring him in a conversation with an avatar for former Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko. Cybercriminals have been using AI voice cloning for a variety of crimes - from high-tech heists to ordinary scams.

AI decision-making systems that offer loan approval and hiring recommendations carry the risk of algorithmic bias, since the training data and decision models they run on reflect long-standing social prejudices.

These are big problems, and they require the attention of policymakers. But they have been around for a while, and they are hardly cataclysmic.

The statement from the Center for AI Safety lumped AI in with pandemics and nuclear weapons as a major risk to civilization. There are problems with that comparison. COVID-19 resulted in almost 7 million deaths worldwide, brought on a massive and continuing mental health crisis and created economic challenges, including chronic supply chain shortages and runaway inflation.

Nuclear weapons probably killed more than 200,000 people in Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, claimed many more lives from cancer in the years that followed, generated decades of profound anxiety during the Cold War and brought the world to the brink of annihilation during the Cuban Missile crisis in 1962. They have also changed the calculations of national leaders on how to respond to international aggression, as currently playing out with Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Gaining

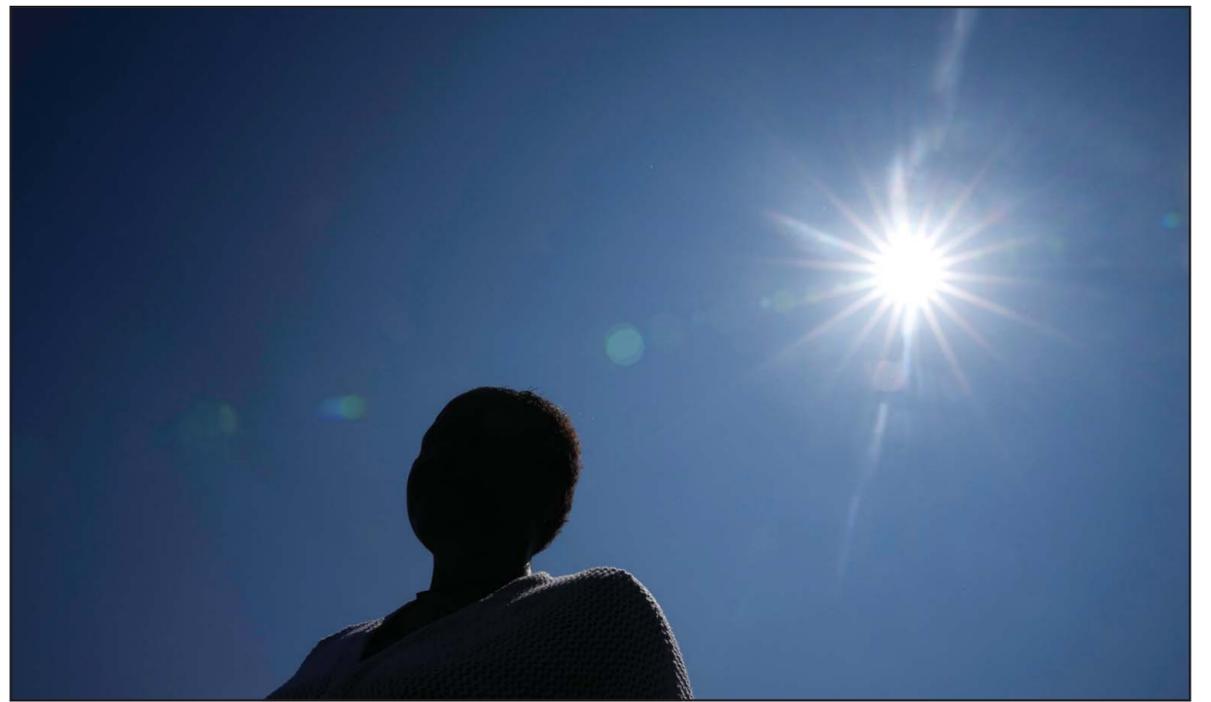
AI is simply nowhere near gaining the ability to do this kind of damage. The paper clip scenario and others like it are science fiction. Existing AI applications execute specific tasks rather than making broad judgments. The technology is far from being able to decide on and then plan out the goals and subordinate goals necessary for shutting down traffic in order to get you a seat in a restaurant, or blowing up a car factory in order to satisfy your itch for paper clips.

Not only does the technology lack the complicated capacity for multilayer judgment that's involved in these scenarios, it also does not have autonomous access to sufficient parts of our critical infrastructure to start causing that kind of damage.

Actually, there is an existential danger inherent in using AI, but that risk is existential in the philosophical rather than apocalyptic sense. AI in its current form can alter the way people view themselves. It can degrade abilities and experiences that people consider essential to being human.

For example, humans are judgment-making creatures. People rationally weigh particulars and make daily judgment calls at work and during leisure time about whom to hire, who should get a loan, what to watch and so on. But more and more of these judgments are being automated and farmed out to algorithms. As that happens, the world won't end. But people will gradually lose the capacity to make these judgments themselves. The fewer of them people make, the worse they are likely to become at making them.

Or consider the role of chance in people's lives. Humans value serendipitous encounters: coming across a place, person or activity by accident, being drawn into it and retrospectively appreciating the role accident played in these meaningful finds. (AP)



The mother of a student whose confidential sexual assault complaint was released online stands outside the Minneapolis Public Schools offices, Thursday, June 1, 2023, in Minneapolis. Ransomware gangs have been stealing confidential documents from schools and dumping them online. (AP)

Ransomware has affected over 5mn US students

Hackers dump kids' private files online

NEW YORK, July 6, (AP) - The confidential documents stolen from schools and dumped online by ransomware gangs are raw, intimate and graphic. They describe student sexual assaults, psychiatric hospitalizations, abusive parents, truancy - even suicide attempts.

"Please do something," begged a student in one leaked file, recalling the trauma of continually bumping into an ex-abuser at a school in Minneapolis. Other victims talked about wetting the bed or crying themselves to sleep.

Complete sexual assault case folios containing these details were among more than 300,000 files dumped online in March after the 36,000-student Minneapolis Public Schools refused to pay a \$1 million ransom. Other exposed data included medical records, discrimination complaints, Social Security numbers and contact information of district employees.

Rich in digitized data, the nation's schools are prime targets for far-flung criminal hackers, who are assiduously locating and scooping up sensitive files that not long ago were committed to paper in locked cabinets. "In this case, everybody has a key," said cybersecurity expert Ian Coldwater, whose son attends a Minneapolis high school.

Often strapped for cash, districts are grossly ill-equipped not just to defend themselves but to respond diligently and transparently when attacked, especially as they struggle to help kids catch up from the pandemic and grapple with shrinking budgets.

Months after the Minneapolis attack, administrators have not delivered on their promise to inform individual victims. Unlike for hospitals, no federal law exists to require this notification from schools.

The Associated Press reached families of six students whose sexual assault case files were exposed. The message from a reporter was the first time anyone had alerted them.

"Truth is, they didn't notify us about anything," said a mother whose son's case file has 80 documents.

Even when schools catch a ransomware attack in progress, the data are typically already gone. That was what Los Angeles Unified School District did last Labor Day weekend, only to see the private paperwork of more than 1,900 former students - including psychological evaluations and medical records - leaked online. Not until February did district officials disclose the breach's full dimensions, noting the complexity of notifying victims with exposed files up to three decades old.

The lasting legacy of school ransomware attacks, it turns out, is not in school closures, recovery costs or even soaring cyberinsurance premiums. It is the trauma for staff, students and parents from the online exposure of private records - which the AP found on the open internet and dark web.

"A massive amount of information is being posted online, and nobody is looking to see just how bad it all is. Or, if somebody is looking, they're not making the results public," said analyst Brett Callow of the cybersecurity firm Emsisoft.

Other big districts recently stung by data theft include San Diego, Des Moines and Tucson, Arizona. While the severity of those hacks remains unclear, all have been criticized either for being slow to admit to being hit by ransomware, dragging their feet on notifying victims - or both.

While other ransomware targets have fortified and segmented networks, encrypting data and mandating multi-factor authentication, school systems have been slower to react.

Ransomware likely has affected well over 5 million US students by now, with district attacks on track to rise this year, said analyst Allan Liska of the cybersecurity firm Recorded Future. Nearly one in three US districts had been breached by the end of 2021, according to a survey by the Center for Internet Security, a federally funded nonprofit.

"Everyone wants schools to be more secure, but very few want to see their taxes raised to do it," Liska said.

Parents have instead pushed to use limited funds on things like bilingual teachers and new football helmets, said Albuquerque schools superintendent Scott Elder, whose district suffered a January 2022 ransomware attack.

Just three years ago, criminals did not routinely grab data in ransomware attacks, said TJ Sayers, cyberthreat intelligence manager at the Center for Internet Security. Now, it's common, he said, with much of it sold on the dark web.

The criminals in the Minneapolis theft were especially aggressive. They shared links to the stolen data on Facebook, Twitter, Telegram and the dark web, which standard browsers can't access. A handwritten note naming three students involved in one of the sexual abuse complaints was featured for a time on YouTube competitor Vimeo, which promptly took down the video.

Cybercrime

The cybercrime syndicate behind the Los Angeles United attack was less brazen. But the 500 gigabytes it dumped on its dark web "leak site" remained freely available for download in June. They include financial records and personnel files with scanned Social Security cards and passports.

The public disclosure of psychological records or sexual assault case files, complete with students' names, can fray psyches and thwart careers, psychologists say. One file stolen from Los Angeles United described how a middle-schooler had attempted suicide and been in and out of the psychiatric hospital a dozen times in a year.

The mother of a 16-year-old with autism recently got a letter from the San Diego Unified School District saying her daughter's medical records may have been leaked online in an Oct. 25 breach.

"What," Barbara Voit asked, "if she doesn't want the world to know that she has autism?"

The Minneapolis parents informed by the AP of the leaked sexual assault complaints feel doubly victimized. Their children have battled PTSD, and some even left their schools. Now this.

"The family is beyond horrified to learn that this highly sensitive information is now available in perpetuity on the internet for the child's future friends, romantic interests, employers, and others to discover," said Jeff Storms, an attorney for one of the families. It is AP policy not to identify sexual abuse victims.

Teachers, meanwhile, want to know why they have to call the district and report problems in order to receive the promised free credit monitoring and identity theft protection after their Social Security numbers were leaked.

"Everything they've learned about this is from the news," said Greta Callahan, of the Minneapolis Federation of Teachers.

Minneapolis Schools spokeswoman Crystina Lugo-Beach would not say how many people have been contacted so far or answer any other AP questions about the attack.

School nurse Angie McCracken had by early April already received 10 alerts through her credit card that her Social Security number and birth date were circulating on the dark web. She wondered about her graduating 18-year-old. "If their identity is stolen, just how hard is that going to make my kid's life?"

Despite parents' and teachers' frustration, schools are routinely advised by incident response teams concerned about legal liability issues and ransom negotiations against being more transparent, said Callow of Emsisoft. Minneapolis school officials apparently followed that playbook, initially describing the Feb. 17 attack cryptically as a "system incident," then as "technical difficulties" and later an "encryption event."

The extent of the breach became clear though when a ransomware group posted video of stolen data more than two weeks later, giving the district 10 days to pay the ransom before leaking files.

The district declined to pay, following the standing advice of the FBI, which says ransoms encourage criminals to target more victims.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, districts prioritized spending on internet connectivity and remote learning. Security got short shrift as IT departments invested in software to track student engagement and performance, often at the expense of privacy and safety, University of Chicago and New York University researchers found.

In a 2023 survey, the Consortium for School Networking, a tech-oriented nonprofit, found just 16% of districts had full-time network security staff, with nearly half devoting 2% or less of their IT budgets to security.

With a deficit in private sector cybersecurity talent, districts struggle to hang onto it. Districts who do hire someone often see them snatched away by businesses that can double their salaries, said Keith Krueger, CEO of the consortium.

Cybersecurity money for public schools is limited. As it stands, districts can only expect slivers of the \$1 billion in cybersecurity grants that the federal government is distributing over four years.

Minnesota's chief information security officer, John Israel, said his state got \$18 million of it this year to divvy among 3,600 different entities, including cities and tribal governments. State lawmakers provided an additional \$22.5 million in grants for cyber and physical security in schools.

Schools also want to tap a federal program called E-Rate that is designed to improve broadband connections to schools and libraries. More than 1,100 wrote the Federal Communications Commission after the Los Angeles Unified breach asking that E-Rate be modified to free up funds for cybersecurity. The FCC is still considering the request.

It's already too late for the mother of one of the Minneapolis students whose confidential sexual assault complaint was released online. She almost feels "violated again."

"All the stuff we kept private," she said, "it's out there. And it's been out there for a very long time."

Caeregen and Wacker to produce Noregen for retinal diseases

CTR-107 may regenerate retinal blood vessels and neurons

ROCHESTER, Mich. & HALLE, Germany, July 6: Caeregen Therapeutics, a regenerative medicine therapeutics company and Wacker Biotech, a contract development and manufacturing organization (CDMO), will collaborate on the development and production of CTR-107 (Noregen™), a novel regenerative therapeutic for the treatment of retinal-related vision loss. As Caeregen's CDMO partner for CTR-107, Wacker Biotech will produce drug substance at its site in Halle, Germany, and complete clinical trial drug product production at its site in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, to support Phase I/II clinical study initiation in 2024.

CTR-107 is the first program to obtain US FDA Rare Pediatric Disease Designation for treatment of Familial Exudative Vitreoretinopathy (FEVR).

CTR-107 is a synthetic targeted growth-factor that mimics the properties of norrin, a naturally occurring human protein that promotes development of normal, organized blood vessels and neurons in the human eye, ear, and central nervous system. CTR-107 is first being developed for the treatment of Familial Exudative Vitreoretinopathy (FEVR), a genetic disorder of retinal blood vessel formation, resulting in partial or complete vision loss. When injected into the eye, CTR-107 may regenerate retinal blood vessels and neurons, restoring normal retinal function and counteracting vision loss due to FEVR. Caeregen intends to subsequently advance Noregen for other critical retinal disease indications including retinal vein occlusion (RVO), diabetic retinopathy (DR) and age-related macular degeneration (AMD).

In December 2022, Noregen received Rare Pediatric Disease designation from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for the treatment of Familial Exudative Vitreoretinopathy (FEVR), rendering Caeregen eligible to obtain a Priority Review Voucher at the time of marketing approval. This RPD designation for Noregen™ is the first to be granted by FDA for children with FEVR and follows the attainment of Orphan Drug Designation (ODD) by both the FDA and European Commission European Medicines Agency (EMA).

Active

Caeregen first contracted with Wacker Biotech in 2022 to support initial manufacturing and process development for CTR-107 and has now partnered with Wacker Biotech to manufacture active CTR-107 drug substance at its site in Halle, Germany, for the first planned Phase I/II clinical study. Finished CTR-107 clinical study drug product manufacturing will be completed at Wacker Biotech's site in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. Production in compliance with pharmaceutical GMP (Good Manufacturing Practice) requirements is scheduled to start in early 2024.

"As a potential breakthrough program for a rare, devastating retinal disease with no therapeutic options for patients, we selected Wacker Biotech as our CDMO partner for CTR-107 development because of their long-standing experience and deep understanding of protein chemistry, and shared urgency in advancing transformative science," says Walter Capone, CEO of Caeregen Therapeutics.

The companies' shared goal is to initiate clinical development which will support progression to regulatory submission as an approved product for patients experiencing progressive vision loss leading to blindness.

"Through its unique structure, CTR-107 has the potential to repair and regenerate the neurovasculature to restore vision, with potential applications as well to reverse hearing loss and treat neurodegenerative diseases. We are pleased to support Caeregen Therapeutics in the development of this revolutionary regenerative drug

candidate and product platform," says Guido Seidel, Vice President Business Unit BioPharma at WACKER.

Wacker Biotech, a wholly owned subsidiary of Munich-based Wacker Chemie AG, uses its proprietary FOLDTEC® technology in the production of CTR-107. With this refolding technology, microbially produced pharmaceutical proteins which tend to form inclusion bodies during production can be manufactured cost-effectively and reliably in high yields and extremely high purity. The patented process utilizes specifically developed and optimized E.coli bacterial strains, a patented, antibiotic- and phage free plasmid maintenance system, and comprehensive refolding know-how.

CTR-107 (Noregen™) is a synthetic targeted growth-factor for retina-related vision loss modeled after norrin, a naturally occurring human protein that guides retinal formation in fetal development. CTR-107 may promote development of normal, organized blood vessels and neurons in the human eye, ear, and central nervous system for individuals with inherited or acquired retinal diseases and potential applications in other neurosensory disorders. As a first-in-class therapeutic candidate to regenerate and repair the retinal vasculature to restore and preserve vision in patients with ischemic vitreoretinopathies, CTR-107 is currently being developed for Familial Exudative Vitreoretinopathy (FEVR), a rare disease of urgent, unmet medical need.

Disorder

Familial Exudative Vitreoretinopathy, or 'FEVR' is a rare inherited disorder of retinal angiogenesis, leading to incomplete vascularization of the peripheral retina and poor vascular differentiation. FEVR most often presents in childhood but may progress at any age with sight-threatening manifestations (Ranchod et al., 2011). It is characterized by abnormal retinal vascular development with progressive vitreoretinal features, including retinal capillary dropout, vessel dragging; retinal folds, vessel leakage and exudation; hemorrhage, neovascularization, vitreoretinal interface changes, and serous, tractional, or combined retinal detachment (Wood et al., 2019) - all contributing to or causing visual impairment and blindness. Currently there are no approved pharmacological therapies for FEVR.

Caeregen Therapeutics, LLC, based in Rochester, MI with offices in Chapel Hill, N.C., is a regenerative medicines company developing therapeutics for neurosensory diseases. By exploiting biological pathways and signaling related to cellular and organ development, Caeregen is focused on advancing targeted therapies with the ability to repair, restore and protect neurosensory tissues affected by inherited or acquired diseases. Caeregen is currently developing Noregen, a unique, novel, recombinant protein mimetic of human norrin-derived growth factor for the potential treatment of retinal-related vision loss.

Wacker Biotech GmbH, Wacker Biotech B.V. and Wacker Biotech US Inc. are full-service contract manufacturers of therapeutic proteins, live microbial products (LMPs), plasmid DNA (pDNA), messenger ribonucleic acid (mRNA) and vaccines based on microbial systems. Wacker Biotech's portfolio extends from strain/process development and analytical testing through to production for clinical and commercial applications. Wacker Biotech operates four GMP-compliant (Good Manufacturing Practice) production plants at its Jena and Halle sites in Germany, in Amsterdam in the Netherlands and in San Diego (USA). The production plants in Jena, Halle and Amsterdam are FDA- and EMA-certified. Wacker Biotech GmbH, Wacker Biotech B.V. and Wacker Biotech US Inc. are wholly owned subsidiaries of Munich-based Wacker Chemie AG.

Microba commences phase I clinical trial for IBD therapeutic

MAP 315 potential treatment option for mlns of people suffering from UC

'Prion devastating disease'

Sangamo, Voyager enter prion disease therapy license 'deal'

BRISBANE, Australia, July 6: Microba Life Sciences Limited (ASX: MAP) ("Microba" or the "Company") has announced that the first participants have been successfully dosed in the Phase I Clinical Trial of MAP 315, in Microba's Therapeutic Program in Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD). This milestone brings Microba's drug candidate MAP 315 into clinical development as a potential new treatment option for the millions of people suffering from ulcerative colitis (UC).

Professor Trent Munro, SVP of Therapeutics at Microba said: "Microba has now matured into a clinical stage drug development company. I am proud of our team and what we have built to bring novel microbiome drugs all the way from human-data guided discovery, through to an orally delivered drug product now dosed in a first in human clinical trial. We are uniquely positioned at the forefront of drug development from the microbiome and excited about the future potential impact of MAP 315 as a new treatment for Inflammatory Bowel Disease sufferers."

The Phase I clinical trial is a randomised, double-blind, placebo-controlled study to evaluate the safety, tolerability and pharmacokinetics of MAP 315 in 32 healthy adults. The trial is being conducted by Nucleus Network in Melbourne, Australia, under the Company's Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) approval and in alignment with formal feedback received from an FDA pre-IND engagement.

Matching

The clinical trial is titled "A Phase 1, Randomised, Double-Blind, Placebo-Controlled, Study to Evaluate the Safety, Tolerability and Pharmacokinetics of MAP 315 in Healthy Adults". The study will enroll 2 cohorts of 16 participants each, who will be randomised 3:1 to receive MAP 315 or its matching placebo for 14 consecutive days (2 weeks). Results from the trial are expected to be available in December 2023. Full study details can also be found in the Australian New Zealand Clinical Trials Registry (ANZCTR) under study ID: ACTRN12623000291684.

MAP 315 was identified using Microba's unique analysis of its large proprietary human databank, demonstrating that this previously uncharacterised and novel bacterial species is commonly observed in healthy individuals but consistently deficient in individuals with IBD. Subsequent pre-clinical investigation of MAP 315 through both in vitro and in vivo models demonstrated that MAP 315 promotes epithelial restitution and mucosal healing - biological activities that are critical for sustained disease remission but not adequately addressed through existing therapy.

MAP 315 is a live biotherapeutic product (LBP) consisting of lyophilised bacteria in an enteric coated capsule which is orally administered and being developed as an investigational product for the treatment of ulcerative colitis (UC). Microba worked in partnership with leading microbiome contract drug manufacturer Bactera to produce GMP compliant MAP 315 at large-scale in their state-of-the-art facilities in Europe to supply material for the MAP 315 clinical trial.

IBD causes prolonged inflamma-

development, manufacture and commercialization of any product candidates using the Voyager capsid. Voyager is eligible to earn certain license fees, royalties on potential commercial sales of any products using Voyager's capsid, and, in the event the prion program is out licensed by Sangamo, a portion of all licensing revenues received with respect to this program. Sangamo expects to submit a potential IND for a product candidate treating prion disease in 2025.

"We believe the novel, brain-penetrant capsids emerging from our TRACER capsid discovery platform have the potential to enable gene therapies for a wide variety of diseases of the central nervous system - far more than we could prosecute internally," said Alfred W. Sandrock, Jr., M.D., Ph.D., Chief Executive Officer of Voyager. "We continue to explore a variety of capsid license structures, such as in this transaction with Sangamo, to leverage our technology for more programs, and ultimately, more patients."

Fatal

Prion disease is a rapidly progressing, fatal neurodegenerative disease caused by the misfolding of the cellular prion protein, PrPC, encoded by the PRNP gene. Misfolded prion protein is acutely toxic to neurons, which can lead to the rapid development of dementia, difficulty walking and changes in gait, hallucinations, muscle stiffness, confusion, fatigue, difficulty speaking, and ultimately death. Most cases are sporadic or caused by inherited dominant mutations in PRNP, with an estimated 500 patients diagnosed per year in the US. The most common form of prion disease that affects humans is Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease. There are currently no approved or clinical-stage disease-modifying therapies for the prevention or treatment of prion disease.

Sangamo's zinc finger transcriptional regulators, or ZF-TRs, recognize and bind to a specific DNA sequence within or near a particular gene, allowing ex-

pression of that target gene to be potentially regulated. ZF activators, or ZF-As, are created by attaching a zinc finger array to an activation domain with the aim of increasing the expression of a target gene relative to an untreated cell. ZF repressors, or ZF-Rs, are created by attaching a zinc finger array to a repression domain in order to down regulate or completely turn off a gene. ZF-Rs can also be designed to selectively repress expression of a mutant allele while allowing for the expression of the healthy allele. Sangamo is currently evaluating ZF-TRs in a variety of pre-clinical programs, including Nav1.7 for the potential treatment of chronic neuropathic pain and for prion disease.

Sangamo Therapeutics is a clinical-stage biopharmaceutical company with a robust genomic medicines pipeline. Using ground-breaking science, including our proprietary zinc finger genome engineering technology and manufacturing expertise, Sangamo aims to create new genomic medicines for patients suffering from diseases for which existing treatment options are inadequate or currently don't exist. To learn more, visit www.sangamo.com and connect with us on LinkedIn and Twitter.

Voyager's TRACER™ (Tropism Redirection of AAV by Cell-type-specific Expression of RNA) capsid discovery platform is a broadly applicable, RNA-based screening platform that enables rapid discovery of AAV capsids with robust penetration of the blood-brain barrier and enhanced central nervous system (CNS) tropism in multiple species, including non-human primates (NHPs). TRACER generated capsids have demonstrated superior and widespread gene expression in the CNS compared to conventional AAV capsids as well as cell- and tissue-specific transduction, including to areas of the brain that have been traditionally difficult to reach. Separate results have demonstrated the enhanced ability of certain capsids to target cardiac muscle and to de-target the dorsal root ganglia.

Evidence

There is a growing body of evidence that the gut microbiome plays a central role in the maintenance of health and the development of chronic disease. With microbiome-based therapeutics now in clinical development and the first FDA approvals, these novel drugs represent an exciting new opportunity for the treatment of chronic diseases that are underserved by current pharmaceuticals.

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Star had been suffering from depression for several years

Hong Kong-born singer Coco Lee dies by suicide at age 48

HONG KONG, July 6, (AP) - Coco Lee, a Hong Kong-born singer and songwriter who had a highly successful career in Asia, has died by suicide, her siblings said Wednesday. She was 48.

The star had been suffering from depression for several years, Lee's elder sisters Carol and Nancy Lee said in a statement posted on Facebook and Instagram, with her condition deteriorating drastically over the last few months.

"Although, CoCo sought professional help and did her best to fight depression, sadly that demon inside of her took the better of her," the statement read.

Lee attempted suicide at home over the weekend and she was rushed to a hospital, her sister said. They said that she was in a coma and died on Wednesday.

Born Ferren Lee in Hong Kong, Lee later moved to the US where she attended middle and high school in San Francisco. She became a singer after winning first runner up in an annual singing competition held by broadcaster TVB in Hong Kong, and released her first album in 1994 at the age of 19.

Though Lee initially started out as a Mandopop singer, she later branched out to release albums in Cantonese and English over her nearly 30-year career. She was best known for her powerful voice and live performances.

"CoCo is also known to have worked tirelessly to open up a new world for Chinese singers in the international music scene, and she went all out to shine for the Chinese," her sisters said in their post. "We are proud of her!"

She also was the first Chinese singer to break into the American market, and her English song "Do You Want My Love" charted at #4 on Billboard's Hot Dance Breakouts chart in Dec. 1999.



Lee

from her marriage with Rockowitz, Lee didn't have children of her own.

In Lee's most recent Instagram post, dated Dec. 31, 2022, she shared several pictures of herself, including tattoos of the words

"love" and "faith" as well as a picture of what appears to be a drainage bag taped to her body.

"Love & Faith - my two favorite words that I carry strongly in my heart which I desperately needed to get through this incredibly difficult year," she wrote in the caption.

"Life seemed unbearable at times but I adapted the attitude of a 'female warrior' to face them head on fearlessly," the caption read.

In March, she posted about having to relearn how to walk after undergoing surgery for an old leg injury that was triggered after going overboard during a dance practice in Oct. 2022.

"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!"

Mandopop singer-songwriter Wang Leehom paid tribute to Lee in an Instagram post, describing her as the "biggest star" whom everyone wanted to work with.

"In the music industry, Coco Lee broke down international barriers, before any other Chinese singer did," he wrote. "Let's always remember her, as a brave pioneer, and an important musical legend."

Taiwanese singer Jolin Tsai posted a message on Facebook that read "R.I.P., your bright smile will always be remembered."

Obit

Variety



This image released by Bleeker Street shows Daryl McCormack in a scene from 'The Lesson.' (AP)

Film

McCormack, Grant and Delpy deliriously captivating

'Lesson' provides a spicy literary thriller

By Lindsey Bahr

The egos are as vast and thorny as the gardens on the lush estate of a prominent author in "The Lesson," an entertaining and erudite chamber piece about a master, a tutor and a family after loss.

This is a story that, in different hands, could have easily turned maudlin or melodramatic, but director Alice Troughton, writer Alex MacKeith and composer Isobel Waller-Bridge opted instead for wry lightness within the construct of a slow-burn thriller. It's as though "The Lesson," and everyone involved, is winking at the audience through the serious material that lingers, intentionally, on the fine line between pretentious and provocative.

Daryl McCormack, of "Good Luck to You, Leo Grande" and "Bad Sisters," plays Liam Sommers, an aspiring writer who has accepted a job tutoring the son of world-famous author J.M. Sinclair (Richard E. Grant), who also happens to be his literary idol. But the film begins with Liam on a fancy stage, being interviewed about his novel about a fading patriarch and a grief-stricken family that the moderator calls one of the most striking debuts of the year. The movie is a memory prompted by that very standard interview question: What was your inspiration?

Anyone in the business of asking artists questions about inspiration knows, on a certain level, that at best you're only getting a very brief version of one person's highly sanitized truth. At worst it's just a plausible sounding fabrication, safely constructed in the rear-view mirror. J.M. Sinclair, in the YouTube interviews that Liam watches on repeat, coyly speaks about how all great writers steal but he's not one, you imagine, who would publicly own any thievery. He is as precious about the singularity of his works and his talent as, in his words, the average writers who attempt originality and "fail universally" and the good writers who have the "sense to borrow." But it all helps to plant the seed that you're about to watch a literary heist unfold, though perhaps not the one you might expect.

The Sinclair family is the picture of upper-class posturing, with a household staff and a feigned formality fitting of someone who is always in control of the narrative, even at the dinner table in the company of only his son, Bertie (Stephen McMillan), and wife, Hélène (Julie Delpy). When he queues up Rachmaninoff as

their dining music and Bertie protests, he challenges his son to give him three good reasons why - a snobbish test that only shuts down the conversation. It's also quite the introduction to an author whom Liam has worshipped. Never meet your idols, etc. etc.

Liam is ostensibly there to help Bertie, a quiet and tortured Chalamet-type, prepare for entrance exams to study English literature at Oxford. But he has his own motives too - he's writing a thesis about Sinclair and at work on his own book. Why would a family that insists on a nondisclosure agreement and utmost discretion hire someone with such a glaring conflict of interest? Well, that's just one of the many mysteries for the audience to navigate in this maze of secrets, shame and scandals, including the somewhat recent suicide of the eldest Sinclair boy who was, it's suggested, a more promising writer than Bertie.

Intellectual

McCormack, Grant and Delpy are a deliriously captivating group to watch. Grant, so adept at comedy, is prickly and terrifying as this intellectual tyrant who is afraid to crush anyone in his path with casual cruelty, as when he asks Liam for help because he's "not a real writer." And McCormack once again excels at playing a shrewd, underestimated outsider. Liam has a few Tom Ripley talents up his sleeve that he uses to his advantage at key moments.

As Liam says of Sinclair's newest book, the third act in the film feels like a bit of a jarring departure from the fun escalating tension of the first two acts. But "The Lesson" is worth a watch as a tightly crafted film made by and for adults unafraid of some rhododendron metaphors and casual Tchaikovsky talk.

"The Lesson," a Bleeker Street release in theaters Friday, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association for "language and some sexual content." Running time 104 minutes. Two and a half stars out of four.

Also:

HANOI, Vietnam: Vietnam's state media have reported that the government banned distribution of the popular "Barbie" movie because it includes a view of a map showing disputed Chinese territorial claims in the South China Sea.

The newspaper Vietnam Express and other media said posters advertising "Barbie" were removed from

movie distributors' websites after Monday's decision. With Margot Robbie playing Barbie opposite Ryan Gosling's Ken in Greta Gerwig's comedic look at their "perfect" world, "Barbie" was supposed to open July 21 in Vietnamese theaters.

The reports cited Vi Kien Thanh, director general of the Vietnam Cinema Department, as saying the National Film Evaluation Council made the decision. It said a map in the film shows China's "nine-dash line," which extends Beijing's territorial claims far into waters that fall within areas claimed by Vietnam and other countries.

The "nine-dash line" is an arcane but sensitive issue for China and its neighbors that shows Beijing's maritime border extending into areas claimed by other governments and encompasses most of the South China Sea. That has brought it into tense standoffs with the ASEAN nations of Indonesia, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and the Philippines, with Chinese fishing boats and military vessels becoming more aggressive in the disputed waters.

Asked about the issue at a daily briefing on Tuesday, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said, "China's position on the South China Sea issue is clear and consistent."

"We believe that the countries concerned should not link the South China Sea issue with normal cultural and people-to-people exchanges," Mao said.

However, China is exceedingly sensitive when it comes to how its national image and border claims are portrayed in entertainment and by businesses. For example, it has routinely retaliated against companies from hotels to airlines that it believes have suggested that self-governing Taiwan - with its own political system, country code and currency - is anything other than a part of China.

Companies almost always acquiesce to Chinese complaints, fearing they risk being locked out of the huge, lucrative Chinese market. That includes Hollywood films deleting or adding scenes based on the expected response on the ruling Communist Party and the highly nationalistic public.

When an international court ruled in 2016 that the "nine-dash line" has no basis in law and the Philippines was entitled to an exclusive economic zone in part of the area claimed by Beijing, China rejected the ruling. (AP)

ATLANTA: An Atlanta rapper signed to Young Thug's record label has been arrested and charged with murder for his suspected role in the fatal shooting of a man outside an apartment complex.

Atlanta Police said 20-year-old **Jakobe Moody**, who goes by **FN DaDealer**, was taken into custody and charged with felony murder and possession of a firearm during the commission of a felony in the June 5 shooting, WSB-TV reported.

Moody was being held in **Fulton County** jail without bond, according to jail records. Moody's mother told WSB she believed it was a case of mistaken identity. She said the family was hiring an attorney and planned to make a statement later this week.

Tremaine Glasper, 28, was found with multiple gunshot wounds in a car at an apartment complex on June 5. Police at the time said they were looking for three suspects in the shooting.

Moody is not listed as one of the defendants in the racketeering trial for Young Thug. Jury selection in that trial is expected to resume this month.

The trial for Young Thug and 13 others is expected to last six to nine months.

Prosecutors have said Young Thug, whose real name is **Jeffery Williams**, is a founder of a criminal street gang called Young Slime Life, or YSL, and that he and others have committed numerous crimes to further the gang's interests. Defense attorneys have said YSL is simply a record label, Young Stoner Life, and that their clients did no wrong. (AP)

SCRANTON, Pa: Three of nine people have pleaded guilty to federal charges in a burglary ring that authorities in northeastern Pennsylvania say stole artwork - including works by **Andy Warhol** and **Jackson Pollock** - as well as antique weapons, sports memorabilia and other items from museums and other institutions over two decades.

Ralph Parry, 45, and **Francesco "Frank" Tassiello**, 50, pleaded guilty Friday to conspiracy to commit theft of major artwork, concealment and disposal of major artwork and interstate transportation of stolen property. The (Scranton) Times-Tribune reported. **Daryl Rinker**, 50, pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit

concealment and disposal of major artwork and interstate transportation of stolen property, the paper reported.

Federal prosecutors in Pennsylvania announced charges in June against nine Lackawanna County residents in 18 heists from art, historical and sports museums and other institutions in six states



FN DaDealer



Young Thug

between 1999 and 2019. The thefts included Andy Warhol and Jackson Pollock artwork taken in 2005 from the Everhart Museum in Scranton and a Jasper Cropsey work and antique firearms worth hundreds of thousands of dollars taken from Ringwood Manor in New Jersey. (AP)

NEW YORK: A state lawmaker was knocked over and injured during the opening ceremony for a new cultural center dedicated to **Louis Armstrong** in New York City officials said.

New York state Assemblyman **Jeffron Aubrey**, who was attending the ribbon-cutting ceremony at the new Louis

Armstrong Center in **Queens**, was walking down from the stage after delivering a speech when a man collided with him and knocked him over, according to the New York Times.

Aubrey suffered a laceration to his head and was transported to a local hospital, where he is in stable condition, police said. (AP)

Features

ARABIC TIMES

FRIDAY-SATURDAY, JULY 7-8, 2023

People & Places



Imane Ayissi



Valentino

PARIS: In the stone cloisters of the Musee des Arts Decoratifs adjoining the palatial Louvre, **Elie Saab** unveiled his latest collection to a rapt audience of VIPs, including **Alicia Silverstone**, on Wednesday.

Amid the historic venue, Saab presented a couture show that astounded attendees with its intricate detailing and magnificent silhouettes - and lived up to the venue's grandeur.

Here are some highlights of Wednesday's fall-winter 2023 couture collections:

Elie Saab

Saab once again affirmed his philosophy: "The code of my collections will always remain the same." Staying true to his glamour-focused ethos, the fall collection saw Saab recraft history's contours through a modern lens. Drawing inspiration from heroines of period pieces - **Cate Blanchett** in "Elizabeth," **Charlize Theron** in "Snow White and the Huntsman," and more - Saab reinterpreted these timeless figures.

Complex embellishments, intricate textures, and sparkling jewel tones of ruby, amethyst and emerald danced across gowns, paying homage to the regal, cinematic muses. Medieval symbolism came to life through sequined Tudor roses and flowering branches vining their way up the gowns, melding historical reverence with Saab's sophisticated artistry.

Dramatic capes of crystalized crepe and velvet dentelle layered atop matching gowns, wrapped in an enigma of enchantment and luxury. Touches of whimsy came to life in pearl drops and gilded bees humming through embroidered foliage, and ethereal gowns with near-transparent sequins in playful fantasies.

Viktor & Rolf

Couture at **Viktor & Rolf** is like a master class in suspense. Season after season the anticipation among fashion critics is palpable over what their latest surreal innovation and creative madness will be. Known for a history steeped in the avant-garde, **Viktor Horsting** and **Rolf Snoeren** are unafraid to challenge norms, often framing their fashion as a commentary on society.

Their fall couture show kicked off with an audacious splash. Bikinis, the epitome of summer wear, were intricately fastened with a lattice of ribbons, an allusion to the paradoxical bondage of fashion. This lattice motif exploded into a kaleidoscopic spectacle on a pale blue bikini that seemed to amplify the model into an oscillating subatomic particle, a look heightened by audacious yellow heels.

Bows and ruffles, traditional symbols of femininity, were deconstructed and recontextualized. A bold red swimsuit was bisected by a single, defiant bow, while another garment saw bows fluttering upwards like a flight of butterflies - a surreal moment



Valentino



Valentino

that testified to the duo's poetry. Their knack for placing the unexpected could not be missed.

Valentino

In a spectacular melding of historic grandeur and modern flair, Valentino treated fashion insiders to a striking couture show set within the Chateau



Valentino

Above and below: Models wear creations for the Imane Ayissi, Valentino and Elie Saab Haute Couture F/W 2023-2024 fashion collections presented in Paris, July 5 and 6. (AP)

Style



Elie Saab

de Chantilly, an opulent 16th century French architectural masterpiece. The show, aptly titled "Un Chateau," fused fashion tradition and contemporary

realism under the stewardship of **Pierpaolo Piccioli**. As models descended the chateau's illustrious stone steps, a symbol of



Elie Saab



Valentino

Fashion

PARIS

as a giant rose flower headpiece that seemed to envelop its wearer. Feather flourishes and regal capes, including a monumental white headpiece, spoke to the aristocratic history of the chateau, contrasting with the sporty vibe also infusing the collection. This intentional tension between the figures and the environment highlighted the transformative potential of the idea of a castle as a space of fantasy or explorations.

By introducing jeans amid the grandeur of Chateau de Chantilly, Piccioli seemed to be saying he wanted to reject traditional notions and reframe couture to better reflect society. The "Un Chateau" spectacle indeed became an arena where simplicity found its place within complexity, offering a new eye on of haute couture's role in an increasingly diverse fashion landscape.

Yuima Nakazato

Up-and-coming designer **Yuima Nakazato**, hailing from Tokyo, demonstrated a growing confidence and maturity in his latest collection presented at Wednesday's couture show.

Known for his unique blend of traditional Japanese techniques with innovative, sustainable approaches, Nakazato's collection began with a surprising piece: a cascading tribal necklace that initially appeared to be made of red coral but was, in fact, ingeniously composed of keys. Nakazato's visual illusions were further showcased through prominent jewelry pieces like a blood-red pendant, almost resembling scavenged carcass remains.

The designer's signature style - the fusion of contrasting elements - was prominent. Vivid, hard jewelry was starkly contrasted with fluid, draped garments that delicately moved with the models. (AP)



Elie Saab



Elie Saab



Elie Saab

The Conversation

Chasing eclipses, meteors

Light pollution driving global 'astro-tourism'

By Vahe Perboomian

USC Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences

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



For years, small groups of astronomy enthusiasts have traveled the globe chasing the rare solar eclipse. They have embarked on cruises to the middle of the ocean, taken flights into the eclipse's path and even traveled to Antarctica. In August 2017, millions across the US witnessed a total solar eclipse visible from Oregon to South Carolina, with a partial eclipse visible to the rest of the continental US.



McMaster

Henry McMaster is the Governor of South Carolina.

The interest in astronomical events that this eclipse sparked will likely return with two eclipses visible in the US during the next year - the annular solar eclipse on Oct. 14, 2023, and the total eclipse on April 8, 2024. But astro-tourism - traveling to national parks, observatories or other natural, dark-sky locations

to view astronomical events - isn't limited just to chasing eclipses.

According to a recent study, 80% of Americans and one-third of the planet's population can no longer see the Milky Way from their homes because of light pollution. As a consequence, most people have to travel to witness meteor showers and other common astronomical events.

I am a space scientist with a passion for teaching physics and astronomy and photographing the night sky. Every summer I spend several nights backpacking in the Sierra Nevada mountains of California, where the skies are sufficiently dark to allow the Milky Way to be seen with the naked eye. My son and I also like to take road trips - often along US 395, the Eastern Sierra Scenic Byway - that coincide with eclipses and meteor showers.

There are two types of eclipses. Lunar eclipses occur when the full moon passes through Earth's shadow. Solar eclipses occur when the new moon briefly blocks the Sun.

There are three types of solar eclipses. During a total eclipse, the Moon completely covers the Sun, with totality, or the time during which the Sun is completely eclipsed, lasting as long as seven minutes. During totality, those in the path of the eclipse will see the Sun's corona, or its outer atmosphere, behind the Moon's silhouette.

Constellations

The Moon's orbit around the Earth is an ellipse, so the Moon can appear to be 15% smaller when it's at its farthest point from Earth, its apogee, compared with its size when it is at its closest point to Earth, its perigee. An annular eclipse occurs when the Moon doesn't cover the entire disk of the Sun, leaving a ring of sunlight around the Moon.

Finally, a partial eclipse occurs when the Moon blocks only a part of the Sun's disk, as the name implies.

Meteor showers are a far more common astronomical event than eclipses, and they are visible from any dark-sky location on Earth. Meteor showers occur when Earth's orbit around the Sun takes it through the dust left behind by a comet. The Earth sweeps up the dust like a car speeding through a cloud of insects on the highway.

Meteor showers are named for the constellations from which the meteors seem to emanate, though it's not necessary to stare in that direction to see meteors. The most prominent meteor showers, occurring on approximately the same dates every year, are the Perseids, named for the constellation Perseus and peaking on the night of Aug. 12-13; the Geminids, named for the constellation Gemini, on Dec. 14-15; and the Lyrids, named for the constellation Lyra, on April 21-22. The night sky will be mostly moonless for the first two this year, but a nearly full moon will make the Lyrid shower of 2024 difficult to see.

One of the most important factors to consider when planning an outing to stargaze or to watch a meteor shower is the phase of the Moon. The full moon rises at about 6 p.m. and sets at 6 a.m., making stargazing all but impossible because of its brightness. For ideal stargazing conditions, the Moon should be below the horizon, and the best viewing conditions are during new moon. You can use a moonrise/moonset calculator to determine the phase of the Moon and its rise and set times for any location on Earth.

Another important factor is weather. Amateur astronomers always joke that the sky is cloudy during the most interesting astronomical events. For example, most major cities in the US that are in the path of the April 2024 eclipse have had cloudy skies on April 8 60% of the time since the year 2000.

Most Americans live in heavily light-polluted areas. A light pollution map such as lightpollutionmap.info can help identify the nearest dark-sky location, which, in my case, is hours away. These maps often use the Bortle dark-sky scale, which reports 1 for extremely dark skies to 9 for highly light-polluted city centers.

Complex

Though you may still see the brightest meteors from city suburbs, the darker your sky, the more meteors you'll see. In general, expect to see fewer than 25 meteors per hour. To see the complex structure of the Milky Way with the naked eye, look for a location with a Bortle index of 3 or below.

It's important to arrive at your chosen site early, preferably during daylight hours. Stumbling around in the dark at an unfamiliar site is a recipe for disaster and may also disturb others who are already at the site. Arriving early also gives time for your eyes to adapt to the dark as night falls, as it typically takes 30 minutes or even longer for your eyes to reach their full dark-adapted potential.

Make sure to carry a headlamp or flashlight that has a red light setting, as red light doesn't ruin night vision. Avoid using your phone, as even a glance at the screen can ruin your eyes' dark adaptation. If you're using a sky-viewing app, switch the app to night mode.

Plan ahead if you're thinking of traveling to view one of the eclipses visible in the US next year. If you're in the path of the eclipse, stay put! If you're traveling, staying at the same location overnight before and after the eclipse can help avoid the hours-long traffic jams experienced by eclipse watchers in 2017.

Also, you should never look at the Sun directly with the naked eye, even during a total eclipse. You'll need a pair of inexpensive eclipse glasses to watch and fully enjoy the eclipse, but get yours early, as many stores ran out of glasses during the 2017 eclipse.

No matter where you travel during the next year, don't forget to look up at night and marvel at the beauty of the night sky away from city lights. (AP)



Lucas Harrington, age 7, cools off in a mister at Kauffman Stadium as temperatures approach 100 degrees Fahrenheit before a baseball game between the Kansas City Royals and the Cleveland Guardians, Wednesday, June 28, 2023, in Kansas City, Mo. The entire planet sweltered for the two unofficial hottest

days in human recordkeeping Monday and Tuesday, according to University of Maine scientists at the Climate Reanalyzer project. The unofficial heat records come after months of unusually hot conditions due to climate change and a strong El Nino event. (AP)

Climate

'Global warming pushing us into a hotter future'

Earth temperature hits record high

NEW YORK, July 6, (AP) - Earth's average temperature remained at a record high Wednesday, after two days in which the planet reached unofficial records. It's the latest marker in a series of climate-change-driven extremes.

The average global temperature was 17.18 Celsius (62.9 degrees Fahrenheit), according to the University of Maine's Climate Reanalyzer, a tool that uses satellite data and computer simulations to measure the world's condition. That matched a record set Tuesday of 17.18 Celsius (62.9 Fahrenheit), and came after a previous record of 17.01 Celsius (62.6 degrees Fahrenheit) was set Monday.

Scientists have warned for months that 2023 could see record heat as human-caused climate change, driven largely by the burning of fossil fuels like coal, natural gas and oil, warmed the atmosphere. They also noted that La Nina, the natural cooling of the ocean that had acted as a counter to that warming, was giving way to El Nino, the reverse phenomenon marked by warming oceans. The North Atlantic has seen record warmth this year.

Evidence

"A record like this is another piece of evidence for the now massively supported proposition that global warming is pushing us into a hotter future," said Stanford University climate scientist Chris Field, who was not part of the calculations.

University of Maine climate scientist Sean Birkle, creator of the Climate Reanalyzer, said the daily figures are unofficial but a useful snapshot of what's happening in a warming world.

While the figures are not an official government record, "this is showing us an indication of where we are right now," said National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration chief scientist Sarah Kapnick. And NOAA indicated it will take the figures into consideration for its official record calculations.

Even though the dataset used for the unofficial record goes back only to 1979, Kapnick said that given other data, the world is likely seeing the hottest day in "several hundred years that we've experienced."

Scientists generally use much longer measurements - months, years, decades - to track the Earth's warming. But the daily highs are an indication that climate change is reaching uncharted territory.

Some parts of the world saw extraordinary heat waves.

High-temperature records were surpassed this week in Quebec and Peru. Beijing reported nine straight days last week when the temperature exceeded 35 degrees Celsius (95 degrees Fahrenheit), and ordered a stop to all outdoor work Wednesday as more high temperatures were forecast to pass 40 degrees Celsius (104 degrees Fahrenheit).

That included communities that aren't used to feeling such heat. In North Grenville, Ontario, the city turned ice hockey rinks into cooling centers as temperatures Wednesday hit 32 degrees Celsius (90 degrees Fahrenheit), with humidity making it making it feel like 38 degrees (100 degrees Fahrenheit).

pensate for the environmental damage they caused.

Solvay Specialty Polymers USA, LLC reached a legal settlement with New Jersey's Attorney General's Office and Department of Environmental Protection on contamination at and near its West Deptford plant in southwestern New Jersey near Philadelphia.

The state had been suing Solvay and numerous other companies to force them to clean up contamination with per- and poly-



A woman uses a long-sleeve shirt to shield from the sun as she walks at an outdoor shopping mall on a sweltering day in Beijing, Thursday, July 6. Employers in Beijing were ordered Thursday by the government to stop outdoor work after scorching summer heat in the Chinese capital was forecast to reach 40 degrees centigrade (104 Fahrenheit). (AP)

Discovery

Bobcat positive for rabies: A bobcat that attacked a camper in a hammock at a Connecticut state park has tested positive for rabies.

The man was among several adults leading a group of young campers last week in Selden Neck State Park, an island in the Connecticut River in Lyme, the state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection said in a news release Monday.

The man was sleeping early Friday when the bobcat attacked him, the department said. He and two other adult leaders subdued the animal and killed it, officials said.

All three men were taken to a hospital with injuries inflicted by the cat. None of the children on the outing came into contact with the animal, authorities said.

"When unprovoked attacks do occur, they are generally disease or illness related," Paul Copleman, a spokesperson for the department, said in a statement. "While rabies is not as common in bobcats as some other mammal species, they can contract the virus."

Treatment after exposure to rabies to prevent development of the fatal disease is typical, though the department had no information on whether the men who came in contact with the infected bobcat received such treatment. (AP)

'Poland hasn't stopped pollution': Germany's government accused Poland of failing to stop the dumping of pollutants that contributed to the deaths of hundreds of tons of fish in the Oder River, which runs along the border between the two countries.

The mass fish die-off last summer caused friction between Warsaw and Berlin, which both blamed chemical discharges on the Polish stretch of the river for promoting the growth of deadly golden algae. The environmental group Greenpeace said wastewater from Poland's coal mines was most likely responsible.

"We see increasing signs that salts continue to be discharged (into the Oder)," German Environment Ministry spokesperson **Christopher Stolzenberg** said. "There has been no reaction by the Polish side to limit the salt discharge."

He said a similar die-off could happen again this summer but noted that water levels and high temperatures were factors in producing golden algae.

"We need to see what's going to happen in the next weeks and months," Stolzenberg told reporters in Berlin.

German officials have reached out to their Polish counterparts "at all levels" to raise awareness about the risk of another environmental catastrophe, he said.

"It can't be in anybody's interest to have a second such disaster," Stolzenberg said. "At the moment, the signs aren't good, and in the end it's a question of time and also circumstances ... whether it could happen again." (AP)

NJ to get \$393m in settlement: A Belgium-based chemical company will spend nearly \$393 million under a settlement announced recently to clean up contamination from its so-called forever chemicals in New Jersey's drinking water and soil and to com-

EU moves toward latest 'gene' techniques in food production

BRUSSELS, July 6, (AP) - The European Union took a step Wednesday toward adapting its food production to the new ways of the world: The 27-nation bloc wants to embrace the latest gene techniques it hopes will help safely counter global challenges like climate change and shortages.

For decades, the EU was conservative in allowing the use of genetically modified organisms - which often brought up connotations of Frankenfood rather than improved crop production - while the United States and others quickly adopted the new bioengineered technologies.

However, the EU's executive commission on Wednesday threw its weight behind so-called new genomic techniques, which seek to change organisms in a much less intrusive way than the GMOs of old, and to allow many to be sold without special labeling.

"In many ways, new genomic techniques can give you the same results as through conventional and natural selection, or through targeted crossbreeding, but with much more speed, precision and efficiency," European Commission Vice President Frans Timmermans said.

The new techniques are intended to make plants better able to withstand drought while requiring fewer pesticides and to create products with better color and more consistency that are more attractive to consumers.

"I feel like we live in a tropical country right now," city spokeswoman Jill Sturdy said. "It just kind of hits you. The air is so thick."

On Wednesday, 38 million Americans were under some kind of heat alert, Kapnick said.

Cities across the US from Medford, Oregon to Tampa, Florida have been hovering at all-time highs, said Zack Taylor, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service.

But according to data from the Climate Reanalyzer, many of the largest temperature anomalies this week was seen over the world's oceans, especially the Antarctic Ocean.

Unusual

"Temperatures have been unusual over the ocean and especially around the Antarctic this week, because wind fronts over the Southern Ocean are strong pushing warm air deeper south," said Raghu Murtugudde, professor of atmospheric, oceanic and earth system science at the University of Maryland and visiting faculty at the Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay.

Murtugudde said that ocean heat is also going deeper. He said, "Oceans take up 93% of additional heat we are generating because of increasing greenhouse gases and they are now a huge reservoir of heat."

Unsurprisingly, large farming companies welcomed the EU's plans and environmentalists mounted opposition. Wednesday's proposal is only the start of a drawn-out process since member nations and the European Parliament must endorse the plans before they can become reality.

The bloc's current GMO legislation dates back to 2001 after the issue divided the EU for a generation. It gave environmentalists the assurance that the EU wouldn't become a free-for-all for multinational agro-corporations to produce GMOs in bulk and sell products to the bloc's 450 million citizens without detailed labeling and warnings.

The EU's main farm lobby, Copa-Cogeca, was jubilant Wednesday. "After more than a decade of postponements, the European Commission has finally presented a proposal," it said in a statement.

Environmentalists are fully alarmed again, fearing that the newest tools still pose too many dangers and must undergo much better testing.

"Whether it's a toy or a face cream, any product on the market needs to be safety tested. Why would there be an exemption for GMOs that end up in our fields or on our plates," said Eva Corral of Greenpeace. "Biotech companies have long considered these safety procedures an unnecessary bother and it's disappointing to see the commission agree with them."

Some places experienced unusually cold weather for the time of year, including southeast Australia and much of India.

With many places seeing temperatures near 38 degrees Celsius (100.4 degrees Fahrenheit), an average temperature record of 17.18 Celsius (62.9 degrees Fahrenheit) might not seem very hot. But Tuesday's global high was nearly a full degree Celsius (1.8 degrees Fahrenheit) higher than the 1979-2000 average, which already topped the 20th- and 19th-century averages.

Alan Harris, director of emergency management for Seminole County, Florida, said the county has already surpassed last year for the number of days they've activated their extreme weather plan - something that happens when the heat index hits 108 degrees Fahrenheit (42 degrees Celsius) or greater.

"It's just been kind of brutally hot for the last week, and now it looks like potentially for two weeks," Harris said.

In the US, heat advisories include portions of western Oregon, inland far northern California, central New Mexico, Texas, Florida and the coastal Carolinas, according to the National Weather Service Weather Prediction Center. Excessive heat warnings are continuing across southern Arizona and California.

fluoroalkyl substances, collectively known as PFAS chemicals. The substances are commonly referred to as "forever chemicals" because they never break down and are difficult to remove from water and soil, said **Shawn LaTourette**, New Jersey's environmental protection commissioner.

These substances can harm fetuses and newborns, and have been associated with kidney and testicular cancer and other illnesses. (AP)



LaTourette



Stolzenberg

Liberty hold off Mercury

Young, Wilson lead Aces past Wings for 9th consecutive victory

LAS VEGAS, July 6, (AP): Jackie Young scored 28 points, A'ja Wilson had 22 points and 13 rebounds and the short-handed Las Vegas Aces beat the Dallas Wings 89-82 on Wednesday night for their ninth straight win.

Kiah Stokes made a fast-break layup with 8:24 left in the fourth quarter to give Las Vegas a 70-69 lead - it's first since it was 9-8.

Wilson made a basket on back-to-back possessions to cap Las Vegas' 11-0 run for an 83-76 lead with 3:41 left. Chelsea Gray also made shots on consecutive possessions to make it 87-80.

Gray finished with 20 points for Las Vegas (16-1), which was without Kelsey Plum due to an illness.

Natasha Howard had a season-high 32 points and 13 rebounds for Dallas (8-9). Teaira McCowan also had a double-double with 14 points and 11 rebounds. Arike Ogunbowale scored 12 points on 5-of-20 shooting and Crystal Danger-

field added 11 points.

Liberty 99, Mercury 95

In New York, Breanna Stewart scored 43 points and New York recovered after squandering a 20-point lead.

Diana Taurasi had 23 points and Brittney Griner added 21 for Phoenix (9-13).

BASKETBALL

The Mercury trailed 73-53 with 4 minutes left in the third quarter before rallying to tie it at 92 all and then Michaela Onyenwere scored to give the Mercury their first lead since the opening minutes.

Jonquel Jones answered with a layup and then Courtney Vandersloot stole a pass and fed Stewart for a layup with 1:19

left to give New York the 94-92 advantage. Both teams turned it over on their next possessions before Onyenwere made 1 of 2 free throws with 33.4 seconds left to get Phoenix back within one.

New York (12-4) worked the shot clock down and Stewart drove to the basket and hit a tough shot over two defenders to make it 98-95 with 18.4 seconds left. Stewart scored 16 of New York's final 18 points.

Lynx 90, Fever 83

In Minneapolis, Napheesa Collier had 32 points and eight rebounds, Kayla McBride added 21 points and Minnesota won its fourth straight.

The Lynx took their first double-digit lead with 4:01 left in the fourth quarter on a free throw by Collier to make it 80-70. Indiana scored six straight points to get to 82-76 following Lexie Hull's steal and fast-break layup, but Collier answered at the other end for an eight-point lead with 1:12 left.

Lindsay Allen scored 16 points for Minnesota (8-9). Rookie Diamond Miller, coming off a career-high 25 points, was held to one point in 24 minutes.

Aliyah Boston had 22 points and nine rebounds and NaLyssa Smith added 18 points and 11 rebounds for Indiana (5-12), which has lost five straight.

Dream 90, Sparks 79

In Los Angeles, Allisha Gray scored 23 points, Cheyenne Parker had 14 points and 11 rebounds and Atlanta beat Los Angeles.

Atlanta jumped out to a 29-14 lead after the first quarter behind nine points from Rhyne Howard. The Dream shot 61% in the quarter and held Los Angeles to 6 of 19 (32%). The Dream were ahead 53-40 at the break.

Howard made her fifth 3-pointer for a 61-51 lead and the Dream lead by double figures the entire fourth quarter.

Giannis had knee surgery this offseason: coach

Williams going to Mavs from Celtics in 3-team trade that includes Spurs

DALLAS, July 6, (AP): The Dallas Mavericks are acquiring Grant Williams from Boston in a sign-and-trade deal that includes the San Antonio Spurs, a person with knowledge of the agreement said Wednesday night.

Dallas is sending guard Reggie Bullock and a 2030 pick swap to the Spurs, while the Mavericks and Celtics will receive multiple second-round picks, according to a person who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because no trades can be finalized before Thursday.

Williams' contract is for \$54 million over four years.

The Mavericks made it clear they thought their roster needed work after missing the playoffs when the pairing of Luka Doncic and Kyrie Irving faltered in the two months after the blockbuster deal that brought Irving from Brooklyn in February.

Irving and the Mavs have agreed on a \$126 million, three-year contract that should become official when free agent deals can be signed, starting Thursday. Center Dwight Powell also is set to return.

BASKETBALL

The 6-foot-6 Williams will change the look of the Dallas frontcourt with the lanky, offensive-minded Christian Wood not expected to return. The 24-year-old averaged career highs of 8.1 points and 4.6 rebounds in his fourth season with the Celtics.

Dallas wants to rediscover the defensive mentality that helped fuel a run to the Western Conference finals in 2022. But it will have to be with a new set of key defensive pieces. The departure of Bullock comes after Dorian Finney-Smith went to the Nets in the Irving deal.

Bullock averaged 7.2 points for the Mavericks last season, a drop from 8.6 in his first season in Dallas. The 3-and-D specialist shot 40% from 3-point range in the 2022 playoffs, making 2.9 per game before dropping to 1.9 at a 38% clip in the 2022-23



In this Monday, April 24, 2023 file photo, Milwaukee Bucks forward Giannis Antetokounmpo (34) dribbles the ball during the first half of Game 4 in a first-round NBA basketball playoff series against the Miami Heat in Miami. (AP)

Skriniar, Asensio join PSG on free transfers

PARIS, July 6, (AP): Paris Saint-Germain added some firepower to its squad with the arrival Thursday of Marco Asensio and bolstered its defense by signing Milan Skriniar on a five-year deal.

PSG announced its first two recruits of the summer a day after unveiling new coach Luis Enrique.

Asensio joined on a three-year deal through June 2026, PSG said. The left-footed striker won three Spanish league titles and

three Champions Leagues with Real Madrid. He previously worked with Enrique when the Spanish manager was in charge of the national squad.

SOCCER

PSG has reportedly been very active on the transfer market in recent weeks and is expected to announce further signings. Luis Enrique has pledged to build a competitive team in a bid to

regular season.

q q q
Bucks forward Giannis Antetokounmpo had surgery on his left knee during the off-season, but the two-time MVP should be ready for training camp, Milwaukee coach Adrian Griffin said.

Griffin said after a practice with the Bucks' summer league team that Antetokounmpo had a "routine" procedure.

"He had a routine surgery on his left knee, and it went great," Griffin said. "Everything went as planned, and we expect him back and ready to go in training camp."

It's unclear whether the surgery will prevent Antetokounmpo from playing for Greece in the World Cup, which begins Aug. 25.

Antetokounmpo finished third in MVP balloting this past season. He averaged a career-high 31.1 points along with 11.8 rebounds and 5.7 assists in 63 games. Antetokounmpo helped the Bucks post the NBA's best regular-season record before their stunning first-round playoff loss to the Miami Heat.

Eleven of the games he missed over the course of the season were due to what the team described as left knee soreness.

□ □ □

Anthony Parker was promoted to general manager of the Orlando Magic on Wednesday, part of a restructuring of the team's basketball operations staff.

Pete D'Alessandro was promoted to executive vice president as part of the moves, the team said, with John Hammond - who had been Orlando's general manager since 2017 - transitioning to a role where he'll be senior advisor to Jeff Weltman, the team's president of basketball operations.

"We are excited for John's well-deserved next chapter," Weltman said. "He has, and will continue to be, an invaluable resource. His experience has helped set the table for the Magic's future and we look forward to continuing to lean on him in regard to everything from player evaluation to player development."

Parker has been Orlando's assistant general manager for the last two seasons, following a four-year stint as general manager of the Lakeland Magic - the team's G League affiliate. Before taking over Lakeland, Parker spent 2012 through 2017 as a Magic scout.

Parker played parts of nine seasons in the NBA with Philadelphia, Toronto, Cleveland and Orlando, averaging 9.1 points.

"Anthony brings a unique perspective to our group as a former player and it has been great to watch his progression from player to scout to G League GM to the Magic's assistant general manager," Weltman said. "Anthony is the ultimate team player and we look forward to his continued leadership, experience and energy."

D'Alessandro had been Orlando's associate general manager for the last year and has also worked for Sacramento, Denver and Golden State.

Hammond has more than 30 years of NBA experience and won the NBA's executive of the year award as GM of the Milwaukee Bucks in 2010.



Australia's Steven Smith plays a shot during the first day of the third Ashes Test match between England and Australia at Headingley, Leeds, England. (AP)

Double strike for Rashid as Afghanistan beat Bangladesh in rain-hit ODI opener

Hridoy stands tall for hosts amid batting debacle

CHATTOGRAM, Bangladesh, July 6, (AP): Star legspinner Rashid Khan returned to Afghanistan's starting XI and took two wickets as his team beat host Bangladesh by 17 runs under the DLS method in the series-opening ODI.

Afghanistan's three-pronged spin attack - Rashid, Mujeeb Ur Rahman and Mohammad Nabi - contained the runs and shared five wickets as Bangladesh scored a mediocre 169-9 in a match that was initially reduced to 43 overs after rain halted the game twice.

Afghanistan, which won the toss, faced a target of 164 in 43 overs and the visitors reached 83-2 in 21.4 overs before rain again intervened for good. Afghanistan was 17 runs ahead of the DLS par score and was eventually declared the winner with no further play possible.

Rashid, one of the leading bowlers in short-form cricket, missed the one-off test match last month which Bangladesh won by a 546-run margin.

Back in action, Rashid (2-21) and offspinner Mujeeb (2-23) sparked Bangladesh's collapse with pacer Fazalhaq Farooqi claiming 3-24 in 8.4 overs.

Towhid Hridoy stood tall for Bangladesh amid the batting debacle to hit 51.

"We had a good start but we lost back-to-back wickets," Bangladesh captain Tamim Iqbal said. "When you put on 160-odd, it is not enough on any day. The wicket was a bit tricky and, if we had added 50 more runs, it would have been good."

Farooqi broke through with the wicket of Tamim, who by his own admission was not 100% fit for the game. Tamim (13) edged a delivery behind. Inform Najmul Hossain started with a brace of boundaries as Bangladesh appeared to hit back. While Farooqi kept it tight, Najmul and Liton Das dealt with debutant Saleem Saifi (0-36 in 4.2 overs) with ease but the introduction of the spinners brought success for the Afghans.

CRICKET

Mujeeb dismissed Liton who pulled the ball to deep-backward square for 26 while Najmul perished to a sweep shot for 12.

Shakib Al Hasan and Hridoy started rebuilding the innings but the rain break seemed to affect concentration. A half-hearted cover drive from Shakib led to his dismissal after scoring 15 off

Saints' tight end Moreau says his cancer is in 'full remission'

Roullier announces he's retiring after 2 major injuries

WASHINGTON, July 6, (AP): Former Washington Commanders center Chase Roullier has announced his retirement, deciding his football-playing days are over seven weeks shy of his 30th birthday because of injuries that derailed his career.

Roullier cited the effects of two significant injuries in recent years - a broken left fibula and a damaged right knee - as the reason he's done in the NFL. The Commanders released him earlier this offseason.

"Two years ago, I would have never thought I'd be writing this right now," Roullier said in a statement posted on Instagram Wednesday. "But in those two years, I have seen two major injuries, two invasive surgeries, two multi-month couch-ridden times, two rehabilitation marathons, two tall mental-health hurdles to climb and two of everything else in between."

Roullier looked like an impressive draft find before the injuries. After getting picked in the sixth round in 2017, the Wyoming product quickly became Washington's starting center and kept that job for three full seasons from 2018-20.

He signed a four-year extension worth just over \$40 million in January 2021 but only played 10 games since.

The end of Roullier's time with the Commanders was clear when they signed Nick Gates away from the New York Giants to start at center and drafted Arkansas' Ricky Stromberg in the third round to be a potential long-term solution in the middle of the offensive line.

Roullier played 4,039 snaps in 69 professional games. According to Pro Football Focus, he allowed just five sacks and 68 pressures.

"It is a very difficult thing to say goodbye to something that has been a large part of my life for over two decades," he said. "This decision has not been an easy one, but after lots of prayer and processing I am confident that it is the right one."

□ □ □

38 deliveries with Bangladesh at 109-4.

Rashid then came on to remove Mushfiqur Rahim (1) and Afif Hossain (4) in quick succession to leave

Bangladesh at 128-6. Farooqi came back for his second spell to get rid of Mehidy Hasan for 5.

Hridoy clipped Farooqi towards long-on for two to reach his third



School children wearing Team India jersey cheer as they stand with Julhan Goswami, former Indian women cricketer, beside the International Cricket Council (ICC) men's cricket World Cup trophy in Kolkata, India. (AP)

Saints tight end Foster Moreau says he is in "full remission" from cancer that team doctors discovered in late March.

"After a few tumultuous months, I've been blessed with the news that I am in full remission from Hodgkin Lymphoma!" the 26-year-old Moreau posted on social media. "I'm so grateful to everyone who reached out to offer their love and support; our prayers were answered. From here I will continue to live my life as God intended."

Moreau's signing with the Saints would have come with considerable fanfare in Louisiana even without the unusual and compelling circumstances surrounding his health. He grew up in New Orleans and played for LSU before the Las Vegas Raiders made him a fourth-round draft choice in 2019, when the club was based in Oakland.

FOOTBALL

Now entering his fifth season, he was considering the possibility of continuing his pro football career in his home town when Dr. John Amoss, the Saints' team physician, noticed an enlarged lymph node in Moreau's left clavicle in late March. Amoss' discovery led to a diagnosis of Hodgkin lymphoma, and Moreau initially announced that he would pause his NFL career to focus on his health.

Hodgkin lymphoma is a form of cancer that affects the immune system.

After further testing, Moreau said, doctors determined he had a rare - but very treatable - form of the disease, nodular lymphocyte-predominant Hodgkin lymphoma (or NLPHL).

His treatment consisted of between six and eight hours of a drip infusion for one day about six weeks ago, he said, followed by several weeks of medication that was either ingested or injected into his stomach area. That treatment ended the day before he signed a three-year, \$12 million contract with New Orleans.

half-century off 67 balls. But two balls later, Farooqi dismissed him to take revenge.

Rashid, Mujeeb and Nabi (1-25) bowled a combined total of 24 overs taking 5-69.

With rain in the forecast, Afghanistan made a watchful start, mostly concentrating on not losing wickets. Ibrahim Zadrani and Rahmanullah Gurbaz added 54 runs in 15.4 overs before left-arm spinner Shakib dismissed Gurbaz for 22.

Zadrani was 41 not out, always keeping his team ahead of the required run rate.

"(We) bowled according to the plans," Afghanistan captain Hashmatullah Shahidi said. "The way Gurbaz and Ibrahim started, it was good. They played according to the situation and gave us a good start in the first 10 overs."

Afghanistan had handed debut to Saleem in place of Gulbadin Naib in the only change from its last ODI against Sri Lanka. Bangladesh was bolstered by the returns of Shakib, paceman Taskin Ahmed and batter Afif Hossain.

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Phillies extend road winning streak to 11

Braves bounce back

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla., July 6, (AP): Taijuan Walker overcome early struggles to win his sixth consecutive start and the Philadelphia Phillies extended their road winning streak to 11 games with an 8-4 victory over the AL-leading Tampa Bay Rays on Wednesday night.

It's the third-longest road winning streak in Phillies history, trailing a 13-game run in 1976 and 12-game stretch that spanned the 1887 and '88 seasons. Tampa Bay has lost a season-high four in a row and 10 of 16 overall.

Walker (10-3) allowed four runs and five hits, all in the first three of his seven-inning outing. Bryson Stott had four hits as Philadelphia finished with 17 hits overall. Bryce Harper went 2 for 5 in his fifth consecutive game with two hits.

BASEBALL

The Phillies grabbed a 5-4 lead on Trea Turner's leadoff homer and Stott's RBI single in the fifth. Nick Castellanos extended the Phillies' advantage to 6-4 on a 437-foot homer to center off Robert Stephenson.

Luke Raley homered for Tampa Bay. Yonny Chirinos (4-4) was the loser.

Mets 2, Diamondbacks 1

In Phoenix, Francisco Alvarez homered to tie it with two outs in the ninth. Mark Canha tripled in the go-ahead run and New York beat Arizona.

The Mets won their fourth in a row, but they waited until they were down to their last strike, when Alvarez homered to right field off Andrew Chafin (2-2), the fourth Arizona pitcher of the game.

Alvarez, the rookie catcher, flung his bat joyfully in the air as he neared first base and saw the ball clear the wall for his 15th homer. He leads the majors with five tying or go-ahead home runs in the sixth inning or later.

Brett Baty followed with a ground single to right and, after a mound visit, Canha tripled to the 413-foot sign in right-center to score Baty.

Kodai Senga (7-5) matched his season high with 12 strikeouts over eight innings. Christian Walker led off the seventh with a home run well over the wall in left-center to break a scoreless tie, and until two out and nobody on in the ninth, it looked as if it would be enough for the NL West-leading Diamondbacks.

Braves 8, Guardians 1

In Cleveland, All-Stars Sean Murphy and Matt Olson homered and Atlanta bounced back from a rare loss to rout Cleveland.

Murphy hit a solo shot in the third inning off Cal Quantrill (2-6), Olson hit a 428-foot blast in the ninth and the Braves had 19 hits and took the series finale after their winning streak was stopped at nine Tuesday.

Austin Riley also connected as the Braves homered in their 23rd straight game, baseball's longest stretch of long balls this season. They lead the majors with 166 homers and are on pace to break the season record of 309 set by Minnesota in 2019.

Atlanta has won 18 of 20 and 25 of 29. Michael Tonkin (5-2) worked 3 1/3 scoreless innings.

Orioles 6, Yankees 3

In New York, touted prospect Colton Cowser hit an RBI single in his major league debut and scored the go-ahead run when fellow rookie Jordan Westburg followed with a two-run triple, sending Dean Kremer and Baltimore past New York.

Kremer (9-4) struck out a career-high 10 in seven innings of four-hit ball. Ryan O'Hearn lined a two-run homer in the ninth, and All-Star relievers Yennier Cano and Félix Bautista combined to get the final six outs as the second-place Orioles won for the second time in eight games. Bautista got four outs for his 23rd save.

Josh Donaldson and Anthony Volpe homered for the Yankees, who had won the first two games of this four-game series between AL East playoff contenders. Kyle Higashioka had an RBI single. Nick Ramirez (0-1) took the loss.

Dodgers 6, Pirates 4

In Los Angeles, J.D. Martinez and David Peralta homered back-to-back in the fifth inning, helping Los Angeles overcome a four-run deficit to beat Pittsburgh.

Martinez connected on an 0-2 pitch from reliever Roansy Contreras (3-7) for his 20th homer, a go-ahead, three-run shot to left-center that scored Will Smith and Max Muncy, who drew consecutive walks. Peralta followed with a 406-foot solo shot to the lower right-field seats for a 6-4



Philadelphia Phillies shortstop Trea Turner, (right), watches as Bryson Stott forces out Tampa Bay Rays' Francisco Mejia at second base and throws to first for a double play during the second inning of a baseball game in St. Petersburg, Fla. (AP)

lead.

Reynolds had a solo homer off Dodgers starter Bobby Miller (5-1) in the first. The Pirates extended the lead to 4-0 on Swinski's three-run blast in the fourth.

Daniel Hudson earned his first save in 13 months.

Red Sox 4, Rangers 2

In Boston, Brayan Bello took a shutout into the sixth inning. Justin Turner had two hits and a pair of RBIs and Boston beat slumping Texas.

Corey Seager had three hits for the Rangers, and Adolis Garcia celebrated being selected for the Home Run Derby by hitting one that counted, a two-run shot in the sixth that made it 3-2.

But those were the only runs against Bello (6-5), who allowed two runs on eight hits in seven innings, striking out three and walking none. Kenley Jansen, Boston's only All-Star selection, pitched the ninth for his 18th save. The Red Sox won for the fourth time in five games.

Texas starter Jon Gray (6-5) allowed four runs - three earned - on nine hits and three walks in six innings. The AL West-leading Rangers have lost eight of 12.

Padres 5, Angels 3

In San Diego, Manny Machado became the career home run leader at Petco Park and drove in three runs for San Diego, which held two-way All-Star Shohei Ohtani hitless in a three-game sweep.

Ohtani was the designated hitter after leaving Tuesday as a pitcher with a blister on his right middle finger. He was 0 for 10 with two walks and two strikeouts in the series.

Machado gave the Padres a 3-2 lead when he hit a no-doubter to left off reliever Jose Soriano leading off the sixth for his 66th at Petco Park, one more than former Padres star Adrian Gonzalez.

L.A.'s Matt Thaiss tied it leading off the seventh when he greeted reliever Nick Martinez (4-3), with a homer to deep right-center.

The Padres loaded the bases with one out in the seventh and Xander Bogaerts' soft grounder to reliever Jacob Webb (1-1) brought in Fernando Tatis Jr. with the go-ahead run.

All-Star closer Josh Hader pitched the ninth for his 20th save.

Reds 9, Nationals 2

In Washington, Elly De La Cruz hit a massive solo homer and two doubles after a mix-up with a covering on the knob of his bat and surging Cincinnati beat Washington.

Joey Votto also homered and finished with three hits as Cincinnati won for the seventh time in eight games. Will Benson had two hits and two RBIs for the NL Central leaders, and Graham Ashcraft (4-6) pitched



New York Mets' Mark Canha (19) celebrates his RBI triple against the Arizona Diamondbacks, while third base coach Joey Cora points to the right side of the infield during the ninth inning of a baseball game in Phoenix. (AP)

six effective innings in his first victory since May 28.

Nationals right-hander Josiah Gray (6-7) allowed three earned runs and eight hits in five innings.

De La Cruz had what appeared to be an empty sensor cover on the knob of his bat. But it was removed after Nationals manager Dave Martinez questioned its use before the infielder batted in the second. Umpires reviewed the legality of the knob cover with the league office and informed De La Cruz he was allowed to put it back on his bat for his second at-bat in the third.

Astros 6, Rockies 4

In Houston, Yainer Díaz homered in his first two at-bats. Jeremy Peña added a two-run shot in his return from a stiff neck and Houston beat Colorado.

Díaz had a solo home run in the second inning and made it 3-0 with a two-run homer in the fourth in his first career two-homer game.

Houston starter J.P. France (4-3) allowed six hits and three runs in six innings to help Houston sweep the two-game series with its fourth straight victory and seventh in 10 games. Ryan Pressly had a scoreless ninth for his 19th save.

Randal Grichuk and C.J. Cron homered for the Rockies, who dropped their 10th straight road game. Chase Anderson (0-4) was the loser.

Cubs 4, Brewers 3

In Milwaukee, Mike Tauchman doubled in two runs and scored in a three-run ninth inning off All-Star closer Devin Williams and Chicago rallied to beat Milwaukee.

Cody Bellinger greeted Williams (4-2) in the ninth with a bloop single to center. After Christopher Morel struck out, Jared Young singled on a dribbler to third. Both runners advanced on a ground out and Tauchman sliced an opposite-field double to left to tie it at 3.

Tauchman scored the go-ahead run when Nico Hoerner reached on a throwing error by third baseman Brian Anderson.

Michael Rucker (2-1) got the victory with two innings of scoreless relief. Adbert Alzolay threw a perfect ninth for his fifth save in six opportunities. It was the second blown save for Williams in 20 chances.

Twins 4, Royals 1

In Minneapolis, Pablo López pitched his first career shutout, a four-hitter complete with a career-high 12 strikeouts, in Minnesota's victory over Kansas City.

López (5-5) retired 15 straight from the third to the eighth inning, including a stretch with six consecutive strikeouts, to help the Twins complete a three-game sweep.

López gave up two doubles and two singles without a walk in his first scoreless appearance since he beat the Royals on opening day.

Rookie Edouard Julien hit his second home run of the series to give the Twins the lead in the first, and Ryan Jeffers went deep for insurance in the seventh.

Giants 2, Mariners 0

In San Francisco, Alex Cobb had seven strikeouts in six crisp innings and combined with three relievers on a seven-hitter, and San Francisco beat Seattle to end a four-game losing streak.

Making his second start since coming off the injured list at the end of June, Cobb (6-2) allowed six hits and didn't walk a batter to anchor the Giants' eighth shutout of the season.

Taylor Rogers and Tyler Rogers each retired three batters. All-Star closer Camilo Doval pitched the ninth for his 25th save.

Mariners starter Tommy Milone (0-1) was the loser.

Marlins 10, Cardinals 9

In Miami, Yuli Gurriel scored from first base on a throwing error by St. Louis reliever Jordan Hicks with one out in the ninth inning and Miami Marlins rallied to beat the Cardinals.

With Gurriel on first after a single and pinch-runner Garrett Hampson on second, Joey Wendle hit a dribbler back to Hicks (1-5). The pitcher's high, errant throw got past first baseman Paul Goldschmidt to allow both runners to score.

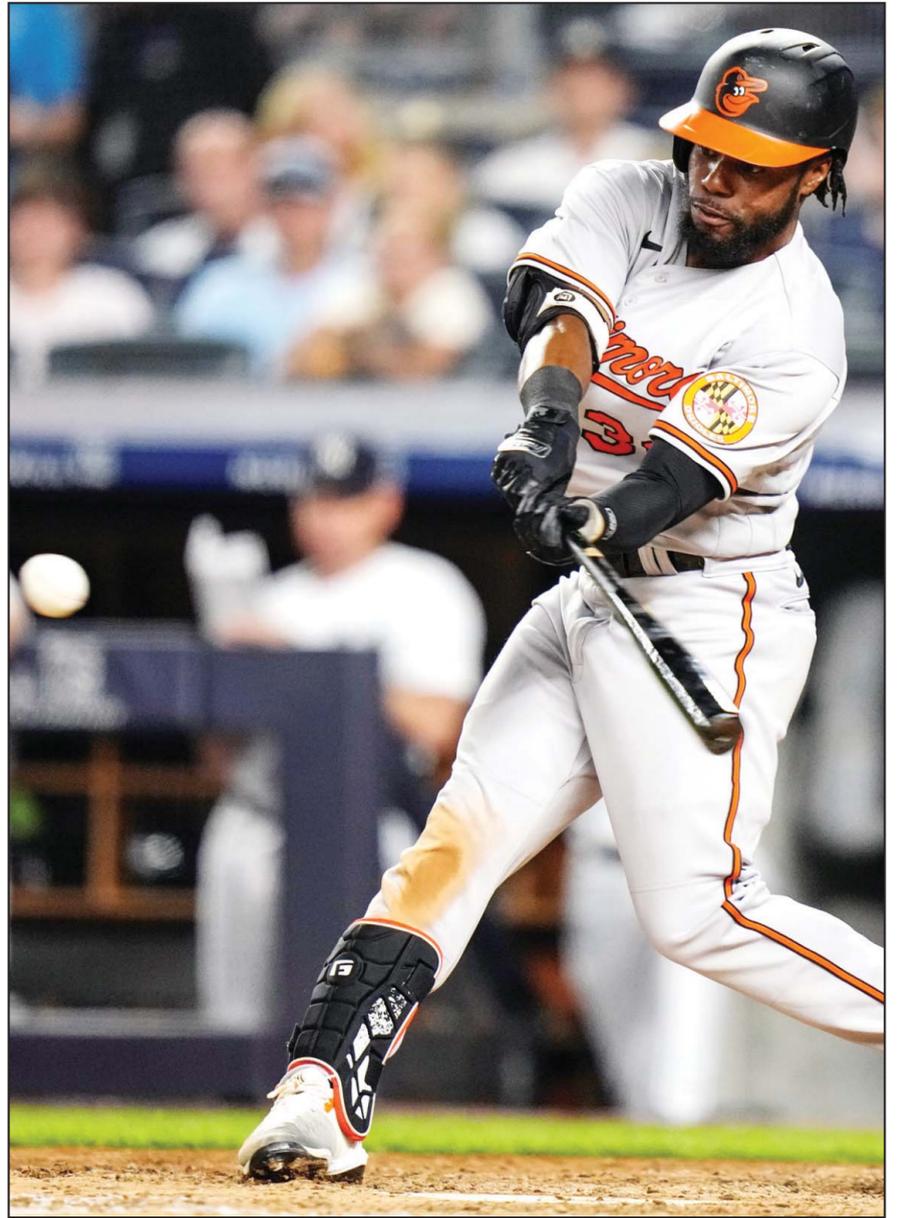
The Cardinals' Jordan Walker hit a two-run homer off Marlins closer A.J. Puk (4-2) in the ninth to make it 9-8.

Athletics 12, Tigers 3

In Detroit, Ryan Noda homered in a three-run first inning and majors-worst Oakland went on to rout Detroit.

Oakland won for the fourth time in five games. The Athletics beat Detroit 1-0 on Tuesday night and held the Tigers scoreless for the first 17 innings of the series.

Shea Langeliers and Jordan Diaz also homered. Athletics starter Austin Pruitt retired all nine batters he faced. Ken Waldichuk (2-5) allowed three runs on two hits and three walks in 4 1/3 innings. Eduardo Rodriguez (4-5) took the loss.



Baltimore Orioles' Cedric Mullins hits a double against the New York Yankees during the seventh inning of a baseball game in New York. (AP)

'We have a lot of quality, but our honors list is blank'

Renard eyes France first major trophy

CLAIREFONTAINE, France, July 6, (AP): Wendie Renard grew up in a place so remote that locals nicknamed it "The End of the World."

By the end of the Women's World Cup, the France captain hopes she'll be raising aloft the major international trophy that has eluded the women's national team.

The imposing central defender's journey starts with a 17,000-kilometer (10,540-mile) trek to Australia, where France opens its campaign in Sydney on July 23 against Jamaica.

France's men have won two World Cups and two European Championship titles - and reached three other major finals - but Les Bleues are under-achievers. The women's team lost its only World Cup semifinal 12 years ago to the United States.

"We have a lot of quality, but our honors list is blank," Renard told The Associated Press in an interview at the team's Clairefontaine training camp outside Paris. "There's a long, long way to go. But the tougher it is, the better it is at the end."

Despite boasting a team packed with players from ultra-successful French club side Lyon - the starting lineup for France's opener at the 2019 World



In this Sunday, Aug. 30, 2020 file photo, Lyon's team captain Wendie Renard celebrates after winning the Women's Champions League final soccer match between Wolfsburg and Lyon at the Anoeta stadium in San Sebastian, Spain. (AP)

Cup had seven Lyon players - France has also only reached one European Championship semifinal, losing last year to Germany.

"Quite a lot of us have experience at the highest level and we need to use it," Renard said. "The hardest thing is saying, 'I should have done this, I have should have done that.' By then it's already too late."

The tournament, cohosted by New Zealand, kicks off on July 20, which is also when Renard turns 33.

She has played 144 internationals and scored 34 goals for France. With Lyon, Renard has won a record 16 league titles and a record eight Champions League trophies.

She's long been considered one of the best players in women's soccer, yet there's a giant gap in Renard's international resumé.

Renard has a chance to put that right, which back in February didn't look like being the case.

Renard said she wouldn't play at the World Cup after saying she no longer felt able to play for France. That decision came after years of tensions between then-coach Corinne Diacre and senior players, including Renard.

SOCCER

Striker Marie-Antoinette Katoto and forward Kadidiatou Diani also put their international careers on hold until significant changes were made.

Two weeks later Diacre was fired and Hervé Renard was hired. He won the African Cup of Nations as coach of Zambia and Ivory Coast, and guided Saudi Arabia to an upset win over Argentina at the men's World Cup last year.

He immediately eased tensions. Renard overturned her decision and 33-year-old midfielder Amandine Henry - who had not played for France for three years under Diacre - was recalled.

"He has an open-mindedness and he doesn't judge you. There's a level of trust. He says things up front, which is very important. It's honest and to your face," Renard said about her new coach. "He said from the first day that his door is always open, that he wants our feedback: what we thought about the training session, if there's anything we could have done more of. He says

that we have a project in common."

Renard, therefore, is among the designated leaders that other players can always approach. The others are striker Eugénie Le Sommer, Henry, Diani and midfielder Grace Geyoro.

When she put her international career on hold, Renard mentioned the need to protect her mental health, which is a priority subject under the new regime.

"The coach spoke about it with us. You have to help each teammate, you can't leave anyone on the side," Renard said. "If she's coming into the dressing room in the morning, I know if she's feeling well or not, if anything's weighing on her mind."

Renard hopes a strong World Cup performance will boost the women's league back home. Interest waned after France hosted the 2019 edition.

"There was great exposure, there was a huge media impact. But we didn't manage to surf that wave and we stagnated, or even regressed, whereas other nations made the most of it and structured their leagues," she said. "We hope we can get the momentum back, all that we lost."

She points out how the women's game in England is reaping the results of a continual investment. In May, a record crowd of 77,390 watched Chelsea beat Manchester United 1-0 in the Women's FA Cup final at Wembley.

"They created a momentum there in a progressive way, with decisions that were already taken years ago. For the league, for TV rights, lots of things were done," Renard said. "When we see how full the stadiums are at Wembley, we say to ourselves 'Why not us?' Because when our games are on TV, we generally have good ratings, but when it's (at the stadium) we need to attract more people."

Renard has played her entire club career in France, yet has been brushing up on her English for the World Cup.

"I'm shy and I've never dared speak it in front of the cameras. I'm good in front of my teacher, but she often tells me off and says to me, 'You're ready, you can speak English.'" Renard explained. "I feel like I don't have enough command yet to express myself properly. But if the opportunity comes I'll make the effort."

Effort is something Renard learned early, growing up in Le Précheur (The Preacher) on the northern coast of Martinique, some 8,000 kilometers (5,000 miles) from France.

MLB Results/Standings

WASHINGTON, July 6, (AP): Results and standings from the MLB games on Wednesday.				
Houston	6	Colorado	4	
Oakland	12	Detroit	3	
Philadelphia	8	Tampa Bay	4	
Boston	4	Texas	3	
Minnesota	5	Kansas City	0	0
Baltimore	6	NY Yankees	2	
Atlanta	8	Cleveland	1	
San Diego	5	LA Angels	3	
San Francisco	2	Seattle	0	
Miami	10	St. Louis	9	
Cincinnati	9	Washington	2	
Chicago Cubs	4	Milwaukee	3	
NY Mets	2	Arizona	1	
LA Dodgers	6	Pittsburgh	4	
American League				
East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Tampa Bay	57	32	.640	—
Baltimore	50	35	.588	5
New York	48	39	.552	8
Toronto	46	40	.535	9-1/2
Boston	44	43	.506	12
Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Minnesota	45	43	.511	—
Cleveland	42	44	.488	2
Detroit	37	48	.435	6-1/2
Chicago	37	50	.425	7-1/2
Kansas City	25	62	.287	19-1/2
West Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Texas	51	36	.586	—
Houston	49	38	.563	2
Los Angeles	45	44	.506	7
Seattle	42	43	.494	8
San Diego	25	63	.284	26-1/2
Oakland	25	63	.284	26-1/2
National League				
East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Atlanta	58	28	.674	—
Miami	51	37	.580	8
Philadelphia	46	39	.541	11-1/2
New York	40	46	.465	18
Washington	34	52	.395	24
Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Cincinnati	48	39	.552	—
Milwaukee	46	41	.529	2
Chicago	40	45	.471	7
Pittsburgh	40	46	.465	7-1/2
St. Louis	35	51	.407	12-1/2
West Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Arizona	50	37	.575	—
Los Angeles	48	38	.558	1-1/2
San Francisco	47	40	.540	3
San Diego	41	46	.471	9
Colorado	33	55	.375	17-1/2



Ukraine's Lesia Tsurenko plays a return to Czech Republic's Katerina Siniakova during the women's singles match on day four of the Wimbledon tennis championships in London. (AP)

Sports

Latest sports scores at — <http://sports.arabtimesonline.com>

Wawrinka wins and gets Djokovic next

Wimbledon is finally dry after 3 days of rain

WIMBLEDON, England, July 6, (AP): The courts are finally dry at Wimbledon and the sun is even shining through the clouds at times, giving organizers hope of fitting in a full day of tennis on Thursday for the first time at this year's tournament.

The first three days of action at the All England Club were affected by rain. Only eight matches were completed on Tuesday. Those matches were played on either Centre Court or No. 1 Court, the only stadiums on the grounds with roofs.

Because of the all the disruption, there were a handful of first-round matches being played on Day 4.

TENNIS

Normally, the first Thursday of the tournament would wrap up the second round.

Among the winners was Stan Wawrinka, a three-time Grand Slam champion from Switzerland. Wawrinka beat No. 29-seeded Tomas Martin Etcheverry of Argentina 6-3, 4-6, 6-4, 6-2 to advance to the third round.

The 38-year-old Wawrinka, who won his major titles at the other three Grand Slam tournaments, will next face Novak Djokovic - the 23-time Grand Slam champion who is going for his record-tying eighth title at Wimbledon. That match is scheduled to be played Friday on Centre Court.

"There's zero opportunity to win Wimbledon for me, I think," said Wawrinka, who reached the quarterfinals at the All England Club in 2014 and 2015. "I'm playing better each match, and as I say, I think it's an honor to play Novak here. I was missing that on my career to play him in the Grand Slam in Wimbledon. That's the last I never played him, and it's going to be a difficult challenge."

"Hopefully I can make a competitive match, but if you will look at recent results, I don't really stand a chance."

Alexander Zverev, who reached the 2020 U.S. Open final but missed most of last season after injuring his ankle in the French Open semifinals, finally got on court and beat Dutch qualifier Gijs Brouwer 6-4, 7-6 (4), 7-6 (5) in the first round.

The 19th-seeded German has twice reached the fourth round at Wimbledon, including in 2021. He again reached the French Open semifinals this year.

In the women's draw, Sofia Kenin and Elina Svitolina both advanced to the third round. Kenin eliminated seventh-seeded Coco Gauff in the first round, while Svitolina beat five-time Wimbledon champion Venus Williams.

Kenin, the 2020 Australian Open champion, will next face Svitolina, who is back on tour after the birth of her first child in October with husband Gael Monfils.

"I've got to figure out a good strategy against her," said Kenin, a 24-year-old American. "She gets a lot of balls back, from what I remember. I mean, she's got a big serve, big backhand. There is nothing off about her game."

Mirra Andreeva, a 16-year-old qualifier from Russia who is ranked 102nd, reached the third round in her Wimbledon debut. She advanced when No. 10-seeded Barbora Krejčíková of the Czech Republic retired from the match with a lower leg injury with Andreeva leading 6-3, 4-0.

"For sure it's not the way I wanted to win the match. But still I advance to the next round, so I'm happy with that," Andreeva said.

Krejčíková won the French Open in 2021. Her best showing at the All England Club was reaching the fourth round the same year.



Germany's Alexander Zverev plays a return to Gijs Brouwer of the Netherlands during the men's singles match on day four of the Wimbledon tennis championships in London. (AP)



Left to right: Yaqoub Al-Yoha, Madhawi Al-Shemmeri and Issa Al-Zankawi celebrate. KUNA photo

Kuwait win 2 silver, bronze medals at Pan Arab Games

ALGIERS, July 6, (KUNA): Yaqoub Al-Yoha and Issa Al-Zankawi each won silver medals for Kuwait in men's athletics with Madhawi Al-Shemmeri clinching a bronze in women's athletics on day one of the Pan Arab Games in Algeria's coastal city of Oran.

Al-Youha, in the 110m hurdles race, was locked in fierce competition with Amine Bouanani, only losing out to the Algerian in the final third.

Kuwaitis maintained a decent

showing as Al-Zankawi won the country's second silver in the men's discus throw with Madhawi Al-Shammari taking home a bronze

ATHLETICS

in the women's 100m sprint.

A total 32 men and women are competing in the 15th edition of the regional competition, across six different sports.

Kuwaiti participates in worlds

KUWAIT CITY, July 6, (KUNA): Kuwait Gymnastics Noor Al-Rezaihan will participate in the second World Junior Championships hosted by Romania, as the first Kuwaiti to participate in this level, amidst a wide participation from 60 countries.

GYMNASTICS

Head of the participating Kuwaiti delegation Salah Askar said that Noor is ready to take on this challenge, noting that she will participate the two days tournaments.

Noor entered an intensive program prior to the championship

under the supervision of Ukrainian Coach Irina Kovalchuk, stated Askar, pointing that she is physically fit and fully ready to compete with world champions in the tournaments.

Askar praised Coach Irina's efforts in preparing Al-Rezaihan for this championship, affirming Kuwait Gymnastics Federation's confidence in the player.

He noted Kuwait Gymnastics Federation support for practicing this sport more in Kuwait and develop the girl performances through enrolling them in international championships, as the federation only started enrolling them in the championships three years ago.

Vingegaard claims Tour yellow jersey

Pogacar wins Pyrenees big stage

CAUTERETS-CAMBASQUE, France, July 6, (AP): Two-time Tour de France champion Tadej Pogacar claimed a 10th career stage win at cycling's biggest race on Thursday after launching a stunning counterattack and dropping defending champion Jonas Vingegaard in the finale.

A day after losing more than a minute to Vingegaard in the first Pyrenean stage, Pogacar showed he was not ready to give up and revived the suspense.

Vingegaard crossed the finish line 24 seconds behind Pogacar following their pulsating duel and seized the race leader's yellow jersey, 25 seconds ahead of his Slovenian rival, according to provisional results.

Overnight leader Jai Hindley dropped to third place overall, one minute, 34 seconds off the pace. The brutal 145-kilometer (90-mile) Stage 6 with a mountaintop finish from the southwestern city of Tarbes to the Plateau de Cambasque featured three tough climbs including the legendary Col du Tourmalet.

It was on the steepest part of the famed mountain pass, in thin air, that Vingegaard, riding behind a small group of breakaway riders, started the battle.

After his teammates asphyxiated competition with a frenetic pace that made most of other contenders crack, Vingegaard launched a sharp attack about 1.5 kilometers (0.9 miles) from

CYCLING

the summit. Pogacar was the only one able to follow.

Vingegaard's teammate Wout Van Aert, who was part of the early breakaway and rode furiously throughout the day, waited for his leader in the downhill as a group of eight riders gathered at the front before the final grind with some steep sections with an 11% gradient.

The tireless Van Aert accelerated again with five kilometers (3.1 miles) left to set up Vingegaard's second attack of the day, with Pogacar and Michal Kwiatkowski taking his wheel.

The Polish rider was quickly dropped and the duellists were on their own for the last three kilometers (1.8 miles) of the stage, spurred on by the vociferous cries of buoyant fans lining up the road and lighting flares. Pogacar then placed his explosive counterattack with 2.6 kilometers (1.6 miles) left and never looked back.

Ashraf 'appointed' as chairman of PCB management committee

ISLAMABAD, July 6, (AP): The Pakistan government has appointed a new 10-member PCB management committee, headed by Zaka Ashraf, for a period of four months.

The management committee will hold its first meeting in Lahore on Thursday. Ashraf was favorite to become chairman of the Pakistan Cricket Board last month but the PCB had to postpone that election after the formation of its board of governors - which elects the new chairman - was challenged in multiple courts around the country.

The government has removed PCB election commissioner Ahmed Shehzad Farooq Rana and appointed advocate supreme court Mahmood Iqbal Khakwani in his place.

The PCB election of its new chairman was postponed on June 26 after Baluchistan High Court accepted the petition of Gul Mohammad Kakar, a former member of the PCB management committee, and set a hearing for July 17.

Before former chairman Najam Sethi dropped out of the election, he formed a 10-member board of governors that also included two direct nominees from Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, the PCB patron. Acting chairman Ahmed She-

hzad Farooq Rana then changed several of the board of governors, prompting Kakar's court challenge.

Representatives of bigger cities such as Lahore, Karachi, Rawalpindi and Peshawar were replaced by men from smaller cities such as Dera Murad Jamali, Hyderabad, Larkana and Bahawalpur.

Pakistan captain Babar Azam wants his teammates to focus on all nine opponents in the World Cup instead of singling out archrival

CRICKET

India in the marquee game of the tournament.

The Pakistan Cricket Board is yet to get clearance from its government to tour India due to tense political relations between the neighboring countries. The International Cricket Council has marked Pakistan's nine World Cup group games in the Indian cities of Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Bangalore, Chennai and Kolkata.

The ICC has said that Pakistan will not be playing any World Cup games in Mumbai and if India qualifies for the semifinals against Pakistan it will be played at Kolkata.



Slovenia's Tadej Pogacar celebrates as he crosses the finish line to win the sixth stage of the Tour de France cycling race over 145 kilometers (90 miles) with start in Tarbes and finish in Cauterets-Cambasque, France. (AP)