



DEPUTY AMIR INAUGURATES NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Put differences aside, focus on reform

Al-Saadoun elected Speaker



His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah delivers a speech at the inauguration of the first ordinary session of the 17th term of the National Assembly.

Photo by Rezk Tawfik

Panel members selected

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh
Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, June 20: The National Assembly held its inaugural session on Tuesday, during which His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah conveyed the congratulatory message of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to the MPs for winning the trust of citizens.

Members of the National Assembly (deputies, the premier and ministers) on Tuesday took the constitutional oath at the beginning of the first ordinary session of the 17th legislative term.

As per Article 91 of the Kuwaiti Constitution, newly elected members of parliament shall take the constitutional oath during an open parliamentary session.

Cabinet ministers are considered to be deputies of the 50-member parliament in their ministerial capacity.

His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah inaugurated the first ordinary session of the 17th legislative term of the newly elected parliament earlier on Tuesday.

His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah urged Tuesday parliament members to focus on reforms "for the sake of Kuwait" with objective of meeting aspirations of citizens to achieve prosperous future.

"We are facing a new phase" during which MPs should focus on reforms, a phase full of aspirations and hopes with the ultimate objective of achieving a prosperous future under leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Deputy Amir, at the inauguration of the first ordinary session of the 17th term of the National Assembly.

He underlined that there was not "room for the waste of time" on conflicts and settling of scores, triggering crises and irresponsible practices, which were a source of dismay and an obstacle for achievements, and "we will not allow this to happen".

"We are confident of your awareness to achieve aspirations of citizens in order for our nation to remain a beacon for humanity, a hub for diplomacy and a pioneer in development," he said.

His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince, who noted the world world praised the democratic practice in the State of Kuwait, urged MPs to activate cooperation with the government in order to address all sources of tension.

"You should promote democratic practices, focus on boosting the supervisory role of the National Assembly, activate the legislative role to achieve aspirations of citizens and give the government enough time to achieve and to wisely use the constitutional tools - if there are any - in order to maintain the genuine practice of democracy," he added.

His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince urged lawmakers to consider "social justice" in their demands, which should maintain, develop and diversify the wealth of the nation ... as well as accomplish late legislations that serve the nation and people ... be responsible to dealing with different circumstances in line with interest of the country."

He also called upon citizens to contribute to development of the nation and maintaining its national unity.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah said Tuesday that the democratic approach can only be achieved with the unity of the people of Kuwait.

This came during His Highness' speech in the opening of the first ordinary session of the 17th term of the National



Photo by Rezk Tawfik

Members of the National Assembly congratulate MP Ahmad Al-Saadoun after being elected as Speaker for the 17th legislative term, during its first ordinary session on Tuesday.

Assembly.

His Highness also said that "we are living in a new era that needs a new vision of national work based on the foundations of reform, commitment to wisdom, and the effective participation and joint work to achieve the aspirations of the people."

"Justice, the rule of law, seriousness in applying it to everyone without exception, equal opportunities for all citizens, fighting corruption and eliminating it from its sources, preserving public money, and consolidating the state of institutions, are all basic pillars that the government is keen to respect and work to achieve," His Highness added.

Sheikh Ahmad said that positive cooperation based on the principle of open and democratic dialogue in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution together constitute the supporting basis for putting the relationship between the two authorities on the right track in a manner that ensures the stability of the state, achieves its higher interests, and advances the fundamentals of its renaissance.

Moreover, the premier noted that the government looks forward to a fruitful relationship with the new parliament, and will present its program of work in implementation of the provisions of Article (98) of the constitution, including all the priorities of the next period, which are realistic and feasible for implementation according to a specific timetable in order to ensure meeting the aspirations of citizens.

"We are aware of the impact of the dangerous current conditions the region and the world are facing, therefore, it is our responsibility to take serious reform measures to protect Kuwait's stability," His Highness the Prime Minister said.

He underlined the need for real partnership and cooperation in protecting the country's unity, refraining from dispute and de-escalating tensions between the two authorities.

As part of its duties in accordance with article 98 of the Kuwaiti constitution, the government will present a program on priorities that need to be executed within specific time, including development issues, he noted.

The program includes taking serious measures to establish economic zones north, south and west of the country, with a total space of 19 square km, to provide environmental, storing, commercial and industrial services with international partnerships, while also allowing the private sector

to achieve developmental goals as part of the Kuwait 2025 vision, His Highness said.

The program is also involved with means of achieving transparency and integrity in the government's work. This includes fighting corruption, protecting public money and bringing to justice those who violate the law, His Highness Sheikh Ahmad affirmed.

Meanwhile, he called on both the government and the National Assembly to reform economy through executing laws that support monetary policy, in the light of the unstable conditions in international oil markets.

"Our reform and development journey must occur in a democratic environment for the benefit of our country and the Kuwaiti people," he added.

The upcoming phase is challenging and tough, thus serious cooperation between the government and the Assembly is much needed to overcome these difficulties, His Highness concluded.

Members of the National Assembly elected MP Ahmad Al-Saadoun as Speaker for the 17th legislative term, during its first ordinary session on Tuesday.

The government members have left Abdullah Al-Salem Hall prior to the vote, ensuring the statement made by Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs, that the government would take a neutral stance regarding the vote.

According to Article 92 of the Kuwaiti constitution and article 28 of the assembly regulations, the MPs are tasked with electing a Speaker and a Deputy Speaker during its first session.

Al-Saadoun, born in 1934, had previously headed the assembly in 1985, 1992 and 1996 and was elected as MP for 10 consecutive legislative terms since 1975.

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent Tuesday a cable of congratulations to Ahmad Al-Saadoun on being elected new parliament speaker.

His Highness the Amir wished Speaker Al-Saadoun success to achieve the people's ambitions for progress and prosperity.

His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent Tuesday a cable to Ahmad Al-Saadoun on being elected by acclamation as new parliament speaker.

His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince wished Speaker Al-Saadoun success to achieve the people's ambitions for progress and prosperity.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent Tuesday a cable to Ahmad Al-Saadoun on being elected as new parliament speaker.

Freshly re-elected Speaker of the National Assembly Ahmad Al-Saadoun on Tuesday affirmed MPs' desire to cooperate with the government to tackle agreed-upon issues and attain people of Kuwait's aspirations.

Al-Saadoun, a veteran legislator, affirmed after he was elected uncontested to head the assembly for the 17th legislative term and lauded the government affirmation with respect of the ministers' willingness to cooperate with the parliament, emphasizing necessity of pursuing coordination on agreed-upon proposals.

He expressed gratitude to the MPS and the Kuwaiti people for responding to appeal by the political leadership to "choose soundly and correct the approach," labelling as unprecedented outcome of the National Assembly elections (Umma 2023).

Al-Saadoun indicated that he sensed the enormous responsibility on his shoulders as chairman of the assembly. The experienced senior lawmaker, humbly, added that he believed that "he was not the best of the attendees for manning the post," and that it was destiny that he won it, again.

A contender, MP Daoud Maarefi, had withdrawn from the contest for the speakership, thus Al-Saadoun was named for the post.

Continued on Page 2

Day by Day

WHEN envy and miserliness prevail in a country, you have to cast the peace spell on it.

When people bicker with each other and look at what is in the hands of others, division prevails and there is no contentment. They turn away from the statement of the Almighty Creator: "You give the kingdom to whom You will and take away the kingdom from whom You will."

It is said that greed takes away whatever has been collected. It is also said that beware of those who show blank faces without any reason, for they are envious.

... Yet, tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar

NewsWatch

GENEVA: Kuwait pledged Monday to provide USD six million to back non-governmental Kuwaiti humanitarian institutions working in Sudan.

The announcement was made by Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the UN and other international organizations in Geneva Ambassador Nasser Al-Hain during a high-level international donors conference for Sudan held in Geneva today.

Since the eruption of Sudan's crisis, Kuwait has sent over 120 tons of urgent relief and medical aid to Sudan, he said.

The step comes out of Kuwait's humanitarian and ethical responsibilities, he elaborated, expressing Kuwait's commitment to, and solidarity with, international efforts aiming to back humanitarian situation in Sudan and neighboring countries.

Ambassador Al-Hain said that Sudan's humanitarian crisis requires creating a unified international vision to share burdens and responsibilities, reduce pressure on host countries, and support political tracks to address the roots of crisis by encouraging preventive diplomacy and resolving conflicts through political dialogue and supporting efforts mediation.

In a statement to KUNA after the session, Al-Hain said Kuwait has been among the first countries, which sent humanitarian aid to Sudan.

This comes upon the orders from His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on launching an air humanitarian bridge working periodically, he made clear. (KUNA)

TUNIS: Tunisia's president said Monday that his country doesn't want to be Europe's border guard or a land of resettlement for migrants rejected elsewhere.

President Kais Saied made the comment after meeting in Tunis with the French and German interior ministers amid an effort by European governments to work with Tunisia to prevent more deadly migration efforts across the Mediterranean. (AP)

ATHENS: Nine Egyptian men accused of belonging to a human smuggling ring that authorities say bears responsibility for one of the worst migrant shipwrecks in the Mediterranean Sea appeared in court in southern Greece on Tuesday for questioning over their alleged role in the disaster.

The nine face charges that include participation in a criminal organization, manslaughter and causing a shipwreck. The hearing was taking place in the southern city of Kalamata. (AP)

UNITED NATIONS: The U.N. special envoy for Libya said Monday he plans to intensify negotiations with the country's feuding parties to reach "a final settlement" in the coming months on the most contentious issues blocking long postponed elections in the troubled north African nation.

Abdoulaye Bathily warned the U.N. Security Council that prolonging the current status quo "is fraught with disaster for Libya and its neighbors." And he said it's imperative that members increase pressure on the parties, speak with one voice, and act "to remove spoilers." (AP)

Prayer Timings

Fajr	03:13	Asr	15:23
Sunrise ..	04:49	Maghrib ..	18:50
Zohr	11:49	Isha	20:23

Local

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

Weather		Abdaly	46	27
Expected weather for next 24 hrs:		Jahra	46	31
By Day: Hot with light to moderate		Salmiyah	42	31
freshening at times northwesterly		Ahmadi	42	34
wind with speeds of 15-45 km/h with		Nuwaisib	44	29
a chance for dust over open areas.		Wafra	46	30
By Night: Hot to rather hot with				

Lebanese PM congratulates Kuwait PM on gov't formation

Cabinet holds first meeting after swearing in before Deputy Amir



Members of the new government after the issuance of the decree forming the government and taking the constitutional oath.



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah presiding over the first meeting after the issuance of the decree forming the government.

KUWAIT CITY, June 20, (KUNA): The Kuwaiti Cabinet held Monday its maiden meeting after issuing the decree on forming the government and swearing in before His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

The meeting was chaired by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah at Sief Palace, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Issa Al-Kandari said after the meeting.

At the onset of its meeting, the Cabinet reviewed the gist of His Highness the Deputy Amir's speech on occasion of the government's constitutional oath.

In the speech, His Highness the Deputy Amir stressed that the leadership, the government, the National Assembly and people are partners in achieving the goals and vision, overcoming obstacles to meet aspirations.

His Highness the Deputy Amir reiterated that organized and serious action, and on-ground follow-up, as well as the best choice of officials at government agencies are of the most important reasons for success.

In addition, His Highness the Deputy Amir stressed the need of cooperation among different institutions and authorities of the State to achieve successful action.

Afterwards, His Highness the Prime Minister thanked former ministers for shouldering their responsibilities.

Meanwhile, First Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Talal Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah affirmed continued efforts to implement the directives of His Highness the Amir and His Highness the Crown Prince under the leadership of His Highness the Prime Minister to serve the country, and achieve its prosperity and renaissance.

The minister further affirmed making efforts to combat corruption, and maintain and protect public funds.

Based on its keenness on cooperation, the Cabinet decided to form a ministerial committee tasked with cooperation with the National Assembly to determine priorities, laws and projects; to meet aspirations of Kuwaitis.

The committee, led by Al-Kandari who is also Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs, includes Deputy Prime Minister, Oil Minister, and Minister of State for Economic and Investment Affairs Saad Al-Barrak; Minister of Justice and Minister of State for Housing Affairs Faleh Al-Rquba; and Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Sheikh Feras Al-Sabah.

Finally, the Cabinet tasked Minister of Finance Abdulaziz Al-Hajri with preparing the government's action plan to be submitted to the Cabinet within two weeks, in order to then be referred to the National Assembly.

Meanwhile, Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikati on Monday phoned His Highness the Prime Minister of Kuwait Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah to congratulate him on the post and the government formation.

The Lebanese Premier Mikati also wished His Highness Sheikh Ahmad and his government all success in their mission.

For his part, His Highness Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf thanked Mikati on his good sentiments which reflected the strong fraternal relations between the two Arab countries and peoples.

He wished Lebanon everlasting stability and further progress and prosperity.

Provide prior info on meet, charities told

KUWAIT CITY, June 20: The Ministry of Social Affairs' Department of Charitable Societies and Foundations issued a circular to the boards of directors of all well-known charity associations to announce the new regulations for concluding agreements and holding meetings.

As per the new regulations, it is prohibited to hold or organize any meeting with diplomatic missions working in the country or representatives of international organizations and bodies, without informing the ministry and obtaining its prior approval. The ministry should also be provided with the contents of the meeting prior to holding them.

The circular stated that, "In the interest of the ministry to conduct the work and activities of non-profit organizations of charitable nature to be in accordance with the systems and rules in force in this regard, please adhere to obtaining our prior approval to hold any meetings with the heads of diplomatic missions operating in the country, or representatives of foreign and internal international organizations and bodies, in addition to concluding any form of agreements or signing contracts with local or international government and private agencies."

The ministry stressed the need to provide it with the content of these meetings and copies of the contracts to be concluded before implementing them.

In another field, the Ministry of Social Affairs' Department of Membership Affairs and Publication of Cooperative Societies in the Cooperation Sector, after suspension of about 40 days and at the request of the Ministry of Interior for its commitment to securing the 2023 parliament elections, today resumed holding elections for the boards of directors of cooperative societies whose legal mandate has ended, and also its members in Jahra Cooperative Society.

'Salaries take up 57pc, subsidies 23% budget'

Citizens protection priority: Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, June 20: International reports commented on the total expenditures allocated by Kuwait in the 2023/2024 budget for salaries and subsidies, highlighting that salaries take up approximately 57 percent of the budget at a value of USD 48 billion, while subsidies accounted for 23 percent of the budget at a value of USD 19.3 billion. On the other hand, investments fell to USD 8.1 billion or 8.1 percent from their level in the previous year, reports Al-Nahar daily.

According to informed sources, re-considering subsidies during the current period will be difficult in light of the level of global inflation and its repercussions on citizens. Protecting citizens socially is a government priority.

The apparent imbalance in the budget for subsidies and salaries, which constitutes

about 80 percent of the total budget for 2023/2024, compared to only 8.1 percent for capital spending, requires a reconsideration of the composition of spending components and moving forward with the completion of long-awaited development projects and solving the problems that they are faced with.

In a related context, reports issued by international institutions revealed serious financial risks that cast a shadow over the global economy.

The World Bank report lowered its expectations for global economic growth in 2024 from 2.7 percent to 2.4 percent, and also reduced growth expectations in 2023 to 2.1 percent compared to its previous expectations of 3.1 percent.

The reduction in growth is due to the risks of financial stresses in the emerging markets, which are intensifying in light of the rise in global interest rates.

The World Bank's warnings come in light of the overlapping shocks that the global economy witnessed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Russian-Ukrainian crisis, and the sharp slowdown in light of the tightening of global financial conditions, which led to a long setback in development efforts.



KUNA photo
Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs for Development and International Cooperation, Ambassador Hamad Al-Mashaan at the meeting.

Global efforts supported

'Kuwait partner in anti-terror fight'

NEW YORK, June 20, (KUNA): Kuwait is a close and solid partner of the international community in combating terrorism, affirmed the assistant foreign minister on Monday.

Addressing the third high-level UN conference for heads of intelligence and anti-terrorism agencies, Assistant Foreign Minister for Development and International Cooperation Ambassador Hamad Al-Mashaan asserted Kuwait's commitment to support the diverse international mechanisms for combating terrorism.

He noted that Kuwait plays a prominent role in the international coalition against ISIS and leads the international working group to prevent the flow of foreign terrorist fighters together with The Netherlands and Turkey.

"Kuwait has secured and facilitated the repatriation of 667 foreign fighters and their families since 2019," he clarified.

Al-Mashaan reiterated Kuwait's call for repatriation of foreign terrorist fighters and their families and reintegrating them in their

countries in order to achieve social cohesion and sustainable peace.

He recalled that Kuwait had hosted several meetings in the working group to prevent the flow of foreign terrorist fighters since 2017.

He added that a memorandum of understanding was signed between the Institute for Justice and the Rule of Law and the Kuwait Institute for Judicial and Legal Studies in December 2022, and a workshop was held in January 2023 in Malta between the Institute and a number of Kuwaiti bodies on protecting the non-profit sector from its misuse for financing terrorism.

Al-Mashaan underlined that Kuwait is fully aware of the danger of terrorism and the need to combat it, as this issue occupies the highest priority of its foreign policy.

The conference, which was inaugurated earlier today by UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, discusses ways to combat terrorism and prevent its spread.

Put differences

Continued from Page 1

Members of the National Assembly elected MP Mohammad Al-Mutair as Deputy Speaker for the 17th legislative term, during its first ordinary session on Tuesday.

MP Al-Mutair was elected as Deputy Speaker after receiving 32 votes against MP Marzouq Al-Azmi who received 14 votes.

The MPs also elected MP Mubarak Al-Tasha as Secretary and MP Mohammad Al-Huwailah as Observer for the National Assembly.

The government members have left Abdullah Al-Salem Hall prior to the vote, ensuring the statement made by Deputy Prime

Minister, Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs, that the government would take a neutral stance regarding the vote.

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent Tuesday a cable of congratulations to Mohammad Al-Mutair on being elected National Assembly Deputy Speaker. His Highness the Amir wished Al-Mutair success to achieve the people's ambitions for progress and prosperity.

His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent Tuesday a cable to Mohammad Al-Mutair on being elected Deputy Parliament Speaker.

His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown

Other Voices

Sincerity and ungratefulness

By Ahmad alsarraf

While serving in the US Army in Southeast Asia during World War II, American soldier William Wynne purchased a dog he named 'Smoky'.

Smoky accompanied Wynne in the last few months of the war. Smoky was a genius, such that she learned many skills and tricks, as well as contributed to battles. She parachuted, walked blindfolded on a tight rope and danced to music. She interacted with the soldiers, especially the injured. One day, she rescued her owner from a fatal accident. She also saved many soldiers when she completed a difficult task — connecting a wire inside a small pipe. This task was supposed to be carried out by hundreds of soldiers, which could have exposed their life to danger under cannon bombing.

When the war ended, Smoky became a familiar face on media in America and around the world. In 1957, Smoky died at the age of 14. She was placed in a World War II ammunition box and buried in a natural reserve at RockyRiver, Ohio. The place is near the house of my friend, Hassan Al-Hassawi. In 2005, the bronze statue of Smoky was unveiled; sitting on a helmet of a US soldier on top of a blue granite platform.

It seems we are insincere and ungrateful to those who did us favors; particularly those who do not belong to our nationality, religion or ethnicity.

Did we memorialize the late British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and the late US President George H W Bush for their significant role in liberating

Kuwait from the Iraqi invaders? Why did we forget the efforts of doctors who volunteered to serve in Kuwait 100 years ago like Dr Arthur Bennett, Dr Charles Mullary and Dr Louis Schudder as well as many American nurses who provided exemplary services to Kuwaiti families for several decades? Their missionary objective could have been disproved, because they did not leave Kuwait despite realizing in the first few months how difficult it was to persuade an Arab Peninsula Muslim citizen to convert to Christianity.

British politician, historian and commissioner in Iraq and Bahrain Harold Dickson (1881-1959) stayed in Kuwait after his retirement in 1936. He contributed to the establishment of Kuwait Oil Company (KOC). His wife continued to live in Kuwait after his death. She wanted to stay and be buried in Kuwait, but she moved to Britain, because of the Iraqi invasion. She died and was buried in Britain.

We can mention many other personalities like Major General Khalil Shehaiber who established Kuwaiti police, Dr Yahya Al-Hadeedi and Dr Ahmad Salama who were granted Kuwaiti citizenship and deserved to be memorialized by naming main streets after them. We also ignored many Muslim doctors and scientists whose names are not seen on any institution or street. We preferred to name main streets after Hassan Al-Banna, Al-Mughera and other unknown individuals. We did so only because some extremist officials found it suitable.

On the other hand, American and European countries and universities named institutions and research centers after Muslim scientists, intellectuals and physicians like Al-Farabi, Ibn Rusud and Ibn Sina. We ignored them totally and refused to honor them. They were philosophers. It is more than enough to regard them as atheists and heretics.

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Prince wished Deputy Speaker Al-Mutair success to achieve the people's ambitions for progress and prosperity.

Chosen as temporary parliament speaker as he is the oldest MP, Marzouq Al-Azmi stressed Tuesday the importance of cooperation between the National Assembly and the government to achieve the Kuwaiti people's aspirations.

This came during Al-Azmi's speech in the opening of the first ordinary session of the 17th term of the National Assembly.

"The efforts of the legislative and executive authorities must combine to produce the best possible legislative, political and executive reform projects so that Kuwait can enjoy a parliament that reflects the wishes of its honorable people," said Al-Azmi.

Furthermore, Al-Azmi stressed that the only and safest path to achieve the aspirations of the Kuwaiti people in terms of structural reforms and future achievements lies in sincere cooperation between the government and its members and strengthening coordination between the legislative and executive authorities.

He added that the country now is in dire need of political stability that could only be ensured by taking precautions and learning lessons amid the surrounding crises, challenges and risks. Al-Azmi hoped that the new assembly would be up to the expectations of the Kuwaiti people under the wise direction of the political leadership and with the sincere help of the government.

National Assembly's Speaker Ahmad Al-Saadoun adjourned the assembly's ordinary session on Tuesday until July 4 and 5.

The 17th National Assembly on Tuesday formed committees and elected their members as follows:

- Financial and Economic Affairs Committee**
1. Abdullah Fehad
 2. Badr Al-Mulla
 3. Shuaib Al-Muwaizri
 4. Abdulah Al-Anbaie,
 5. Abdulwahab Al-Essa
 6. DawoudMaarefi
 7. BadrNashmi Al-Anzi
- Petitions and Complaints Committee**
1. Hamdan Al-Azmi
 2. Muhammad Hayef Al-Mutairi
 3. Khalid Al-Otaibi
 4. Khalid Al-Tamar
 5. Abdulhadi Al-Ajmi
- Health, Social and Labor Affairs Committee**
1. Saad Al-Khanfour

2. Majed Al-Mutairi
3. Hani Shams
4. BadrNashmi Al-Anzi
5. Fahd bin Jame'e

Education, Culture and Guidance Affairs Committee

1. Hamad Al-Matar
2. Muhammad Al-Hewaila
3. Janan Bu Shehri
4. Abdulhadi Al-Ajmi
5. Hamad Al-Elyan

Interior and Defense Affairs Committee

1. Khalid Al-Otaibi
2. Majed Al-Mutairi
3. Khalid Al-Tamar
4. Muhammad Al-Mahan
5. BadrSayyar Al-Shemmari

Legislative and Legal Affairs Committee

1. Abdulkaareem Al-Kandari
2. Osama Al-Shaheen
3. Muhammad Al-Sayer
4. Abdulaziz Al-Sagaabi
5. Mubarak Al-Tasha
6. Janan Bu Shehri
7. Jarrah Al-Fawzan

Response to the Amir Speech Committee

1. Osama Al-Shaheen
2. Hamad Al-Obaid
3. BadrNashmi Al-Anzi

Public Utilities Committee

1. Ahmed Lari
2. Muhammad Al-Hewaila
3. Fares Al-Otaibi
4. Mubarak Al-Hajraf
5. Muhammad Al-Mahan
6. Fahd Al-Masoud
7. DawoudMaarefi

Budgets and Final Accounts Committee

1. Badr Al-Mulla
2. Adel Al-Damkhi
3. Hamad Al-Matar
4. Osama Al-Zaid
5. Saad Al-Khanfour
6. Abdulwahab Al-Essa
7. Fahd Al-Masoud

Public Funds Protection Committee

1. Osama Al-Shaheen
2. Mehalhal Al-Mudhaf
3. Meteb Al-Ra'athan
4. Jarrah Al-Fawzan
5. Hamad Al-Elyan

diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

'Waiting for nation to move out of stagnation that befell it over years'

"THE recently concluded parliamentary election resulted in the return of 38 former lawmakers and entry of 12 new lawmakers, some of whom have experience in legislative work. Therefore, the National Assembly will continue its previous course, focusing on two tracks: intensity in interrogations and exaggeration in ambitions, in addition to what some lawmakers have talked about," columnist **Abdullah Bishara** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

"It is embodied in a complex triptych that expresses a parliamentary desire to cross into the space of sovereignty, as it came from suggestions that the lawmakers echoed in their coordination meetings.

"First: role of the Constitutional Court and limiting its authority to ruling on the fate of the legislature. Second: general amnesty for Kuwaitis in exile, moving away from the grip of rulings issued against them. Third: reinstating the Kuwaiti nationality of those stripped of citizenship for various reasons.

"Here, we must note the difference between the government's position and desires of the legislature for the path of development. Development should be flexible — capable of digesting additions. It should express the points of view that come from studies and an assessment of capabilities that the legislature wants and seeks to persuade the government to agree on the plan deemed appropriate for Kuwait.

"In deliberations on development, opportunities exist despite the difference in jurisprudence between the two parties. This is possible through discussions, in which there is give and take. Dialogues between the government and legislature could open a wide space for parliamentary-governmental coalition, because it constitutes the basic demand of the Kuwaiti public.

"The Kuwaiti public is eagerly waiting for the nation to move out of the stagnation that befell it over the years. The citizen's enthusiasm comes from adhesion of development vitality with his daily life. The citizen issues judgments on the legislative authority through development achievements, which push Kuwait to join the Gulf ranks.

"I believe that Kuwait's priorities strongly call for dealing with development files, as compensation for the years of depression. We have to accept diversification in technology, developments in industry, investment and expansion of trade.

"Whatever the differences between the two parties regarding development jurisprudence, these differences remain far from the clash of crises. They have nothing to do with grave issues. They do not affect sovereignty rights, which are not without mines and explosives. Merely thinking about raising sensitive sovereign issues requires cooperation with all the relevant parties. It necessitates coordination due to its sensitivity.

"We must note that the most important conditions of the new chapter is that His Highness the Prime Minister assumes the leading role in guiding deliberations. It also lies in his commitment to the regulations approved by the Constitution and his awareness of the requirements of flexibility in his defense of the project he is implementing. He does not succeed with intransigence. He could achieve what he wants if he will focus on steps toward development, form the basics of development, and stay away from sensitive issues that should be addressed through calm communication.

"We hope His Highness the Prime Minister will remember that the people of Kuwait are with him if he shows firmness in leadership and clarity in the proposal, insistence on cooperation, keenness to respect the powers that the Constitution granted to the two parties, seek help from the Parliament Speaker in bringing positions closer, and overcome divergence by reaching a solution that satisfies all parties, including the citizens.

"We hope His Highness the Prime Minister will benefit from the lessons learned by his predecessors. Sheikh Sabah Al-Khalid was responsive to the rights of both parties. He avoided aggravation, acknowledged the need for consensus with the legislature, and generous in disregarding the harsh behavior and transgression of the legislature's internal regulations.

"Based on this experience, it is clear that it is necessary to resort to the Constitutional Court in case of doubt about the contents of interrogations; while insisting on respecting the dictates of the internal regulations. It is clear from previous experience that leniency in applying the regulations or not resorting to the Constitutional Court put Kuwait in a space of confrontation and stumble. This is an unusual situation.

"Kuwait flourishes if there is agreement between the legislative and executive authorities, proceeding in accordance with the principles of the Constitution — the source of tranquility and stability. The principle of consensus is the truth that raises Kuwait not only in development, but in all areas of life. His Highness the Prime Minister must remember this and insist on it, as it is the source of strong national unity. He should always remember Kuwait's position in this tense region, which does not exclude Kuwait from its projections. The Iraqi-Iranian war in the 1980s put us on the brink of collapse. We do not deny that the grim invasion came from its secretions.

"We — the people, the representatives and the government — have to confirm the fact in Kuwait's parliamentary experience; that is, the inevitability of the fateful overlap between the two authorities, recalling the state of dwarfism when the threads of the fateful overlap weakened. This opened doors to insulting Kuwait's status and distorting its history with the accompanying inflation, corruption and widespread frustration.

"It is certain that His Highness the Prime Minister is aware of the dangers of frustration if it prevails in society. Such frustration leads to loss of hope for a promising future, loss of good measure and the escalation of despair.

"Nevertheless, the Constitution carries principles. Its implementation results in harmony between the two authorities. It speaks of the dangers of negligence, while ignoring this cry. Kuwait has tried areas in which the effort towards consensus was weak and generated divergence from it with questions about intentions and doubts about goals. We do not deny that misunderstandings stem from the failure to act on the logic of the Constitution to ensure harmony.

"Negligence was not on the part of the government, it was on the two parties. The Kuwaiti history recorded that the criminal Iraqi, Saddam Hussein, utilized the 'dry' period to conspire against Kuwait. He sent his soldiers to take advantage of the Kuwaiti climate, which was heavy with clouds.

"We remember those circumstances, while benefiting from them and realizing that we did not fulfill what the Constitution called for — neither in letter nor in spirit. Kuwait's history recorded the result of ignoring the Constitution and provided the best lessons. Kuwait can neither rise nor live without its Constitution, as well as lack of adherence to its texts and spirit."



Bishara

Also:

"Now that the 2023 National Assembly election is over, citizens have renewed hope and dream of getting the demands they have been asking for successive parliamentary terms. Due to many factors and influences, several societal groups did not achieve their goals. They are counting on the current Parliament to end the 'waiting' situation quickly in order to address these demands by directing its full energy towards the realization of such a goal," columnist **Mishari Al-Mutairi** wrote for **Al-Anba** daily.

"The Parliament should fully cooperate with the government. Our representatives should stop submitting motions to grill the government for a while, so the latter can do its work.

"If we closely look into the public's demands, they can be classified into several groups, starting with that of retirees whose calls for help have become louder in order to obtain their rights guaranteed by law. This must begin with increasing the minimum pension to KD500, so they can fulfill their living obligations in light of the high prices. In addition, the end of service pay must be disbursed for those who did not receive it, reduce the replacement rate with the return of benefits to retirees, increase the value of good loan provided the monthly deduction rate ranges from five to 10 percent, and include the annual increase within the replacement.

"There is a list of other popular, general and comprehensive demands that everyone has agreed on. This can be summed up in several points, including the improvement of the standard of living of citizens, development of services provided to them, elimination of unemployment by providing job opportunities for young people, adjusting the demographic structure, increasing salaries, dropping loans or the interest, coordinating with the government in infrastructure development, developing education, and paying attention to the health and housing sectors in particular.

"I have a personal conviction that these demands will not be achieved except through a parliament whose members are committed to the consensus principle, unifying the work strategy and avoiding disputes that would create discord or confusion within the legislature. The lawmakers must focus on the interest of the country and its citizens, and that the decisions issued by parliamentarians are compatible with the size of available capabilities."



"I have repeated it over and over. We, in the 'Kuwaiti House of Awareness', released a report on 'human development' a few years ago, which included an immediate review of the Civil Service Law that was ratified in 1979!" columnist **Dr Turki Al-Azmi** wrote for **Al-Rai** daily.

"We called for amending Articles 15 and 26 and activating Articles 19 and 20 of the Civil Service Law ... We mentioned the details in the submitted report!

"Human development is concerned with the development of human capabilities and skills. It is entrusted with the task of individuals obtaining education and knowledge, and enabling them to live in prosperity on one hand, and to serve the country and its public and private institutions on the other hand.

"Human development is the cornerstone of the labor market, upon which the economy of any country is built. If managed well, human resources could achieve all 17 sustainable development goals based on the United Nations program, which Kuwait signed. It is the cornerstone in providing the human resources (manpower) necessary to achieve these goals by 2030.

"We understand the role of the Civil Service commission (CSC), especially the Employment Affairs Sector, which is the foundation of the CSC. Therefore, merging the Employment Affairs Sector with the Finance Sector is a setback and a grave mistake in terms of the concept of human development."



"From time to time, cooperative work is exposed to bumps that could distort its image, especially in achieving food security. The ancestors wanted it to be safe and secure through coordination between the socialist system of the commercial social structure and the global commercial system of global capitalism in money and business. It must be integrated with our promising Gulf of openness and the combination of these two axes ruling the world today. This will lead to development, openness to the Earth's bounties, and well-being of the people amidst the intertwined atmosphere of conflicts and destructive wars," columnist **Mohammad Al-Saqr** wrote for **Al-Anba** daily.

"In the end, the Kuwaiti model of cooperation dazzled the world with its simplicity and majesty in terms of its achievements and distinction. Despite all that, subservient hands keep on messing around this patient and steadfast body. It means subjugating the success of cooperatives in the governorates, and exposing the distinguished ones to failure and bankruptcy.

"This is done by an actor within the prominent cooperative family, not to mention drowning it in debts, claims, suspicious activities, exaggerated expenses, falsifying losing contracts and commercial agreements, and exposing the reputation of the loyal and faithful ones to court trials. The common question for the people of Kuwait in this case is: Who will benefit from what is happening to the successful cooperative system, which has proven its usefulness during wars, catastrophes and difficult circumstances?"



"I am writing the article as we listen to the results of the parliamentary elections in Kuwait, which are being held for the second time in nine months. There is nothing new this time, as the one-vote system continues to distort the electoral scene, there are no parties, no currents, no alliances, and the majority of candidates follow the method of 'me by myself,'" columnist **Dahem Al Qahntani** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

"There is nothing new, we can say again and again. The National Assembly will be without real powers as long as the government can paralyze it by simply being absent from the parliamentary sessions.

"Once again, the parliament that is elected by the Kuwaiti people and represents their will cannot even convene, just because the government decides not to attend.

"The painful thing is that there is not a single constitutional text that gives the government the right to be absent from parliamentary sessions, nor is there a definitive text stating that the National Assembly nullifies its sessions if the government does not attend the sessions.

"So what is the solution? There is no absolutely no solution but to change the electoral system, so that we apply the system of proportional lists, and that there are two or five electoral districts with a compulsory vote within the district.

"There is no solution without a new law regulating political action. There is no political action without a license, or a silent ban on political parties or associations. Collective political action is Kuwait's hope instead of individual political action that has exhausted Kuwait and its people."

— Compiled by Mai Elsoukary



KUNA photo

A delegation from the National Office for Human Rights pays a visit to the Juvenile Welfare Department.

Human rights office hails services of 'juvenile dept'

Delegation meets girls and boys

KUWAIT CITY, June 20, (KUNA): The National Office for Human Rights praised the services of the Juvenile Welfare Department of the Ministry of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs, and its keenness to monitor various care homes and their commitment to human rights standards.

Mona Al-Attayah, a member of the Board of Directors and rapporteur of the Complaints and Grievances Committee at the Diwan, told Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) on Tuesday, during a visit by a delegation from the Diwan to the Department of Welfare, that this visit aims to review the conditions in the centers of correctional institutions, detention centers, and care homes, pursuant to the provisions of the law establishing the Diwan No. 67 of 2015.

Al-Attayah added that the delegation met, during its visit to the Juvenile Welfare Home, in the boys and girls sections between the ages of 14 and 20, to learn directly from the inmates about the nature of social and psychological services, various activities, and the quality of the subsistence services provided to them.

She explained that during the tour, the delegation learned about the nature of the vocational and rehabilitative activities provided by the administration, such as carpentry, printing, mechanics, computer workshops, recreational and sports activities that include football, tennis and others, in addition to some activities for girls in the field of sewing, drawing and flower arrangement, in addition to cultural activities in the field of reading and the library in addition to introducing them to the religious guidance house, which is responsible for rehabilitating the inmates and integrating them into an appropriate social environment.

She stated that the Social Welfare Home includes a regular school affiliated with the Ministry of Education and is equipped with administrative and educational cadres to complete the formal education of inmate juveniles.

She stated that the delegation held meetings with the Director of the Juvenile Welfare Department, Dr. Jassim Al-Kandari, who stated that the total number of inmates is 39, and that the administration intends to move to a new building to provide various services and activities.

Al-Attayah indicated that the National Office for Human Rights made recommendations and observations with the aim of raising the efficiency of the level of care and providing a safe environment for employees and inmates, as stipulated in human rights.

It is noteworthy that the social care institutions are concerned with receiving juveniles who are convicted and others, where the inmates are classified according to gender, age, mental level, in addition to judgments issued by court order and others.

'No encroachments'

EPA conducts raids on beach violations

KUWAIT CITY, June 20: The inspection teams of the Environment Public Authority on Saturday carried out a joint campaign with the Environment Police, with the aim of removing environmental encroachments on the beaches, reports **Al-Rai** daily.

During the campaign that targeted the "Marina" beach in Salmiya, the inspection teams recorded three violations, while beach-goers who were mostly committed to the environmental law were strictly instructed with some articles of the law and the great importance of preserving the marine environment.

The Director of the Inspection Department at the authority, Nada Al-Dabbashi, announced that continuous inspection campaigns will be implemented on all Kuwaiti beaches, islands and chalets to monitor beach-goers.

She added that the authority focuses on implementing Article No. 33 of the Environmental Protection Law, which is concerned with throwing waste in designated places, and Article No. 100 in the event that prohibited hunting tools are used, or harm to wild organisms is observed.

She pointed out that the fine ranges from 500 to 5,000 dinars for violating Article No. 100 of the Environmental Protection Law, if it is transferred to the Public Prosecution.

With regard to encroachments on the beaches of the chalets, Al-Dabbashi pointed out that there are many reports in this regard, in addition to igniting or burying coal, and an inspection is being carried out to take the necessary measures.

With regard to the violating elderly women, I mentioned that the violating and existing ones are being dealt with without studying the environmental impact, or rejected by the authority.

Al-Dabbashi expressed her hope that all beach-goers would abide by the environmental protection law, in order to avoid environmental violations, so that Kuwait's environment would be clean and free of encroachments.

MoE plans to promote quality education

KUWAIT CITY, June 20: The decision issued by the Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education, Dr. Hamad Al-Adwani, will regulate scholarships for medical specializations in Egypt and Jordan starting from the next academic year 2023-2024, reports **Al-Qabas** daily.

The Higher Education Ministry said, this comes within the framework of the ministry's efforts to control the quality of education, authenticity of graduation certificates and to promote quality education.

Informed sources said this step was

taken after multiple visits by delegations to medical universities in Egypt and Jordan over the past few months to conduct extensive studies to measure the quality of education outside Kuwait according to what was disclosed during a meeting last month.

The sources noted the approval of the Board of Directors of the National Agency for Academic Accreditation and Education Quality Assurance on June 4, 2023, and the recommendation of the Committee for Setting Standards and Determining Higher Education Institutions in Medical Specialties out-

side the country.

The sources confirmed that the decision came based on the approval of the Board of Directors of the National Bureau for Academic Accreditation and Education Quality Assurance on June 4, 2023 within the framework of the Ministry of Higher Education's endeavor to control the quality of education and in continuation of the ministry's efforts to ensure the authenticity of academic certificates and quality education, and after a series of decisions taken by the ministry during the past years, in this context.

75 flights to carry 9,000 Haj pilgrims

KUWAIT CITY, June 20, (KUNA): The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) said on Tuesday that 75 flights will operate to carry 9,000 pilgrims to Haj.

In a statement to KUNA, Deputy Director General for Planning and Projects Affairs Saad Al-Otaibi, affirmed that DGCA's preparations for Hajj season originates in cooperation with several governmental bodies such as the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs and the General Administration of Customs.

He noted that the first flight of the season will take off on Friday, June 23. Al-Otaibi praised all participating parties involved in the operation for this season, hoping for success and easiness.

Meanwhile, the Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI) warned on Tuesday citizens and residents of online hackers impersonating the authority through fake links.



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'Digital transformation' of admin paperwork to assist Hajj pilgrims

Kuwait witnesses increase in population: CSB

'Pakistan flood relief'

Kuwait donates around \$ 1m

ISLAMABAD, June 20, (KUNA): The State of Kuwait on Tuesday donated nearly one million US dollars to the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) of Pakistan for the victims of recent devastating floods in the country.

This is part of the direct Kuwaiti financial contributions in addition to other financial contributions that were directed through the specialized agencies of the United Nations, Kuwaiti Ambassador to Pakistani Nassar Almutairi said in a statement to KUNA.

These donations come along with the various relief activities and the campaign by the people of Kuwait, citizens and residents in support of the flood victims of Pakistan, which exceeds the amount of USD two million that was distributed on time in the devastated areas by the Kuwait Red Crescent and NGOs, he said.

"Mujezat Al-Shifa" Raw honey is an ideal skin care product

Nutrition consultant at Mujezat Al-Shifa Company said: Studies and scientific research have proven these great effects on the skin of honey, especially raw honey, as it contains vitamins, minerals and protein acids to nourish skin cells and regenerate damaged ones, noting that collagen and elastin are responsible for the elasticity and cohesion of the skin so that it does not sag or wrinkle due to The ability of honey to absorb moisture from the air and give it to the skin, giving it a full, soft and fresh look.



She added: Honey contains fruit and algulonic acid and enzymes, which helps in gentle and safe exfoliation of dead skin and impurities, giving the skin freshness and light because it contains hydrogen peroxide, which lightens skin color and rid it of brown spots.

KUWAIT CITY, June 20: Head of the team from the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs in Kuwait's Hajj Expedition Sattam Al-Mazyen said the expedition has launched the digital transformation of all administrative paperwork into electronic form in order to facilitate the Kuwaiti pilgrims, report Ajarida daily.

He said this during a meeting that Al-Mazyen held with the heads and members of the teams and committees of the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs earlier this week in the holy city of Makkah.

Al-Mazyen explained that after implementing this system, everyone will notice a significant change in work, especially with regard to ease of documentation, knowledge of peak work times and the actual needs of all teams and committees, and setting the dates of the meetings so that there is no conflict in them.

Meanwhile, the Deputy Head of the Ministry of Health team in the Kuwait Hajj Expedition Mugheer Al-Shammari announced the arrival of the first and second batches of the team to the holy land.

He said, "The third and final batch is expected to arrive this week, and thus the completion of all team members."

He explained that the clinic will be opened at the headquarters of the Hajj expedition in Al-Naseem neighborhood the day after tomorrow. This means that it will be ready before the arrival of any Kuwaiti pilgrim. The clinic will work around the clock to provide medical

service to Kuwaiti pilgrims.

Before heading to Makkah, the Ministry of Awqaf team coordinated with the Ministry of Health and the Saudi Food and Drug Authority, and the customs at King Abdulaziz Airport to finalize all necessary arrangements for the arrival of medicines.

All these procedures were completed, and the medicines arrived at the expedition's headquarters in Mecca. The distribution of shares of these medicines has begun.

□ □ □

Population increases: The population of Kuwait increased in the past year by about 407,851 people or by 9.3 percent to reach 4.793 million people from 4.385 million at the end of 2021, reports Al-Rai daily.

According to data issued by the Central Statistical Bureau (CSB), this jump was mainly the result of an increase in the number of non-Kuwaitis by about 379,491 people, or by 13.1 percent last year, bringing their total to 3.276 million people from 2.897 million at the end of 2021. The number of Kuwaitis increased by about 1.9 percent from 1.488 million to 1.517 million.

Thus the percentage of non-Kuwaitis out of the total population increased from 66.05 percent at the end of 2021 to 68.35 percent at the end of 2022, while the percentage of Kuwaitis decreased from 33.94 percent to 31.65 percent.

The male population constituted about 61.2 percent of the total population of Kuwait at the end of last year, compared to 38.2 percent of the female population.

The number of non-Kuwaitis aged 60 years and above has increased by 35,227 thousand or 33.64 percent, reaching 139,935 at the end of last year, compared to 104,708 at the end of 2021.



Meeting of the GCC ambassadors.

Aljarida photo

Omani embassy hosts meeting of coordination for GCC envoys

KUWAIT CITY, June 20: The Embassy of the Sultanate of Oman in Kuwait hosted at its headquarters the second coordination meeting for the ambassadors of the Gulf Cooperation Council countries accredited to the country, reports Aljarida daily.

The meeting was presided over by the Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to Kuwait Dr. Saleh Al-Kharousi, and was held in the presence of the Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates Dr. Matar Al-Neyadi, the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Bahrain Salah Al-Malki, the Deputy Head of Mission at the Saudi Embassy, the Minister Plenipotentiary Yahya Al-Qahtani, the Ambassador of the

State of Qatar Ali Al Mahmoud, and the Minister Plenipotentiary from the Gulf Cooperation Council Administration, a representative of Kuwait's Foreign Ministry Hamad Al-Farhoud, and Deputy Head of Mission at the Embassy of the Sultanate of Oman Shihab Al-Rawas.

In a press statement, Dr. Al-Kharousi said the meeting touched on the joint coordination between the Gulf diplomatic missions and Kuwait's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in implementation of the decisions of the Gulf Ministerial Council. It is worth highlighting that the Sultanate of Oman is currently chairing the 43rd session of the GCC Supreme Council.



Dr Sondos Al-Sharida with a number of participating children.

'I Can' campaign launched

Kuwait Pediatric Association celebrates International Day of Sickle Cell Anemia

KUWAIT CITY, June 20, (KUNA): The Kuwait Pediatric Association launched the "I Can" campaign as part of the activities celebrating the International Day of Sickle Cell Anemia, in addition to a marathon with the participation of about 30 children, their families and specialist doctors.

The head of the Kuwaiti Pediatric Association and the head of the department of hematology, pediatric cancer and stem cell transplantation at the National Bank Hospital, Dr. Sondos Al-Sharida, said in a press statement, Tuesday, that sickle cell anemia is a pathological condition that affects the shape of red blood cells that carry oxygen to parts of the body.

She explained that red blood cells are usually round and flexible, which facilitates their movement in the

blood vessels, but in the case of sickle cell anemia, the red cells take the shape of a sickle or a crescent and become hard and sticky, which may slow or prevent blood flow.

She pointed out that there are many indicators associated with the disease, which usually appear at the age of about six months and change over time and also differ from one person to another, including anemia, bouts of pain, swelling of the hands and feet, frequent infections, delayed growth or puberty, and vision problems.

Al-Sharida warned that sickle cell anemia leads to a number of complications such as stroke, acute chest syndrome, pulmonary hypertension, organ damage, splenic failure, blindness, leg ulcers, gallstones, deep vein thrombosis and pregnancy complications.



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The Guest Show poster

TGS presents Leana Al Awadhi

The Guest Show (TGS) on Radio Kuwait presents Leana Al Awadhi, founding member of Mudhawi's List, a program that supports women running for elected office positions by linking them with volunteers and other creatives.

Leana Al Awadhi has an interesting story. She grew up in Columbia & Kuwait and has a MSc in Countering Organized Crime & Terrorism from University College, London. She has spent most of her professional life specialising in anti-money laundering and detecting financial crime.

Apart from regular work, Leana is a highly committed activist who invests a lot of effort and time in civil and women's rights. Young and committed Kuwaitis like Leana are a role model for younger generations of Kuwaitis and they reaffirm the country's belief in the power of the youth.

In this episode of The Guest Show, Leana speaks to Chaitali B Roy of growing up in Columbia, of being the only Muslim/Arab woman in her class, and the significant role of women in the country's growth and development.

Agency looking forward through strategic partnership with Microsoft

AI techniques to raise efficiency of govt work: Information Technology Authority

KUWAIT CITY, June 20, (KUNA): Acting Director General of the Central Agency for Information Technology Dr. Ammar Al-Husseini confirmed today, Monday, that artificial intelligence technologies have become part of the government's interest to benefit from them in raising the efficiency of government work.



Al-Husseini

This came in a press statement by Al-Husseini during his participation in the conference 'Artificial Intelligence Summit for Leaders in the Government Sector', which is organized by Information Technology in cooperation with Microsoft under the title 'From Imagination to Reality', and it will last for one day.

He added that artificial intelligence will greatly affect all business sectors and the way these businesses are performed, and will also raise the level of productivity, pointing out that the summit aims to introduce public and private sector institutions in Kuwait

to the latest innovations in the field of artificial intelligence that will accelerate the vision of New Kuwait 2035.

He stated that artificial intelligence is part of the government's interest to benefit from these technologies to raise the efficiency of government work to spread the culture of artificial intelligence, especially for leaders in the government sector to draw a road map and benefit from it.

He explained that the world is witnessing today a real revolution in the field of artificial intelligence, adding that Microsoft has succeeded in harnessing this technology to enhance its products and design new solutions supported by its continuous invest-

ments in research and development and its expertise in various sectors.

Al-Husseini stated that the Central Agency for Information Technology is looking forward, through the strategic partnership with Microsoft, to provide these innovations in Kuwait to accelerate digital transformation across various sectors locally.

For his part, General Manager at Microsoft - Kuwait Alaeddin Alaeddin said in a similar statement that artificial intelligence has become one of the most innovative technologies that have revolutionized the information technology sector, which contributes to enhancing human capabilities and enabling more creativity and innovation in business.

Alaeddin added that this technology provides emerging, small, medium and large enterprises in various sectors with new opportunities to support the country's economic diversification and promote the digital economy.



Participants in the conference 'Artificial Intelligence Summit for Leaders in the Government Sector'.

KUNA photos

'Gulf region, a bridge between East & West'

Boosting denominators more beneficial: Sheikh Thamer

BERLIN, June 20, (KUNA): The Gulf area was a bridge between the East and the West, and there were collective efforts to achieve strategic stability of the region, said a former Kuwaiti interior minister on Monday.

Sheikh Thamer Ali Al-Salem Al-Sabah made the statement during the fifth session of the Gulf-German Dialogue Forum on Security and Cooperation which kicked off earlier today.

In his speech, Sheikh Thamer stressed keenness of Kuwait on establishing this forum in 2019, due to its firm belief in the importance of dialogue with Germany, one of the most important decision-makers in Europe.

He noted that the coming times will be more difficult and will require cooperation from everyone, not only to achieve stability in the region, but in order to understand that this difference in national interests and policies does not necessarily mean that "we are on two different sides".

"Instead, boosting denominators is more beneficial than focusing on mat-

ters of difference in national policy," he said.

He pointed out that the Middle East region has witnessed, over the past century, a very large proportion of instability, and that it is still witnessing the emergence of "hotbeds of tension until now, since the vacuum left by the withdrawal of the British Empire, up to the Soviet strategic goal of reaching the warm waters of the Arabian Gulf".

On the GCC states' relations with Iran, Sheikh Thamer stated that the region lives in a geographical reality that cannot be changed, stressing that Iran "was our neighbor in the past and will remain so in the future".

He further went to say that the recent rapprochement between Saudi Arabia and Iran embodies the idea of building on common denominators.

He recalled Kuwait's endeavors to achieve this goal since 2016 through the efforts led by His Highness the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. On the long-standing conflicts in Syria, and Yemen, and the new

situation in Sudan, Sheikh Thamer said he is looking forward to finding peaceful solutions to these issues based mainly on political dialogue and firm base that allow making tangible progress and sustainable positive results.

Meanwhile, GCC Secretary General Jassim Al-Budaiwi stressed the need of the forum amid challenges and unrest facing the world.

Speaking during the forum, he highlighted progresses and developments made in all sectors in the Gulf community that topped with economy, politics, diplomatic ties, security, human development and others.

Relations

Several countries and regional communities seek to cement their relations with the GCC, he affirmed. He referred that the Gulf states and Germany have deep-rooted historical and friendly ties, in addition to "very broad" commercial and investment ones.

Al-Budaiwi elaborated that the Gulf endeavors are not limited to boosting collaboration in energy security, renewable energy, and green hydrogen, as well as strengthening economic and trade relations with Germany, but rather seek to expand them to include new fields like education, scientific research, vocational training, artificial intelligence, and cybersecurity.



Sheikh Thamer

Assistant Undersecretary Al-Ansari heads Kuwait delegation

Kuwait partakes in preparatory meetings of 53rd session of Council of Arab Information Ministers

RABAT, June 20, (KUNA): The preparatory meetings for the 53rd session of the Council of Arab Ministers of Information kicked off in Rabat, with the participation of delegations from Arab countries, including the delegation of the State of Kuwait, headed by the Assistant Undersecretary of the Ministry of Information for Foreign Information Affairs, Mazen Al-Ansari.

In his speech during the opening of the committee's work, the Assistant Secretary and Head of the Media and Communication Sector of the League of Arab States, Ambassador Ahmed Khattabi expressed his sincere thanks to the Ministry of Youth, Culture and Communication for the good organization of the meetings.



Khattabi

He stated that the department concerned with the communication sector in the League of Arab States worked during the recent period to implement the decisions issued by the 52nd session of the Council of Arab Ministers of Information, which was held in Cairo in September 2022, "as it spared no effort to accomplish its tasks, especially continuing media support for the Palestinian cause."

In this context, Khattabi reviewed a number of forums and events organized by the media sector of the League

KFAED doles out USD 85mn in global humanitarian aid

KUWAIT CITY, June 20, (KUNA): Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) has provided humanitarian aid worth USD 85 million directed at refugees and displaced people, the fund's chief Waleed Al-Bahar said on Monday.

KFAED remains diligent in its efforts to provide refugees with a "decent living", the official said a day ahead of the United Nations'

World Refugee Day.

Through its solid rapport with various UN humanitarian agencies, Kuwaiti is dedicated to saving lives and protecting the rights of refugees across the globe, he underlined.

In this vein, Al-Bahar highlighted that KFAED's headquarters will be lit blue in solidarity with the UN-designated World Refugee Day, on June 20.

He concluded that all these activities resulted in a number of recommendations thanks to the valuable contributions of Arab member states, organizations and unions working in the media field under the umbrella of the League of Arab States, expressing his aspiration that this session would be a new building block for the advancement of the Arab media system in a spirit of harmony and agreement.

For his part, Acting Secretary-General of the Moroccan Ministry of Youth, Culture and Communication, Mustafa Amdjar, affirmed that these meetings "are a reason to support opportunities for calm civilized dialogue, cooperation and synergy, and reject methods of incitement and discrimination.

الطرق السيارة بالمغرب
Autoroutes du Maroc

NATIONAL COMPANY OF THE HIGHWAYS OF MOROCCO (ADM)

Construction of Tit Mellil - Berrechid Highway
From the junction of Berrechid to the junction of Casablanca
OPEN INVITATION TO TENDER N° 55 / 23 / S

In accordance with ADM's provisional purchasing program for the year 2023 which was published in the newspaper "Al Bayane" on March 13, on August 3rd 2023 at 11:00 am, it will be proceeded in the offices of the National Company of Motorways of Morocco, with the opening of the envelopes relating to the call for tenders opened for construction of Tit Mellil - Berrechid highway between the junction of Berrechid and the junction of Casablanca.

The opening sessions will be held in public session.

This invitation to tender is divided into four lots:

- lot n° 1 : The work on section 1 of the Tit Mellil - Berrechid Highway (between the junction of Berrechid and PK10+300) on a linear of about 10 kilometers, not including the viaducts
- lot n° 2 : The work on section 2 of the Tit Mellil - Berrechid Highway (between PK10+300 and PK20+200) on a linear of about 10 kilometers, not including the viaducts
- lot n° 3 : The work on section 3 of the Tit Mellil - Berrechid Highway (between PK20+200 and the junction of Casablanca) on a linear of about 9 kilometers
- lot n° 4 : the viaducts 75, 115, 123, and 137 located on section which extends between the junction of Berrechid and the interchange on national road n°9.

ADM makes its market portal available to competitors available at: <https://achats.adm.co.ma>. The terms of use of the ADM Markets Portal are accessible from said portal.

Competitors can consult and download free of charge, and only from the ADM portal, the files of calls for tenders and competitions, as well as the documents and additional information relating thereto.

The provisional guarantee is set at:

- Six million dirhams (6.000.000,00) for lot n°1
- Five million five hundred thousand dirhams (5 500 000,00) for lot n°2
- Six million five hundred thousand dirhams (6 500 000,00) for lot n°3
- One million four hundred thousand dirhams (1.400.000,00) for lot n°4

The content as well as the presentation of the bidding documents should be in conformity with the provisions of ADM Contract Regulations.

The electronic submission of envelopes is the only way to participate in the invitation to tender. Receipt of paper submissions is not authorized. Competitors are required to submit their submissions only electronically through the ADM Marketplace Portal. Only envelopes submitted through ADM's dematerialized purchasing platform will be taken into consideration.

The procedures for submitting envelopes are defined in the consultation files.

The supporting documents to provide are those stipulated under Article 23 of ADM Contract Regulations and specified in the Consultation Regulations.

Moroccan candidates shall submit the certificate of qualification and classification delivered by the Ministry of Infrastructure, Transport, Logistics and water.

This certificate completes the technical file for Moroccan competitors.

The qualification and classification required according to the system of qualification and classification of the construction and public works are given in the Table below:

For lot n°1 and lot n°2:

Sector	Qualification	Rank
B- Road works	B2 - special road earthworks B3 - Road sanitation works and environmental treatment B5 - Untreated seats and surface coatings B6 - Hot treated and coated seats	S
D-construction of structures	D2 - Exceptional reinforced concrete structures D3 - Standard prestressed concrete structures	1

For lot n°3:

Sector	Qualification	Rank
B- Road works	B2 - special road earthworks B3 - Road sanitation works and environmental treatment B5 - Untreated seats and surface coatings B6 - Hot treated and coated seats	S
D-construction of structures	D2 - Exceptional reinforced concrete structures	1

For lot n°4:

Sector	Qualification	Rank
D-construction of structures	D4 - Exceptional prestressed concrete structures	1

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China cuts benchmark lending rate

China's central bank cut its benchmark lending rate on Tuesday for the first time in 10 months. The People's Bank of China announced in a statement that it has lowered the one-year loan prime rate, a benchmark for corporate loans, by 10 basis points from 3.65 percent to 3.55 percent. It was the first rate cut since August last year.

In addition, the central bank trimmed the five-year loan prime

rate, which is used to price mortgages, by 10 basis points from 4.3 percent to 4.2 percent, also for the first time since last August.

Last week, the central bank cut the rate of its one-year medium-term lending facility loans to some financial institutions from 2.75 percent to 2.65 percent, and lowered the seven-day reverse repurchase rate, which is used for short-term liquidity to banks, from 2 percent to 1.9 percent.

Zeng Gang, Director of the Shanghai Institute for Finance and Development, said the policy rate cuts last week led to Tuesday's rate reduction, state-run Xinhua News Agency reported.

Zeng said it will effectively drive down real loan interest rates, reduce financing costs, stimulate credit demand, and strengthen the growth momentum of consumption and investment, according to the report. (KUNA)

investigate type of AI that powers systems like ChatGPT

European Union consumer protection groups urged regulators on Tuesday to investigate the type of artificial intelligence underpinning systems like ChatGPT, citing risks that leave people vulnerable and the delay before the bloc's groundbreaking AI regulations take effect.

In a coordinated effort, 13 watchdog groups wrote to their national consumer, data pro-

tection, competition and product safety authorities warning them about a range of concerns around generative artificial intelligence.

A transatlantic coalition of consumer groups also wrote to U.S. President Joe Biden asking him to take action to protect consumers from possible harms caused by generative AI.

Europe has led the world in efforts to regulate artificial intel-

ligence, which gained urgency with the rise of a new breed of artificial intelligence that gives AI chatbots like ChatGPT the power to generate text, images, video and audio that resemble human work.

The EU is putting the finishing touches on the world's first set of comprehensive rules for the technology, but they are not expected to take effect for two years. (AP)

Market Movements

20-06-2023

	Change	Closing pts		Change	Closing pts		
JAPAN	- Nikkei	+0.06	33,388.91	UAE	- DFM	-0.34	3,774.24
SAUDI	- Tadawul	+0.08	11,431.37	PAKISTAN	- KSE 100	-0.01	40,647.48
				PHILIPPINES	- PSEi	-0.02	6,448.90
				EGYPT	- EGX 30	-0.37	17,921.92

Business

Asian shares mostly slip

Wall St falls and takes a step back after its big rally

NEW YORK, June 20, (AP): Stocks were falling Tuesday in Wall Street's first trading after a five-week rally carried it to its highest level since the spring of last year.

The S&P 500 was 0.4% lower in afternoon trading. The Dow Jones Industrial Average was down 198 points, or 0.6%, at 34,101, as of 12:40 p.m. Eastern time, while the Nasdaq composite was 0.1% lower.

The U.S. stock market is taking a step back following many steps forward on hopes the economy can avoid a recession and inflation is easing enough for the Federal Reserve to stop raising interest rates soon. A frenzy around artificial intelligence has also vaulted a select group of tech stocks to huge gains.

Those hopes are battling against worries that sticky inflation will force the Fed to keep interest rates higher for longer, which could grind down the economy. With some of the easiest improvements in year-over-year inflation soon to be lapped, a tougher road may be ahead for both the economy and financial markets.

"Leaning on the lessons of the 1970s, the Fed is right to be cautious, even if that represents an inconvenient truth for stock investors," said Lisa Shalett, chief investment officer of Morgan Stanley Wealth Management.

During the 70s, inflation remained high for much longer than hoped, forcing the Fed to ultimately drive the economy into a recession by sharply hiking interest rates.

Tuesday marked the first trading for Wall Street following a meeting between Chinese leader Xi Jinping and U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken. It yielded no signs of progress from either of the world's largest economies on Taiwan, human rights, technology and other issues of contention. Most of Wall Street was falling, with roughly 80% of stocks in the S&P 500 lower.

Worries about the global economy's strength dragged down prices for crude oil and stocks of companies that pull it from the ground. Energy stocks fell 2.6% for the largest loss among the 11 sectors that make up the S&P 500. Exxon Mobil fell 2.2%, and Chevron lost 2.8%.

Ball Corp., which makes aluminum cans and other products, dropped 2.7%. It said Tuesday that it's considering options for its aerospace business but that "there is no certainty that any formal decision will be made." Its stock had jumped 7.2% Friday following a report that it was looking to sell the unit.

On the winning side was Dice Therapeutics, which soared 37.1% after Eli Lilly said it would buy the biopharmaceutical company for \$2.4 billion in cash. Lilly added 1.1%.

Homebuilders were among the biggest gainers in the S&P 500. D.R. Horton rose 1.2%, and PulteGroup gained 1.4%.

A report Tuesday morning showed that U.S. homebuilders broke ground on many more sites last month than economists expected. The number of building permits, an indication of future activity, also accelerated faster than expected.

In the bond market, the yield on the 10-year Treasury fell to 3.71% from 3.77% late Friday. It helps set rates for mortgages and other important loans.

The two-year yield, which moves more on expectations for the Fed, slipped to 4.66% from 4.72%.

This upcoming week doesn't have many potentially market-moving events coming off a Monday closure in observance of the Juneteenth national holiday.

Europe

France's CAC 40 inched down less than 0.1% to 7,312.73 in early trading, while

Germany's DAX slipped 0.4% to 16,134.01. Britain's FTSE 100 added nearly 0.1% to 7,592.28. mes this year.

Asia

Asian shares mostly declined Tuesday as some investors took a wait-and-see attitude after U.S. markets were closed for a national holiday.

Some investors were also disappointed after a meeting between Chinese leader Xi Jinping and Secretary of State Antony Blinken yielded no signs of progress from either side on Taiwan, human rights, technology and other issues of contention.

Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 inched down less than 0.1% in afternoon trading to 33,388.91. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 added 0.9% to 7,357.80. South Korea's Kospi lost 0.2% to 2,603.27. Hong Kong's Hang Seng dipped 1.8% to 19,550.76, while the Shanghai Composite edged down 0.5% to 3,240.87.

The Chinese government said the meeting between Xi and the top U.S. diplomat produced "candid and in-depth" talks. Bilateral relations are at their lowest point in decades. Both sides indicated a willingness to cooperate.

Oil

In energy markets, benchmark U.S. crude lost \$1.02 to \$70.76 a barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. Brent crude, the international standard, declined 26 cents to \$75.83 a barrel.

Currencies

In currency trading, the U.S. dollar edged up to 142.07 Japanese yen from 141.91 yen. The euro cost \$1.0931, up from \$1.0921.

Blinken, Xi pledge to 'stabilize' the deteriorated US-China ties

China rebuffs the main US request

BEIJING, June 20, (AP): U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken met on Monday with Chinese President Xi Jinping and said they agreed to "stabilize" badly deteriorated U.S.-China ties, but America's top diplomat left Beijing with his biggest ask rebuffed: better communications between their militaries.

After meeting Xi, Blinken said China is not ready to resume military-to-military contacts, something the U.S. considers crucial to avoid miscalculation and conflict, particularly over Taiwan.

Still, China's main diplomat for the Western Hemisphere, Yang Tao, said he thought Blinken's visit to China "marks a new beginning."

"The U.S. side is surely aware of why there is difficulty in military-to-military exchanges," he said, blaming the issue squarely on U.S. sanctions, which Blinken said revolved entirely around threats to American security.

Yet Blinken and Xi pronounced themselves satisfied with progress made during the two days of talks, without pointing to specific areas of agreement beyond a mutual decision to return to a broad agenda for cooperation and competition endorsed last year by Xi and President Joe Biden at a summit in Bali.

And, it remained unclear if those understandings can resolve their most important disagreements, many of which have international implications. Still, both men said they were pleased with the outcome of the highest-level U.S. visit to China in five years.

Willingness

The two sides expressed a willingness to hold more talks, but there was little indication that either is prepared to bend from positions on issues including trade, Taiwan, human rights conditions in China and Hong Kong, Chinese military assertiveness in the South China Sea, and Russia's war in Ukraine.

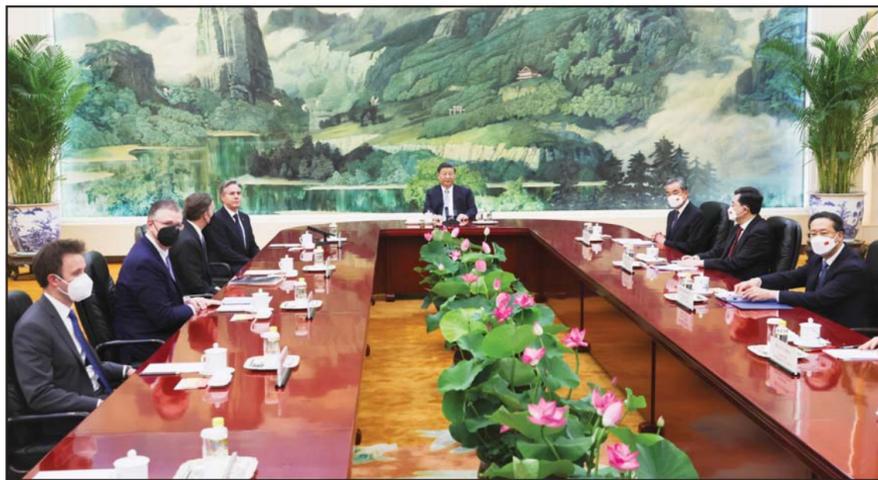
Blinken said later that the U.S. set limited objectives for the trip and achieved them. He told reporters before leaving for a Ukraine reconstruction conference in London that he had raised the issue of military to military communications "repeatedly."

"It is absolutely vital that we have these kinds of communications," he said. "This is something we're going to keep working on."

Speaking to reporters Monday during a campaign fundraising trip to California, Biden said Blinken did a "hell of a job." The president said "you know" progress was made with relations between the U.S. and China because of the meeting.

The U.S. has said that, since 2021, China has declined or failed to respond to over a dozen requests from the Department of Defense for top-level dialogues.

According to a transcript of the meeting with Blinken, Xi said he was pleased with the outcome of Blinken's earlier meetings with top Chinese



U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, (fourth left), meets with Chinese President Xi Jinping, (center), and Wang Yi, Chinese Communist Party's foreign policy chief, (third right), in the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, China, Monday, June 19, 2023. (AP)

Major management reshuffle at e-commerce giant

Alibaba announces new CEO, chairman

HONG KONG, June 20, (AP): China's Alibaba Group has announced a major management reshuffle as the e-commerce giant restructures into six different business divisions to adapt to fast-changing technologies.

The moves also are aimed at spurring growth at a time when the Chinese economy is slowing despite an end to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions a half-year ago.

Eddie Wu, chairman of its e-commerce group, will succeed Daniel Zhang as CEO, the company said in a statement Tuesday.

Zhang will be CEO and chairman of Alibaba's cloud computing unit, which has been approved to be spun off and is expected to be listed for trading within a year.

Alibaba's current executive vice chairman, Joseph Tsai, is to succeed Zhang as chairman of the Alibaba Group. Tsai, who owns the NBA basketball team Brooklyn Nets and is the chairman of Alibaba-owned Hong Kong newspaper South China Morning Post, is a Taiwan-born Canadian citizen. He helped to found Alibaba in the late 1990s.

Wu was the company's technology

director when the company was founded in 1999. He also served as special assistant to Alibaba's co-founder and former board chairman Jack Ma between 2014 and 2019, and has had stints as CTO of Alibaba's digital wallet business Alipay and as a chairman of Alibaba Health.

Alibaba's reorganization will allow five of its six business divisions, excluding the core e-commerce business, to raise outside capital and go public.

The changes take effect Sept. 10. Zhang, became Alibaba Group's CEO in 2015 and succeeded Ma as chairman in 2019. He is known for creating the Singles' Day shopping festival, which over the years has grown to become the world's largest online shopping extravaganza.

"This is the right time for me to make a transition, given the importance of Alibaba Cloud Intelligence Group as it progresses towards a full spin-off," Zhang said in a statement.

"I look forward to working closely with Joe and Eddie in the coming months to ensure a seamless transition."

Alibaba's Hong Kong shares were

down about 1.5% Tuesday afternoon following the news.

Alibaba has in recent years come under scrutiny by the Chinese government amid a crackdown on the technology industry.

Ma, the firm's best known co-founder and once China's richest man, has kept a low profile with few public appearances after he publicly criticized China's regulators and financial systems during a speech in Shanghai in Oct. 2020.

Shortly afterward, the government scuttled a planned initial public offering of Alibaba's financial affiliate Ant Group. It had been set to raise \$34.5 billion in what would have been the world's largest share offering at the time.

Alibaba was later fined \$2.8 billion for breaching antitrust rules as Chinese authorities cracked down on the once-free-wheeling technology industry.

In March, Ma returned to mainland China after being reportedly being sighted in Europe, Japan, Thailand and Hong Kong over the past few years. His itinerary has been closely watched as a barometer of Beijing's attitude towards private businesses.

our relationship."

"The United States is committed to doing that," Blinken said. "It's in the interest of the United States, in the interests of China, and in the interest of the world."

Blinken described his earlier discussions with senior Chinese officials as "candid and constructive."

Despite the symbolism of his presence in China, Blinken and other U.S. officials had played down the prospects for any significant breakthroughs on the most vexing issues facing the planet's two largest economies.

PwC Global Workforce Hopes & Fears Survey

One in 4 workers looking for 'new' jobs as cost of living concerns bite

LONDON, June 20, (PR Newswire): PwC released the 2023 Global Workforce Hopes & Fears Survey which details the attitudes and behaviours of nearly 54,000 workers in 46 countries and territories.

Despite a softening economy globally, "The Great Resignation" looks to continue. One in four (26%) employees say it is likely they will change jobs in the next 12 months, up from 19% last year. Workers who said they are most likely to change employers include those who feel overworked (44%), struggle to pay the bills every month (38%), and Gen Z (35%).

Purpose, company culture and inclusion also remains key to employee concerns. Among workers who said they are likely to change employers, less than half (47%) said they find their jobs fulfilling compared to 57% of those unlikely to change employers. Those likely to change employers are also eight percentage points less likely to say that they can truly be themselves at work than their counterparts who intend to stay (51% vs. 59%).

Today's cooling economy is creating a cash-strapped workforce

Globally, employees are increasingly feeling cash-strapped as a cooling economy and inflationary challenges continue to impact workforce wallets. The proportion of the global workforce who said they have money left over at the end of the month has fallen to 38%, down from 47% last year. One in five workers (21%) now work multiple jobs, with 69% doing so because they need additional income. The share of workers with multiple jobs is higher for Gen Z (30%) and ethnic minorities (28%).

The economic squeeze is also driving up pay demands, with the proportion of workers planning to ask for a pay increase jumping from 35% to 42% year on year. Among workers who are struggling financially, that number rises to nearly half (46%).

Bob Moritz, PwC Global Chair, said:

"The global workforce is divided into two - those with valuable skills who are well set to keep learning, and those without. We found that often, those without the skills are less financially secure and less able to access training in the skills of the future. In a world where CEOs know they need to transform their businesses to succeed, they need to combine the benefits of technology with a plan to unlock the talents of all workers. It is in no-one's interest for businesses to chase the same group of skilled workers while the rest of society gets left behind."

There is a negative feedback loop as cash-strapped workers are less likely to access training

Workers struggling financially are also less able to meet the challenges of the future including the need to develop new skills and adapt to the rise of AI. Compared to workers who can pay their bills comfortably, those who struggle or cannot pay their bills are 12 percentage points less likely to say they are actively seeking out opportunities to develop new skills (62% vs. 50%). Similarly, those workers who are more financially secure are more likely to seek feedback at work and use it to improve their performance (57%) than those who are struggling financially (45%).

More than one-third (37%) of workers doing better financially say AI will improve their productivity versus those workers not doing well financially (24%). Those workers doing better financially also think AI will create new job opportunities (24% vs.



Bhusan Sethi

19%). They are less likely to think it will change the nature of their work in a negative way (13% vs. 18%).

Skilled workers are more optimistic

In contrast, skilled workers are facing a rapidly changing economic and workplace environment with greater confidence. Workers who said their job requires specialised skills are more likely to anticipate change ahead. More than half (51%) say the skills their job requires will change significantly in the next five years, compared to just 15% for employees who don't have specialised training. Around two-thirds are confident their employer will help them develop the digital, analytical and collaboration skills they will need. These numbers fall to below half for those who do not currently work in jobs that require specialist training.

Legacy recruitment practices hinder employee mobility confidence

In a competitive labour market, employers are missing out on valuable talent because of old-fashioned approaches to recruitment and development. More than one-third (35%) of workers with specialist skills moderately or strongly agree that they have missed out on work opportunities because they don't know the right people.

Meanwhile, more than one-third (35%) of workers say they have skills that are not apparent from their CV or job histories, indicating companies may be overlooking talent within the ranks. Recent research published by the World Economic Forum in collaboration with PwC found that creating skills-first labour markets could help more than 100 million people worldwide get better jobs.

Bhusan Sethi, Strategy& Principal, PwC US, said:

"With the ongoing economic uncertainty, we see a global workforce that wants more pay and more meaning from their work. Addressing these needs will be critical as leaders seek to transform their workplaces enabling business model reinvention, profitable growth and job creation. A critical part of this transformation agenda will include accessing alternative talent pools through a skills-first hiring approach to address today's skills and labour shortages. Evaluating and upskilling people based on what they can do in the future, not just what they have demonstrated in the past, can deliver sustainable economic, business and societal outcomes."

Employers have a key role to play in employee retention

PwC's 2023 CEO Survey found that four in 10 CEOs think their company will not survive more than 10 years without transformation.

Envision powers Central Asia largest wind devt

Envision Energy, a world-leading renewable energy company, is proud to announce its pivotal role as turbine supplier for the 1 GW Bash & Dzhanakely wind projects in Uzbekistan.

ACWA Power, a renowned Saudi Arabian developer that is driving the energy transition globally, spearheads these projects' development, with financing offered by leading international development financial institutions

led by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), DEG, Proparco, the OPEC Fund, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) among others.

Envision Energy's EN171-6.5 wind turbines are integral to these projects' operational and financial frameworks. This confirms the faith placed in Envision by various financial institutions including EBRD and ADB.

The Bash & Djankely wind pro-

jects will contribute immensely to Uzbekistan's objective of installing 5000 MW of wind energy by 2030.

John Lee, Managing Director of Envision Energy Asia and Africa, comments, "As a dedicated net-zero partner, we offer a comprehensive suite of product and system solutions. We're proud to drive renewable energy expansion in Uzbekistan and beyond, furthering the growth and sustainability of the renewable energy sector." (AP)

Huasun Energy has top energy yield performance

Huasun Energy's Himalaya G12-132 bifacial double-glass HJT solar module demonstrates exceptional performance and reliability. With its high performance, Huasun has emerged as one of the 'Top Performers' based on data obtained from PVEL's Product Qualification Program (PQP) test.

In rigorous PQP test, six tests included in the 2023 publication are thermal cycling, damp heat, mechanical stress sequence, po-

tential-induced degradation (PID), light-induced degradation (LID) + light and elevated temperature-induced degradation (LETID), and PAN performance, which plays a crucial role in assessing real-world performance by comparing modeled results to actual measurements within an accelerated lifetime test regime.

Notably, in terms of PAN Performance, which forecasts the system's alignment with energy yield

predictions using industry-standard modeling software PVsyst, Huasun Energy's Himalaya G12-132 bifacial double-glass HJT solar module has achieved a top energy yield on simulated PV sites documented in PVEL's PAN reports.

Based on 'PVsyst Energy Yield Simulations' located in Las Vegas and Boston, Huasun's remarkable performance surpasses that of all the other module manufacturers in terms of specific energy yield. (AP)

Black people made up 26% of the homeless population: New study

'High housing costs, low income push Californians into homelessness'

SAN FRANCISCO, June 20, (AP): Homeless people in California are already a vulnerable group, often struggling with poor health, trauma and deep poverty before they lose their housing, according to a new study on adult homelessness.

The study released Tuesday by the University of California, San Francisco attempts to capture a comprehensive picture of how people become homeless in California, and what impeded their efforts at finding permanent housing. The representative survey of nearly 3,200 homeless people found that when they lost housing, their median household income was \$960 a month, and for renters on leases it was \$1,400 a month, of which on average half went to rent.

Homelessness is a national crisis, and all too pervasive in California, where an estimated 171,000 people - or 30% of all homeless people in the U.S. - are homeless. Political leaders are divided over how to address the crisis, with some, including Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom, favoring tent encampment sweeps and a tough-love approach toward those with mental health and addiction issues.

It is not groundbreaking news that the state's exorbitant housing costs are a major driver behind homelessness, but researchers at the UCSF's Benioff Homelessness and Housing Initiative hope that the study will strengthen public support for policies that focus on offering housing and emergency rental assistance - rather than policies emphasizing punishment or stigma.

"People are homeless because their rent is too high. And their options are too few. And they have no cushion," said Dr. Margot Kushel, initiative director and lead investigator. "And it really makes you wonder how different things would look if we could solve that underlying problem."

Kushel's team surveyed nearly 3,200 adults around California, and followed up to conduct in-depth interviews with 365 people, between October 2021 and November 2022.

The study found that Black people made up 26% of the homeless population in a state where they are only 6% of the general population. About 90% of participants were living in California when they became homeless. Half reported an inability to work due to age, health or disability. The median length of homelessness was a little under two years.

More than a third of adults surveyed met the criteria for chronic homelessness, meaning they had a disabling condition and were homeless for at least 1 year - or were homeless four times in the previous three years totaling more than 12 months.

In Los Angeles in 2015, Sage Johnson's mother was evicted from their apartment when she was unable to meet rent that had increased to \$1,200. In disability pay, she received about \$1,340 a month. She bounced around, from LA's notorious Skid Row to various convalescent homes while her daughter lived at a shelter.

Later, Johnson, 28, was able to place her mother in a home, where she stayed for about two years. In 2018

though, her mother died from a debilitating stroke.

Johnson, who now has stable housing, wishes she could have done more.

"But in the end, she did have a bed. She was inside. She didn't have any more strokes outside. And she was able to regenerate and rejuvenate and restore some of her life while in the convalescent home," said Johnson, a co-chair for one of the study's advisory boards.

Among study participants, substance abuse and issues with mental health were common and predated becoming homeless. Of those surveyed, 45% reported current, regular use of cocaine, amphetamines and opioids or heavy episodic drinking. Participants described how heavy substance use contributed to losing their homes, but also how methamphetamine usage allowed them to stay alert to protect themselves from assault or theft.

Nearly half of the adults surveyed were not on a lease in the six months prior to becoming homeless, and had likely moved in with family or friends, contributing to rent when they could. Nearly a quarter cited conflict among housemates, desire for more space or not wanting to impose any longer on family and friends as primary reasons they left.

On average, people surveyed who were not on leases received only one day of warning before needing to move out.

Among people on rental lease agreements, more than 20% cited income loss or reduction as the primary

reason they lost housing. "So it wasn't so much that their housing costs increased, it's that they could no longer keep up with it," said Kushel.

California ranks as the most unaffordable state when it comes to housing, according to an annual report by the National Low Income Housing Coalition. A person earning an hourly minimum wage of \$15.50 would have to work nearly 90 hours a week to afford the statewide average for a modest one-bedroom rental, which is nearly \$1,800 a month, the coalition states.

The study was requested by Newsom's administration, which has made addressing homelessness a priority, but the state did not fund it so didn't play a role in analyzing data or interpreting the findings.

The report makes many recommendations, including deep expansion of rental assistance and pilot programs to facilitate shared housing for people seeking to get out of homelessness - and a rental stipend program for people living temporarily with family or friends.

Johnson said she hopes the public will find the report's findings to be evidence that tax dollars are being put to good use in social safety net spending. She also hopes that people will support robust mental health and addiction treatment services along with affordable housing options.

"I don't want to set anyone up for failure," she said. "And I'm sure many of my peers can agree that folks need time to practice going back to, like, regular society life."

Buttigieg says US 'green corridors' initiative 'key' to cutting shipping industry emissions

'40% of Yokohama's emissions come from its port'

YOKOHAMA, Japan, June 20, (AP): An American push to establish "green shipping corridors" is key to reducing carbon emissions from the shipping industry, U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg said Monday while touring the port of Yokohama near Tokyo.

Buttigieg was in Japan to attend a meeting over the weekend of transport ministers of the Group of Seven advanced economies, who reaffirmed a commitment to reducing emissions from the transport industry and to keeping navigation free and open in the Asia-Pacific region.

The U.S. is seeking to develop and strengthen partnerships with "like-minded countries" to improve maritime security and keep shipping and aviation corridors open, he told The Associated Press in an interview.

Emissions from maritime transport account for about 3% of total global emissions from human activities. Some 40% of Yokohama's emissions come from its port.

About 90% of all traded goods are moved by sea, and maritime trade volumes are expected to triple by 2050, according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. Studies predict the industry's share of greenhouse gas emissions could reach 15%. That has added urgency to efforts to cut such pollution.

The International Maritime Organization, which regulates commercial shipping, wants to halve its greenhouse gas releases by midcentury and may seek deeper cuts this year.

The Port of Los Angeles signed an agreement in March with port authorities of Yokohama and Tokyo to establish the so-called green shipping corridors, aiming to promote emissions

Italians calling for a pasta protest

Food prices are squeezing Europe

MILAN, June 20, (AP): When it comes to skyrocketing pasta prices, Italians are crying: Basta! They have had enough after the cost of the staple of every Italian table soared by twice the rate of inflation. One consumer advocate group is calling for a weeklong national pasta strike starting June 22 after the Rome government held a crisis meeting last month and decided not to intervene on prices.

"The macaroni strike is to see if keeping pasta on the shelves will bring down the prices, in the great Anglo-Saxon tradition of boycotting goods," said Furio Truzzi, president of the group, Assoutenti. "The price of pasta is absolutely out of proportion with production costs." Grocery prices have risen more sharply in Europe than in other advanced economies - from the U.S. to Japan - driven by higher energy and labor costs and the impact of Russia's war in Ukraine. That is even though costs for food commodities have fallen for months from record highs, including wheat for the flour used to make pasta.

Stores and suppliers have been accused of profit-padding "greedflation," but economists say retail profits have been stable and the problem comes down to the higher cost to produce food.

reductions through use of net-zero emissions vessels and other efforts to reduce the flow of greenhouse gases from ports and shipping.

It also has formed similar partnerships with Singapore and Shanghai and the U.S. has begun discussing setting up such corridors in Southeast Asia. The initiative is also under discussion by the Quad, which includes

Feeling the pressure, some governments in Europe have capped prices on staples or pushed for agreements with grocery stores to bring down costs, something that's popular with the public but can actually make food prices worse.

Shoppers like Noée Borey, a 26-year-old picking up groceries at a chain store in Paris, said she is all for setting ceilings for some food to help low-income workers and students.

She buys less meat and opts for less expensive grocery stores. "Inevitably, all the products I buy have gone up by 20%, whether it's butter or berries," Borey said. "I'm not buying cherries anymore because they cost 15 euros a kilo" (about \$8 a pound).

The French government reached a three-month agreement with supermarket chains for them to cut prices on hundreds of staples and other foods, which is expected to be extended through the summer. Britain - where food inflation has reached 45-year highs - is discussing a similar move.

Countries like Hungary, with the highest food inflation in the European Union, and Croatia have mandated price controls for items like cooking oil, some pork cuts, wheat flour and milk.

Japan, the U.S., India and Australia.

Yokohama is the closest major port to North America across the Pacific and is a major regional hub.

Japan is working to reduce fossil fuel use and promote hydrogen and ammonia as alternative fuels. Yokohama plans to build a terminal for ships to import hydrogen, officials said. Other facilities in Yokohama allow a ship that is idling at the port to be powered electronically instead of burning heavily polluting marine fuel oil.

Similar initiatives are being promoted in U.S. ports, Buttigieg said, adding that Japanese leadership in developing hydrogen as fuel is going to be "a big part of the future."

The Biden administration is pushing to speed up the transition to renewable and less polluting energy sources. While attending G7 meetings in April in Sapporo, northern Japan, U.S. Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm toured the world's first and only liquefied hydrogen carrier, a ship that showcases Japanese efforts to transform heavily polluting coal into emissions-free hydrogen power.

Japan aims to achieve carbon neutrality in 2050, with a goal of becoming a "hydrogen society." But its hydrogen industry is still in its initial stages, and still mostly reliant on hydrogen produced using fossil fuels.



Announcement

Subscription and allocation results of the rights offering for the increase in the issued capital of Kuwait International Bank K.S.C.P.

The rights offering subscription period for the increase in the issued capital of Kuwait International Bank K.S.C.P. (the "Bank" or the "Issuer") ended on Tuesday, 13 June 2023. The offered rights of 428,571,729 shares were fully subscribed during this period.

The following is a summary of the subscription results for the rights offering:

- Total number of rights issue shares offered: 428,571,429 shares
- Total value of rights issue shares offered: KD 60,000,000.060
- Total number of subscribed shares: 2,943,071,971 shares
- Total value of subscribed shares: KD 412,030,075.940
- Number of rights subscribed: 383,251,911 shares (89.43% of total rights offered)
- Number of unsubscribed rights allotted to subscribers who applied for more than their entitlement: 45,319,518 shares (10.57% of the total right issue shares offered)
- The percentage of allocation of additional issue shares to subscribers who have applied for more than their entitlement: 1.77%

The total value of the rights issue shares offered shall be transferred to the Bank's capital account and the excess amount shall be refunded to the respective shareholders within five business days of the disclosure of the allocation results that was made in Boursa Kuwait.

For more information:

kibci@kamcoinvest.com - (965) 2233 6648/6976

Issuance Advisor & Subscription Agent

KAMCO
INVEST



U.S. Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg, (front left), is guided to the Yokohama Port during a tour which includes a visit to a construction site for a new pier that will accommodate larger ships coming from the U.S. in Tokyo. (AP)

BUSINESS

Ghossn denies payments to former French minister

A Lebanese judge on Monday questioned auto tycoon Carlos Ghossn in Beirut over possible links to a former French Cabinet minister charged two years ago with "passive corruption" for work she did for him, officials familiar with the case said.

The Lebanese officials said Ghossn denied any dealings with France's former Justice Minister Rachida Dati who is accused of having done consulting work for Ghossn for two years starting in 2010 when she was a member of the European parliament.

Dati was accused in 2021 of "passive corruption by a person who at the time was

holding an elective mandate" and "benefiting from abuse of power." She was suspected of lobbying which would have been illegal in her position.

The former head of Nissan and Renault denied during the questioning in Beirut that Nissan had paid about \$1 million for Dati in lawyer fees, added the officials speaking on condition of anonymity.

The officials said Beirut recently received a new Red Notice from Interpol and summoned Ghossn for questioning on Monday where he came with his lawyer to attend the session. It was the third Red Notice that Lebanon

has received since Ghossn fled from Japan in late 2019.

A Red Notice is not an international arrest warrant but a request to law enforcement to provisionally arrest the person of interest.

Monday's questioning was the first for Ghossn since May last year when he was summoned for questioning days after Beirut received a Red Notice from Interpol at the request of the French prosecutor's office.

The notice was for Ghossn and four other people based on an investigation opened in 2019 into money laundering and abuse of company assets. (AP)



Former Nissan Motor Co. Chairman Carlos Ghossn holds a press conference at the Maronite Christian Holy Spirit University of Kaslik, Lebanon, on Sept. 29, 2020. (AP)

Company contribution to UNHCR helped over 1500 families to date

Boursa Kuwait reaffirms its commitment to the UNHCR

KUWAIT CITY, June 20: Boursa Kuwait lit up its office building in blue on June 20, 2023, in commemoration of World Refugee Day and in line with its efforts to support humanitarian causes and make a difference and positive impact in the community.

World Refugee Day is an international day designated by the United Nations to honor refugees around the globe, celebrating the strength and courage of people who have been forced to flee their home country to escape conflict or persecution. Falling on June 20 of every year, it is an occasion to build empathy and understanding for the plight of refugees and recognize their resilience in rebuilding their lives. This year, World Refugee Day focuses on the power of inclusion and solutions for refugees, with the theme of "Hope away from Home".

Commenting on the occasion, Mr. Naser Meshari Al Sanousi, Senior Director of Marketing and Communication at Boursa Kuwait, said: "On World Refugee Day, Boursa Kuwait joins the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, supporting the agency's efforts to help over 110 million refugees and internally displaced people across the globe, who have been forced to flee their homes because of wars and conflicts in countries like Syria, Yemen, Afghanistan, Sudan and many other places around the world."

On the occasion, the company also announced that it would continue to support initiatives launched by the UNHCR. The company has been an advocate of the UNHCR and has supported the Agency's efforts to make a difference in the lives



Naser Al Sanousi

of refugees and the internally displaced. Over the past few years, Boursa Kuwait has contributed to the annual Winterization Assistance Program as well as the educational program for the children of refugees and internally displaced people among other initiatives.

This year, the exchange is supporting the emergency efforts in Sudan, where large numbers of civilians have been forced to flee following the outbreak of armed conflict, including people who were already internally displaced because of previous conflicts in Sudan and refugees from other countries who had sought safety in Sudan. In addition to new internal displacement, over 450,000 people, including Sudanese refugees and refugees of other nationalities hosted by Sudan have fled Sudan to neighboring countries or returned home in adverse circumstances – notably to Chad, South Sudan, the Central African Republic, Egypt and Ethiopia.

Boursa Kuwait's partnership with the UNHCR is the embodiment of the company's sincere desire to raise awareness to the importance of helping those who are in need and have been deprived of their right to live with dignity. This initiative will contribute to greater awareness of the importance of helping the victims of wars, conflicts and persecution build better futures for themselves.

Al-Sanousi added: "Boursa Kuwait values its strategic partnership with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees and has supported the UN Refugee Agency's projects and initiatives over the past three years. The company believes it has an important role in achieving the United Nations' Sustainable Development



Nisreen Rubaian

Goals. On World Refugee Day, I would like to invite our partners in the private sector to join us in support of solutions to the refugees' plight".

The initiative forms part of Boursa Kuwait's efforts to create a lasting meaningful impact on the community as part of its Corporate Sustainability strategy, and is in line with Goal 1 – No Poverty, Goal 2 – Zero Hunger, Goal 3 – Good Health and Well-Being, Goal 4 – Quality Education, Goal 6 – Clean Water and Sanitation, Goal 10 – Reduced Inequalities and Goal 17 – Partnership for the Goals - of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

UNHCR Representative in Kuwait Ms. Nisreen Rubaian welcomed Boursa Kuwait's support of the agency and its mandate, saying, "World Refugee Day aims to shed light on the plight of refugees and the internally displaced around the world, falling every year on June 20. This year's theme of "Hope Away From Home" stresses the importance of the inclusion of refugees into the societies in which they were adopted, giving them an opportunity to become contributors and helping them rebuild their lives. I would like to thank Boursa Kuwait for partnering with the UNHCR and supporting the Commission's efforts in making a difference in the lives of over 1500 refugee families for the past three years, and would like to hail the exchange's contribution to the field of education for all parties, specifically unaccompanied children, and look forward to more collaboration in the future."

Boursa Kuwait's Corporate Sustainability strategy stipulates ensuring initiatives apply and fall in line with the company's corporate social responsibility (CSR), industry best practice standards and investor expectations, creating strong and sustainable partnerships that ultimately achieve success and allow Boursa Kuwait to leverage the capabilities and strengths of other companies or organizations that have experience in different fields, and integrating sustainability efforts with the company culture, in order to achieve longevity and an ongoing impact that is carried on and instilled in the day-to-day operations of the stock exchange.

As part of the strategy, Boursa Kuwait has launched many initiatives in partnership with local and international organizations, focusing on support for nongovernmental organizations and charity programs, financial literacy and capital market awareness, the empowerment of women, as well as environmental protection.

KIB successfully completes its capital increase, oversubscribed by 687 pct

KD 60 mln value of shares sold

KUWAIT CITY, June 20: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) announced the successful completion of the subscription process to increase its capital by offering 428,571,429 shares, at a value of KD 60 million. The right issue was oversubscribed by 687%, and the capital increase comes in line with the Bank's strategy to achieve further development and growth.

Following the completion of the capital increase, the Bank's paid-up capital increased by 34.98% to reach KD 165.4 million which strengthens the Bank's financial position. The Bank will use the proceeds of the capital increase to support the Bank's regulatory capital ratios and support its growth plans. In addition, the proceeds will be additional investments in developing its digital infrastructure to provide digital banking services of high quality.

The rights issue period commenced on Tuesday May 30th until June 13th. Kamco Investment Company K.S.C.P. (Kamco Invest) managed the offering in their capacity as the Issuance Advisor and Subscription Agent, and Meysan Partners were appointed by the Bank as the Legal Advisors. The subscription process was fully automated whereby applications were submitted through Kuwait Clearing Company's online subscription platform, www.ipoc.kw.

Raed Jawad Bukhamseen, Vice Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the Bank, said: "We were pleased to witness a high level of shareholder participation and oversubscription of the offering, which is reflective of our shareholders' commitment to the Bank and investors' confidence in the strategy adopted by the Bank. I would like to take this opportunity to highlight the role played by the "Kamco Invest" team, the Issuance Advisor and Subscription Agent, and Kuwait Clearing Company, the Clearing and Depository Agent, in the success of this offering, in addition to the support from the regulatory authorities including the Central Bank of Kuwait, the Capital Markets Authority, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, and Boursa Kuwait."

He added, "The capital increase will strengthen KIB's capital base and enhance its capital adequacy ratios. The proceeds from the offering will contribute to the Bank's overall growth trajectory and business development activities. In further efforts to cement our position as a leading and competitive financial institution in the region, we remain committed to implementing our transformational strategy that is in step with the banking sector's continuous development and reflects our future-focused vision."

Bukhamseen added: "As a forward-looking bank, we will use the capital increase to achieve the objectives drawn in our dynamic strategy to enrich customers' experiences by providing innovative, next-level products



Al Dukhan receiving the award on behalf of Kuwait Airways.

Kuwait Airways, the World's Most Improved Airline for the Year '23

KUWAIT CITY, June 20: Kuwait Airways has received the top award as the World's Most Improved Airline by the international air transport rating organization, Skytrax, specialized in the evaluation of airlines during the 2023 World Airline Awards which was held on the side-lines of the Paris Air Show. The award was received by Kuwait Airways Chairman, Captain Ali Al-Dukhan, with the participation of the Chief Executive Officer of Kuwait Airways, Eng. Maen Razouqi and in the presence of various heads of international airlines and experts in the air transport industry.

Kuwait Airways is proud to have achieved the 42nd rank for the year 2023 of the 50 best airlines around the world after it was ranked 76th for the year 2022 of the 100 best airlines around the world.

Additionally, Kuwait Airways expects to make further remarkable progress in 2023 by the end of the year, befitting the national carrier of the State of Kuwait and will continue raising the expectations higher, to embrace new opportunities by investing in the service of the Blue Bird's valued customers.

and services that meet their needs and add real value to their lifestyles. In addition, we will continue driving innovation in the banking sector by investing in digital technology, which, in turn, would enable us to provide holistic solutions to cope with the rapid changes in the local and regional markets."

The Bank's financial results for the fiscal year 2022 showcased a solid

The awards presented by Skytrax are independent and impartial where travelers across the world vote in the largest airlines passenger satisfaction survey to determine the award winners.

The 2023 awards were selected over the course of a year based on customer survey and questionnaire provided in English, French, Spanish, Russian, Japanese, and Chinese.

Over 100 customer nationalities participated in this survey with 20 million eligible entries counted in the results. In addition, more than 325 airlines were featured in the final award results.

On the sidelines of the honoring function, Kuwait Airways Chairman, Captain Ali Al-Dukhan stated, "We are proud to receive this prestigious accolade, that is awarded to Kuwait Airways, reflecting the objectives set by the company's Board Members and the relentless efforts of the employees in all the operational and support sectors of the company. This is a culmination of their diligent endeavours in developing the Blue Bird, as well as their dedication and commitment over the past years in achieving the desired objectives and enabling Kuwait Airways to

achieve the best levels of excellence."

Al-Dukhan added, "This award is according to the criteria specified by Skytrax and based on the extensive survey and evaluation carried out over several months. The entire operational system at Kuwait Airways was evaluated, commencing from reservations through the various sales channels (the company's sales offices, website, electronic application), followed by completion of travel procedures at Terminal 4, including services at the check-in and baggage weighing area, all the way to boarding the aircraft and enjoying a comfortable and pleasant experience on board the latest fleet of aircraft that are environmentally friendly and have modern technological features and facilities."

On his part, the Chief Executive Officer of Kuwait Airways, Eng. Maen Razouqi stated, "Kuwait Airways takes pride in receiving the Skytrax Most Improved Airline Award, which is a testament to our unwavering commitment and relentless efforts of all our employees in achieving the strategic objectives and vision for 2030, aimed at providing the best of customer experience.



Raed Bukhamseen

financial performance, with a net profit attributable to shareholders reaching almost KD 13.6 million, with earnings per share (EPS) of 7.92 fils, and a steady growth rate of 25% compared to the previous year. The consolidation financial statements indicated that the Bank's assets grew by 14%, reaching KD 3.58 billion by the end of 2022 – compared to almost KD 3.14 billion in the preceding year.

Cloud based solution to be utilized

SBK selects Yardi's unified platform to manage its mixed real estate portfolio

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates, June 20, (PR Newswire): SBK Real Estate, one of the largest property management firms in the Middle East, has chosen Yardi® as its property management and accounting platform to digitalise its estate management services, enhance operations and customer services.

Yardi's technology will help SBK automate its real estate management services, consolidate data and gain a holistic overview of its mixed portfolio from a single cloud platform. With Yardi's unified solution, SBK will streamline the lead-to-lease journey, integrate rental contracts to Dubai Land Department System Ejari and enhance tenant services through a fully white-labelled resident portal and mobile app.

"Yardi's comprehensive suite of products will enable us to centralise our operations with a user-friendly dashboard and improve collaboration across various departments," said Mr. Ahamed Niazi, General Manager, SBK Real Estate. "This implementation will help us optimise our services to our clients and drive our growth strategy forward."

"It's great to see SBK Real Estate choose Yardi as its technology partner," said Neal Gemassmer, vice president of international for

Yardi. "Our cloud-based solution is designed for real estate and helps simplify complexities in both property management and accounting whilst automating time-consuming day-to-day processes. We look forward to working closely with SBK and are excited to see Yardi continue to grow in the UAE."

See how Yardi can elevate your real estate operations through a fully connected solution.

About SBK Real Estate SBK Real Estate commenced operations in 1998 as an endeavour to tap the vast potential in property management market and other related segments of the real estate industry. SBK Group is a diversified group of companies under the ownership of H. H. Sheikh Suhail Bin Khalifa Saeed Al Maktoum and Mr Ahamed Hassan. For more information, visit sbkrealstate.com.

About Yardi Yardi® develops and supports industry-leading investment and property management software for all types and sizes of real estate companies. With over 8,500 employees, Yardi is working with our clients globally to drive significant innovation in the real estate industry. For more information on how Yardi is Energised for Tomorrow, visit yardi.ae.

BLS International signs Visa outsourcing deal with Embassy of Italy in Abu Dhabi

NEW DELHI, June 20, (PR Newswire): BLS International, a trusted global tech-enabled services partner, has entered into a significant visa outsourcing agreement with the Embassy of Italy in Abu Dhabi.

The agreement aims to streamline the visa application process and enhance the overall experience for applicants. Earlier this year, BLS International effectively secured three new contracts with the Italian government in Singapore, Senegal, and Russia. With the recent addition of the Italian mission in Abu Dhabi, BLS International now collaborates with four Italian missions worldwide, significantly expanding its footprint.

The Embassy of Italy in Abu Dhabi has chosen BLS International as its preferred partner for visa processing services due to company's expertise and commitment to delivering efficient and reliable solutions. BLS International, with its extensive experience in handling visa and consular services, is well-equipped to manage the growing demand for Italian visas in the region.

Shikhar Aggarwal, Joint Managing Director, BLS International, expressed his enthusiasm for the collaboration, stating, "We are delighted to partner with the Embassy of Italy in Abu Dhabi and provide our best-in-class visa outsourcing services. This agreement reflects our continued commitment to delivering innovative and customer-centric solutions to our esteemed clients. We are confident that our advanced technology plat-

forms and dedicated workforce will ensure a seamless and hassle-free visa application process for applicants."

With its strong global presence and advanced visa processing systems, BLS International is committed to ensuring a smooth and efficient visa application journey. The company leverages cutting-edge technologies, including AI-driven platforms and data privacy measures, to ensure the highest levels of security and accuracy in the visa processing ecosystem.

The collaboration between BLS International and the Embassy of Italy in Abu Dhabi will provide applicants with a range of convenient services. This includes easy-to-access application centers, flexible appointment scheduling, and real-time tracking of application status.

About BLS International BLS International has a proven track record in providing visa outsourcing services to various diplomatic missions and governments worldwide. The company's dedication to operational excellence and customer-centric approach has earned it a reputation for delivering high-quality and reliable services.

BLS International is a leading Indian company that has experienced substantial growth since its establishment in 2005. As the only homegrown firm in its industry listed on the NSE and BSE, BLS International plays a pivotal role in supporting India's development and fulfilling its vision and mission.

Burgan Bank supports CBK's Eidity campaign

Burgan Bank is participating in supporting the Eidity campaign in collaboration with the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK), the Kuwait Banking Association (KBA), and KNET. As part of the campaign, and starting from June 20, a number of ATMs will be located at the Avenues, Assima Mall, Al Kout Mall and 360 Mall to provide bank customers and the public with cash bills in all denominations, due to increased demand during the Eid period.

In addition, the Bank is providing customers with Eidya cash bills through

its 29 branches across Kuwait and ATMs found at the Avenues, 360 Mall, Marina Mall, and Maghateer Complex in Fahaaheel.

The Eidity initiative has been quite successful over the course of the past few years, being well received by customers and the public at large, as it facilitates the easy withdrawal of Eidyas. On its part, Burgan Bank has always been committed to participating in and supporting all initiatives organized by CBK and KBA to help serve all customers of the banking sector in Kuwait.

Every year, Burgan Bank also offers a complimentary Eidya delivery service to its Premier and Private Banking customers, in collaboration with Peacock Concierge. As part of this service, the Bank delivers fresh bank notes in the denominations of the customer's choice and to any location they prefer – be it their home or workplace – to save them the hassle of visiting a branch in person.

Established in 1977, Burgan Bank is currently the third-largest bank by assets in Kuwait. From its earliest days,

the Bank has significantly focused on the corporate and financial institution sectors, in addition to diversifying its offering to cater to its growing retail and private banking customer base.

Burgan Bank has majority-owned subsidiaries, collectively known as the "Burgan Bank Group", in the MENAT region. This Group is supported by one of the largest branch networks across the region and includes: Gulf Bank Algeria – AGB (Algeria), Tunis International Bank – TIB (Tunisia), and the fully owned Burgan Bank Turkey.



Eidity final

Bank presents cutting-edge financing solutions

ABK participates in 2nd annual Dragon Gear Expo at 360 Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, June 20: In its commitment to meeting the diverse needs and preferences of customers in all sectors, Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK), as the strategic partner, sponsored the 2nd annual Dragon Gear exhibition for Chinese auto brands held from June 11 to 18, 2023 at 360 Kuwait.

This participation is seen as a testament to ABK's relentless pursuit in introducing visitors to its most salient, innovative offers, unparalleled products, and cutting-edge financing solutions, which are well-tailored to cater to the varied market segments. Throughout the event, the Bank presented financial solutions to support customers in finding the car that best suits their budgets and aspirations.

On this occasion, Johair Marafi, Acting General Manager of Retail Banking at ABK, said, "The Dragon Gear exhibition gains great im-



Ahli Bank of Kuwait team at the Dragon Gear exhibition.

portance in light of the significant demand for car purchases in the Kuwaiti market. We are therefore pleased to have sponsored the event

and had the opportunity to introduce potential customers to our financing solutions that suit their lifestyle needs."

According to Marafi, "We continue to collaborate with many entities in multiple sectors to provide exceptional discounts and rewarding benefits to customers, in appreciation of their continued trust in banking with ABK. We are committed to adopting the highest standards of security to protect them when making transactions."

Enhance

She added, "At ABK, we strive to innovate promotional campaigns and offers that increase customer satisfaction with our products and services. We offer customers a range of advantages and rewards when banking with ABK both in-store and online. Additionally, we study customer needs and go beyond their expectations to enhance our competitive position in the local banking sector."

Marafi noted that ABK regularly participates in exhibitions and events

that enable the Bank to engage with customers and strengthen its market share. It innovates offers and campaigns according to their preferences and personal needs.



Marafi

She emphasized that the Bank strives to provide numerous advantages that attract new customers to open accounts with them and unlock a unique banking experience complemented by exceptional services.

Marafi concluded with an invitation to follow the Bank's social media accounts to remain up to date with the latest marketing initiatives and to benefit from the current

promotional campaigns and offers throughout the year.

Since its establishment in 1967, ABK has progressed to become one of the leading Kuwaiti banks in the region that is today known for offering a simpler banking experience. The Bank offers personal, corporate, and private banking of which includes a wide array of products and services. ABK also provides a broad range of local, regional, and global investment solutions and services through its subsidiary, ABK Capital. Enjoying equal stability and strength, the Bank also offers the convenience of banking across the region, servicing other markets in Egypt and the UAE.

For more information about ABK, please follow the Bank's Instagram account @abk_kuwait, visit eahli.com, contact Ahlan Ahli 1 899 899 or visit one of the Bank's branches across Kuwait.

Indian designs showcased

Malabar Gold signs superstar NTR Jr. as new ambassador

KUWAIT CITY, June 20: Malabar Gold & Diamonds, the 6th largest jewellery retailer globally with over 320 showrooms across 11 countries, has signed mass superstar Nandamuri Taraka Rama Rao Jr. also known as NTR Jr. as its newest brand ambassador. NTR Jr. will be featured in the upcoming consumer campaigns of Malabar Gold & Diamonds. A prolific actor and a pan-India mass superstar attracting global attention, NTR Jr. reflects the core values of the group i.e., trust, transparency, and excellence with his affable and grounded persona.

The second innings of NTR Jr. as the brand's ambassador will make Malabar Gold & Diamonds 30th anniversary even more glittering. Signing the super-star is in line with the group's aim to further expand its customer base and build a stronger consumer-connect in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana region as well as across India and around the world.

Speaking about the association, NTR Jr. shared, "I am happy to be associated once again with Malabar Gold & Diamonds. Apart from being one of the most trusted jewellery brands, they are actively showcasing Indian designs, art & culture at the global stage. Their customer-centric promises and ESG initiatives have established their leadership in the industry. I see great synergy between the values I believe in and what the brand stands for."

Admired

Commenting on associating with NTR Jr., MP Ahammed, Chairman, Malabar Group said, "We are excited to renew our time-tested association with NTR Jr. He has emerged as a one of the widely admired movie stars in India across regions. His outstanding filmography underlines his command over the crafts of acting. He is an actor par excellence, and his impressive personality will further elevate our brand proposition. We had an amazing association in the past with NTR Jr. and the revival of the relation will help accelerate the acceptance of the brand globally in our ambition to be the no. 1 global jewellery retailer. As we celebrate our 30th anniversary this year, we would like to reaffirm our commitment to offering our valued customers excellence in transparency, jewellery variety and craftsmanship along with world-class jewellery shopping experience".

Malabar Gold & Diamonds boasts of an extensive retail network in India, UAE, KSA, Qatar, Bahrain, Oman, Kuwait, Malaysia, Singapore, the US & the UK. The group has plans to foray into new markets such as Australia, Canada, South Africa, Egypt, Bangladesh, Turkey and New Zealand as well as major cities in India.

Malabar Gold & Diamonds is known for providing an exceptional jewellery shopping experience with convenience and customer-friendly policies, known as the 'Malabar Promise.' This promise assures customers of unmatched quality,

transparency, and service assurance. With more than 25 exclusive brands and collections in gold, diamond, and precious gems, Malabar Gold & Diamonds presents designs curated from 20 countries, catering to the diverse tastes and preferences of their vast, multicultural customer base.

Malabar Gold & Diamonds was established in 1993 and is the flagship company of Malabar Group, a leading diversified Indian business conglomerate.

Addition

With an annual turnover of \$5.2 billion, the company currently ranks as the 6th largest jewellery retailer globally and today has a strong retail network of over 320 outlets spread across 11 countries in addition to multiple offices, design centers, wholesale units, and factories spread across India, Middle East, Far East, the USA & the UK. The group, owned by more than 4,000 shareholders, has more than 18,500 professionals from over 26 countries working towards its continued success. Malabar Gold & Diamonds also features an online store www.malabargoldanddiamonds.com providing customers the opportunity to purchase their favourite jewellery at any time and on any day from the comfort of their homes.

The group also operates MGD - Lifestyle Jewellery, a retail concept offering trendy and light weight jewellery that represents the independent and the modern woman through its designs and collections.

ESG (Environmental, Social & Governance) has been the primary commitment of the group since its inception. The key ESG focus area of Malabar Group are Health, Housing, Hunger Free World, Education, Environment and Women empowerment. Integrating the principles of responsibility and sustainability into its core business, Malabar Group periodically strengthens its ESG goals to remain a socially conscious and responsible organization. The group contributes 5% of its profit to such initiatives in the same country of operation.



Superstar NTR Jr., newest brand ambassador of Malabar Gold & Diamonds



KFH leadership and UNDP officials.

'Programme designed to help integrate SDGs'

KFH, UNDP host sustainable finance workshop for its senior management

KUWAIT CITY, June 20: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) organized a two-day workshop on sustainable finance for its senior management as part of the partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to advance the integration of sustainability into its practices and decision-making. The workshop brought together theory and practice by world-leading experts.

Mohammad Alarbeed, KFH Executive Manager Governance and Sustainability, said that the technical workshop for senior executives on sustainable finance is part of the Memorandum of Understanding previously signed with UNDP. The programme helps senior management keep abreast of the latest trends, laws and regulations in sustainability and identify best practices KFH can use.

"As part of its integrated sustainability strategy, KFH applies ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) standards to all its investments and adheres to transparency, financial inclusion and women's empowerment. This workshop is another strategic initiative for KFH to bolster its position as a sustainable bank and achieve greater alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)", Alarbeed added.

Investment

He emphasized that sustainability is indispensable to KFH's vision and mission. Leveraging sustainability and integrating ESG standards into responsible investment decisions is vital. Thus, the Sustainable Finance workshop is of great importance to KFH's senior management as it supports them in driving changes in the sustainability strategy and adopting responsible banking practices into the bank's operations.

Moises Venancio, Resident Representative of UNDP Kuwait, expressed his gratitude for the partnership between UNDP and KFH, stating that KFH has long been a global pioneer in Islamic finance. He added that the workshop aims

Tamam driving financial, digital inclusion

Zain's 'Tamam' platform in Saudi awarded 'Best Personal Finance Solution' in Mideast

DUBAI/RIYADH, June 20: Zain, a leading provider of innovative technologies and digital lifestyle communications operating in seven markets across the Middle East and Africa, announces that its "Tamam" financing services operation in Saudi Arabia has been selected as the 'Best Personal Finance Solution' by Entrepreneur Middle East Magazine, at its 2023 Middle East Fintech Awards event held in Dubai recently.

With the aim to increase financial inclusion in line with the Kingdom's 'Vision 2030' Financial Sector Development Plan, Tamam was established in 2019 under the Saudi Central Bank's Regulatory Sandbox program. Following 18 months of extensive proof-of-concept testing, on December 31, 2020, Tamam attained the first consumer micro-financing commercial license awarded in the Kingdom and the region to offer micro-loans via a fully digital customer experience on a mobile app.

Tamam offers the fastest response financing services in Saudi Arabia, providing individuals with the opportunity to receive Shari'a-compliant loans without physically visiting a bank location. The platform's end-



to-end application and award process takes just minutes from the time of downloading the app to the loan amount being paid out.

Commenting on the award, Tamam CEO, Yousef AlMusaillem said, "We are extremely proud of the work we do at Tamam in driving financial and digital inclusion across the Kingdom. We believe firmly that everyone deserves fair and equal access to financial services and take our participation in the

Kingdom's Vision 2030 Financial Sector Development Plan extremely seriously, with the aim of bringing as many individuals as possible into the digital economy."

Key Features of Tamam

As one of Saudi Arabia's most innovative micro-financing digital institutions, Tamam's solutions cater to the evolving financial needs of its customers. The platform's products include instant approvals; short-term financing; and fully digital, quick, easy, and secure solutions.

Potential customers can apply easily, using the Tamam app, receive rapid approval, and take advantage of the flexible conditions and easy processes. Loans are provided to Saudi nationals and residents, without the requirement of a salary transfer or guarantor, with a finance amount up to SAR 50,000 available for a 24-month tenure.

Tamam is passionate about its vision of becoming a leader in delivering innovative fintech solutions, supporting the socio-economic development of Saudi Arabia and beyond.

For more please visit <https://tamam.life/>

to give KFH a head start on its sustainability journey by improving the team's knowledge and understanding of the SDGs and sustainable finance, thematic/green sukuk, impact measurement and management practices, and available standards and benchmarks.

Venancio further stressed that the workshop represents UNDP's commitment to supporting the private sector in contributing to the global, regional, and national levels of the SDG agenda. He acknowledged that

KFH and many other banking institutions and companies worldwide actively seek ways to enhance their contributions to the planet's sustainability and the fight against climate change. The training agenda was specifically designed to integrate the SDGs and sustainability into KFH's daily portfolio and operations to facilitate the consolidation of these approaches.

It is worth noting that KFH has adopted a pioneering sustainability strategy and launched its "Keep it

Green" program as an umbrella for several sustainability initiatives. This has earned it Gold Level Certificate from the Global Sustainability Assessment System GSAS – the first Bank in Kuwait to receive such certification.

The technical partnership with UNDP supports KFH in strengthening its efforts to mainstream sustainability and the SDGs into its investment portfolio through SDG impact investment and the expansion of green finance.



Cardio Flow Design obtains FDA approval for 4D MRI blood flow analysis software

Aiosyn expands its AI-powered digital pathology QC solution

NIJMEGEN, Netherlands, June 20: Aiosyn, a software company that develops AI-powered pathology solutions, has announced the latest advancement in their automated quality control (QC) algorithm. Aiosyn's QC solution, AiosynQC, is now fully compatible with immunohistochemistry (IHC) slides, in addition to hematoxylin and eosin (H&E) slides. This update extends the benefits of AiosynQC and allows laboratories that rely significantly on IHC staining to further streamline operations.

"Immunohistochemistry is an integral part of modern pathology practices, and we are excited to offer an AI-powered solution for QC compatible with IHC staining, empowering laboratories to further improve their pathology workflow" says David Tellez, Chief Technology Officer of Aiosyn.

AiosynQC automatically recognizes and flags the most common artifacts in histology slide images, improving the quality and speed of the digital pathology workflow. The solution helps laboratories to ensure that only high-quality images are utilized by pathologists, technicians, and researchers. With the ability to flag problematic cases before they reach the pathologist, AiosynQC improves the efficiency of the workflow by reducing the manual check for artifacts during the quality control of slides.

Role

IHC is the second most common staining technique in pathology laboratories after H&E and plays an important role in both routine diagnostic work as well as in basic and clinical research, including biomarker exploration. Therefore, the compatibility with such staining marks a significant milestone that highlights Aiosyn's commitment to facilitate the adoption and integration of its software solutions into existing digital pathology workflows.

Alongside the expansion of support for IHC slides, Aiosyn is actively developing advanced deep learning algorithms for various pathologies. The recent launch of AiosynQC on Sectra Amplifier Marketplace further showcases Aiosyn's dedication to making AI-powered technology accessible to pathology laboratories worldwide.

Aiosyn is a Dutch medical software company that develops AI-powered pathology solutions that will be integrated into standard pathology workflows. The Aiosyn team has been built upon 20+ years of research experience in the field of pathology and is rooted into the pathology practice.

AiosynQC is an AI-powered solution for automated quality control of digital histology slides. In the EU and the UK, AiosynQC is not considered a medical device under Eu-

ropean IVDR and UK MDR 2002 legislation, respectively. AiosynQC is not intended to be used as an accessory to, nor is it necessary to be used in combination with any AI or other medical devices to specifically enable them to meet their intended purpose or directly assist in their functionality.

The US Food and Drug Administration has approved the use of iTFlow® in blood flow analysis. The FDA approval is significant as it recognizes the safety and effectiveness of iTFlow® in analyzing blood flow through 4D Flow MRI data, with the potential to enhance diagnostic accuracy for patients with cardiovascular diseases and heart conditions.

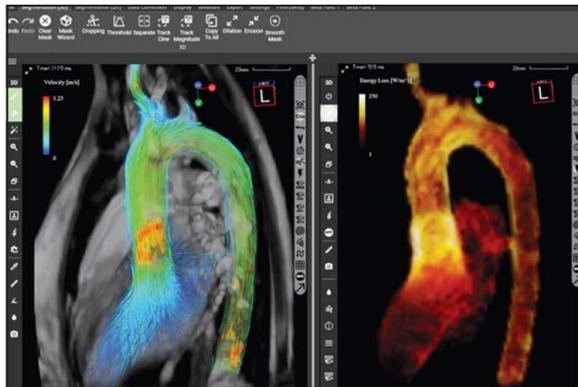
The FDA approval of iTFlow® will enable healthcare professionals to make more precise and effective decisions in patient care.

iTFlow® is an innovative software solution developed by Cardio Flow Design Inc. that supports blood flow analysis and evaluation in the fields of cardiovascular surgery and radiology. Based on MRI data, users can perform their own analysis and visualization of blood flow. It enables the visualization of fluid dynamics in the heart and blood vessels in both 2D and 3D, even without the use of contrast agents. Furthermore, various quantitative evaluations can be made, including flow rate, velocity, pathline, streamline, and other parameters. Combining advanced algorithms and image analysis techniques assists physicians and healthcare professionals in diagnosis and treatment planning.

Dr. Itatani, MD, Ph.D., a cardiovascular surgeon specializing in adult congenital heart disease and the inventor of iTFlow®, explains, "We developed this software with the aim of enabling all physicians, regardless of their level of experience, to propose the most appropriate treatment for patients even with complicated anatomy and cardiac function by quantitatively evaluating blood flow."

Research

Dr. Loke, Associate Professor of Pediatrics at Children's National Hospital, who has been conducting retrospective blood flow analysis research with iTFlow® prior to FDA approval, commented: "Cardiac magnetic imaging research has demonstrated the emerging potential of advanced intracardiac flow analysis in heart disease beyond traditional measurements. To that end, iTFlow® provides a front-line software interface to measure kinetic energies, vortices, and shear stresses inside the heart without the need for complex in-house engineering software. I am excited by the potential of software such as iTFlow® in bringing intracardiac flow analysis to clinical cardiology."



Blood flow visualization using iTFlow®

New tech helps in bone growth process during fusion

Orthofix launches WaveForm A 3D printed anterior lumbar interbody

LEWISVILLE, Texas, June 20: Orthofix Medical Inc. (NASDAQ:OFIX), a leading global spine and orthopedics company, has announced the full commercial launch of the WaveForm® A interbody for Anterior Lumbar Interbody Fusion (ALIF) procedures. The WaveForm A interbody seamlessly integrates with the company's Meridian ALIF system for treating patients in need of fusion due to degenerative disc disease. The proprietary wave-like design of the WaveForm A interbody provides a balance of strength, porosity and stability, with a large implant graft aperture for bone graft material to aid in creating an osteoinductive environment to optimize supplemental fixation procedures.

"Implant design and surface technology play a vital role in the bone growth process during fusion," said Dr. Neil Arif Tayyab, orthopaedic spine surgeon at Girard Orthopaedic Surgeons, in San Diego, CA. "Newer designs such as the WaveForm A interbody can help stimulate a better bone growth response and give me greater confidence that the patient will have a successful fusion."

The Meridian ALIF system is a modular instrument and implant system designed to help streamline ALIF procedures by providing diverse fixation options for single and multilevel ALIFs in a reduced number of trays. Meridian is compatible with both the WaveForm A interbody and the company's Reef™ A interbody featuring its proprietary NanoMetalene® surface technology and Reef Topography™. With the launch of WaveForm A, the Merid-



The 3D printed WaveForm A interbody for ALIF procedures features a proprietary wave-like design that provides a balance of strength, porosity and stability, with a large implant graft aperture for bone graft material.

idian system can more completely address the approximately \$200 million dollar ALIF market segment in the US.

Balance

The 3D printed WaveForm A implants feature WaveForm® technology, a repeating and continuous wave-like structure. WaveForm was

created to withstand high compressive loads while delivering an end-plate porosity that maximizes the potential for early stabilization. This balance of strength to porosity offers increased opportunity for bone packing, decreased stiffness profile and enhanced imaging properties.

"Our Meridian ALIF system integrates the most advanced technolo-

gies into our surgical sets, minimizing the need for multiple instrument sets during the procedure," said Kevin Kenny, President of Global Spine. "The WaveForm A interbody is an exciting addition to our portfolio of solutions for ALIF procedures and enables us to provide a more streamlined option so surgeons can do more for their patients."

The ALIF market can be segmented by material into non-3D printed metal, PEEK (standard and titanium-based advanced surface technologies), 3D printed metal, and machined bone markets. It is estimated that more than half of the US ALIF interbody market today is addressed by PEEK devices. Due to their clinical advantages, 3D printed and advanced surface technologies-based interbody devices are expected to grow faster than the overall interbody market in upcoming years as they take market share from PEEK devices, ultimately leading to a larger market share than standard PEEK.

The newly merged Orthofix-SeaSpine organization is a leading global spine and orthopedics company with a comprehensive portfolio of biologics, innovative spinal hardware, bone growth therapies, specialized orthopedic solutions and a leading surgical navigation system. Its products are distributed in more than 68 countries worldwide.

The Company is headquartered in Lewisville, Texas and has primary offices in Carlsbad, CA, with a focus on spine and biologics product innovation and surgeon education, and Verona, Italy, with an emphasis on product innovation, production, and medical education for orthopedics.

Fakeeh University first in ME to leverage drone tech

Dubai completes first medication delivery via drone

DUBAI, June 20: In another unique public-private sector partnership that raises Dubai's global competitiveness as a hub for advanced technologies and smart applications, the city saw the completion of the first successful trial of medical delivery via drones at Dubai Silicon Oasis (DSO), the special economic zone for knowledge and innovation and a member of the Dubai Integrated Economic Zones Authority (DIEZ).

The completion of the trial makes Fakeeh University Hospital, an academic-focused smart health-

care facility based in DSO, the first healthcare provider in the Middle East to leverage drone technology for medication delivery. The introduction of drone delivery of medicine presents a shift in healthcare accessibility and efficiency. The key benefits of this innovative approach include quick response, enhanced accessibility, reliability, and sustainability.

The game-changing achievement took place within a 10-kilometre radius, transporting medication from the hospital to a patient's home in Cedre Villas, a gated

community of luxury villas in the heart of DSO. It follows a series of year-long trials conducted at DSO, in collaboration with the Dubai Future Foundation (DFF) and the Dubai Civil Aviation Authority (DCAA).

By leveraging drones, Fakeeh University Hospital can now deliver medication promptly to patients, significantly reducing response time and potentially saving lives in critical situations. Drones also eliminate geographical barriers, allowing patients to receive medication without

on-ground delays. This groundbreaking solution ensures equitable access to healthcare services for all UAE residents.

The trial is also in line with the objectives of the 'Dubai Programme to Enable Drone Transportation' launched by His Highness Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai, and Chairman of The Executive Council of Dubai in 2021, aimed at increasing the efficiency of transportation services by utilising drones for various purposes.

Cardio Flow Design Inc. has been committed to strict quality management processes and efforts to comply with FDA standards in the development of iTFlow®.

Company CEO, Teruyasu Nishino, MD, expressed his joy with FDA approval. "We are delighted this software has obtained FDA approval. We have been pursuing the concept of blood flow analysis

with 4D flow MRI for many years, and iTFlow® encapsulates the essence of this concept. With this approval, we believe that healthcare professionals will be able to provide more accurate diagnoses and treatment plans for cardiovascular diseases, especially for children with congenital heart disease, and will save many lives.

This innovation will change the

way of diagnosis and serve as a catalyst to spread the adoption of blood flow analysis worldwide."

Cardio Flow Design Inc. was founded by two doctors with a mission to "change cardiology with blood flow analysis." The Company aims to create a world where diagnostic procedures based on blood flow can be easily conducted. With the advancement of technology and

CT/MRI, obtaining more definitive information about the state of blood flow within the body has become possible. Cardio Flow Design, Inc. strives to bring about significant innovations in the diagnosis and treatment of cardiology and cardiovascular surgery through the application of blood flow analysis technology to predict future diseases and aid in surgical planning.

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Kotsur pays tribute to his father in new short film

NEW YORK, June 20, (AP) — When Troy Kotsur made history as the first Deaf male actor to win an Oscar at the 2022 Academy Awards, he was thinking about his father.

By then, Kotsur had already become a hero to the Deaf community, widely celebrated for his acclaimed performance in the family drama "CODA." It was easy to admire the tenacity and talent that had brought Kotsur, in his early 50s, to the movies' biggest stage after years of struggle as an actor in an industry not known for its hospitality to Deaf performers.

To Kotsur, his persistence was most owed to one person: His father. At the Oscar podium, Kotsur dedicated the award to him. "You are my hero," he said.

"He didn't look at me as having limitations. He continued to push me and push me," Kotsur said in an interview recently through an interpreter. "That's why I am who I am today."

In "To My Father," a short film premiered recently at the Tribeca Film Festival, Kotsur extends and deepens that tribute to explain his father's story and how it shaped him.

Leonard "Len" Kotsur was the police chief of Mesa, Arizona, whose two other sons could hear. Ninety percent of Deaf children are born to hearing parents but the wide majority of those parents never learn American Sign Language. The elder Kotsur wasn't one of them. He was, Troy says, the best signer in the family.

"Most deaf kids have hearing parents who unfortunately do not know sign language at all," says Kotsur. "So I need to show them that there's nothing wrong with sign language and there's nothing wrong with the Deaf person."

Shortly before Kotsur graduated high school, his father was in a car accident with a drunk driver. He became paralyzed from the neck down and spent the rest of his life in a wheelchair. Crushing, he could no longer sign as he once did with his son.

"But he didn't let that stop him," says Kotsur. "About six months after the accident, he went back to work. He continued working as the chief of police, paralyzed in a wheelchair. He didn't care. He really persisted. And my dad was a great example for me. Me being deaf wasn't a big deal. I didn't let that stop me. I kept persisting and, surprisingly, I even won an Oscar."

Perspective

The accident altered the perspectives of both father and son. In press reports at the time, Kotsur's father spoke about struggling with depression and the frustration of not being able to communicate the same way with Troy.

"Finally, I saw that there were a lot of people worse off than me," Leonard Kotsur told the Arizona Republic in 1988. "I still have my head and my shoulders, and I can still talk and do things."

Kotsur and his father, who died in 2001, developed their own sign language based on the gestures that he could manage. For something more elaborate, his father used a keyboard with a pencil taped to his hand.

"We really had to have the patience to take the time to communicate," says Kotsur.

A little more than a year after winning his Oscar, that moment has already been usurped by another, more earthshaking one: Kotsur's daughter graduated high school last month. With the prospect of an empty nest with

his wife, Deanne Bray, upcoming, Kotsur is looking forward to working more. "And maybe more parties to go to," he says, smiling.

Kotsur recently signed on to his first role since "CODA," which also won best picture. He's to star alongside Maika Monroe in the crime thriller "In Cold Light" from director Maxime Giroux.

"There's been a lot of meetings," Kotsur says of his life since "CODA." "I've had a lot of meetings and some scripts that were already written but didn't have a Deaf role. And so we've been discussing how we can adapt these roles to have a Deaf person in these projects. We've developed a lot of creative projects together, some things that people have probably never thought of, and I'm pretty excited."

The "CODA" win was a watershed moment for the Deaf community. But change in Hollywood can stagnate after making big leaps forward. "CODA," Kotsur thinks, has impacted Hollywood. Most of all, he says, it showed Deaf culture in a more authentic and human way. "And it's become a domino effect," says Kotsur. "I'm seeing a lot of doors begin to open for Deaf professionals and more opportunities out there."

Kotsur, himself, is still getting used to being seen as a trailblazer.

"When I was younger and I was about 12 years old, I met several Deaf professional stage actors and I wasn't really sure if they were hearing or Deaf," says Kotsur. "After the show, I went up to them and I said, 'Hey, are you actually deaf?' And these actors said, 'Yeah.' And I said, 'Can I become an actor in the future?' And they said, 'Yeah, of course you can.' And now these Deaf children are asking me, 'Can I act and can I be a filmmaker?' And I say, 'Yeah, of course. Of course you can, because I did it. That means you can do it, too.'"

Film

Variety



This image released by Warner Bros. Pictures shows Ezra Miller, (from left), Michael Keaton and Ezra Miller in a scene from 'The Flash.' (AP)

Film

'Everything came with a little adventure'

'The Flash' triumphs despite turmoil

LOS ANGELES, June 20, (AP) — There were many stressful things about making "The Flash" and getting it to theaters. It was shot in the middle of a pandemic. There was isolation from friends and family for the 138-day shoot. There were A-list schedules to coordinate for cameos. There was a star in Ezra Miller who, after it wrapped, made headlines for legal run-ins amid a mental health crisis. And behind it all, a studio undergoing leadership changes and rethinking the whole DC Comics strategy.

But first, they had to figure out how to transport a two-ton Batmobile from Los Angeles to the UK amid a worldwide shortage of shipping containers in 2021.

This was not just any Batmobile, mind you. It was one of the originals from the Tim Burton movies that was needed for the grand return of Michael Keaton's caped crusader after 30 years — a major production that also involved building, from scratch, a life-size replica of the Batcave.

Director Andy Muschietti and his sister, producer Barbara Muschietti, waited nervously for its arrival worried whether it would make it in time or just be stuck in the middle of the ocean. They breathed a sigh of relief when it made it ashore, briefly celebrated and moved on to the next problem: how to get it into the Batcave at Warner Bros. Studios Leavesden. Ultimately it involved a loading it onto a modified airport cargo truck that was lifted 20 feet (6 meters) in the air and "gently rolled" onto set.

"Everything came with a little adventure," Barbara Muschietti said with a laugh in a recent interview with The Associated Press.

It's an apt if intentionally understated description of getting "The Flash" into theaters on June 16. Movie versions of the lightning quick comic book character have been in various stages of development since the late 1980s. One scenario had Ryan Reynolds starring and David S. Goyer directing; another had George Miller setting the stage for spinoffs and standalones with Adam Brody.

Then in 2014, things started taking shape as Warner Bros. plotted out a shared universe of DC Comics films, including a standalone Flash starring Miller as Barry Allen, who would first appear in "Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice," "Suicide Squad" and "Justice League."

But even that wasn't so straightforward, with disagreements over tone and scheduling conflicts making things complicated. Several writers and directors cycled in and out of developing "The Flash," including Phil Lord and Christopher Miller, Seth Grahame-Smith, Rick Famuyiwa, Robert Zemeckis and John Francis Daley and Jonathan Goldstein, and release dates were pushed back. Ezra Miller even worked on their own treatment of a script.

The Muschiettis were finishing "It Chapter Two" when the studio approached them about "The Flash." They didn't concern themselves with the messy, marathon development history — they just wanted to figure out if this was worth several years of their life. In the story, Andy Muschietti found a compelling emotional core: The relationship between Barry Allen and his mother, who was killed when he was a child and whom he wants to go back in time to save. "Back to the Future," which is referenced quite a bit in "The Flash," was one of their favorite movies, too. They were in.

Multiverse

"Birds of Prey" screenwriter Christina Hobson had taken a crack at the story and come out with something that was both fun and emotional and introduced the multiverse to the DC cannon. In Barry Allen's quest to save his mother, he accidentally gets tossed into another timeline and meets a younger, different version of himself who gets swept up in the journey. It allowed for lots of possibilities, including bringing Keaton back in a movie that also had Ben Affleck's "Zack Snyder Batman."

"We all got very excited about the prospect of having Michael Keaton come back after 30 years of not knowing what Batman was up to," Andy Muschietti said. "The multiverse allowed this to happen and combine the existing characters, the existing universe, with something that seemed to have been buried in the past."

They told Keaton, who jogged to their lunch meeting in Brentwood, they wouldn't be able to do the film without him. They wanted to find his Bruce Wayne in a place people wouldn't expect. By the end of lunch, Keaton had agreed and jogged off.

"I didn't want him to be sitting near the fireplace, like staring out of a glass of whiskey," Andy Muschietti said. "I knew he was going to transform back into Batman so I needed him to be in a place that made that

transformation possible in the tradition of a reluctant hero."

Keaton's Batman was also due to make a return in the standalone "Batgirl" movie which was ultimately shelved close to completion.

"The Flash" has other nostalgic nods, including an army of cameos best left unspoiled, that helps set the stage for a "universe reboot." While making the film, big leadership changes were afoot at Warner Bros. and, specifically, DC Studios, where new co-chairs and CEOs James Gunn and Peter Safran were tasked with plotting the future of the DC Universe characters, from Superman to Batman. That new vision won't officially begin until Gunn's new Superman in 2025, but he's also said that "The Flash," though technically from a previous regime, "resets the entire DC universe."

But then during the extensive post-production on "The Flash," star Ezra Miller, also started making headlines for a string of arrests and reports of erratic behavior last year. They were arrested twice last year in Hawaii, including for disorderly conduct and harassment at a karaoke bar. In January, they pleaded guilty to a charge stemming from a break-in and theft of alcohol at a neighbor's home in Vermont. They avoided jail time but paid a \$500 fine and got a year of probation, agreeing to abide by a number of conditions including continued mental health treatment.

Though some questioned whether "The Flash" should be shelved, the studio remained committed to releasing it on June 16 even without their star on the promotional circuit.

"We're in contact with them. They love the movie. They support the movie. And they're taking their treatment very seriously," said Barbara Muschietti of Miller. "We want everybody to see this. It's great and it's special. And it has all our hearts and guts."

While early hyperbole abounded with people like Gunn calling it one of the best superhero movies he'd ever seen, reviews have indeed been mostly very positive with lots of praise for Miller's dual roles.

"What you get is this delicious odd couple," Barbara Muschietti. "You forget that they're the same actor."

There are even rumors that the Muschiettis' DC relationship will continue with future films. But right now, the focus is "The Flash."

"Let's just wait and see," Andy Muschietti said.

Features

ARABO TIMES

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 21, 2023

NEW YORK: Pop star Bebe Rexha was hit in the face and injured by a cellphone hurled from the audience at a hometown show in New York City Sunday night, and a man was arrested, police said.

The Grammy-nominated, multiplatinum-selling singer-songwriter was taken to a hospital after the phone hit her, police said. A bruise and a bandage were visible above her left eye in social media posts she made Monday.

"I'm good, yeah, I'm feelin' alright," she sang in a TikTok video, taking a line from "I'm Good (Blue)," her recent hit with DJ David Guetta.

Rexha, 33, was on stage at Pier 17, a rooftop venue in Manhattan, when the phone was thrown, police said. Video posted on social media showed the phone ricocheting off the artist's head, and then Rexha grabbing her face and sinking to her knees.

Nicolas Malvagna, 27, of New Jersey, was released without bail after being arraigned Monday on assault, aggravated harassment and other charges. Each is either a misdemeanor or a violation.

According to a court complaint, Malvagna told a third party he tried to hit Rexha with the phone at the end of the show because he thought "it would be funny."

A message seeking comment was sent to his attorney.

A three-time Grammy nominee, Rexha is known for such hits as "I'm Good (Blue)," "Meant to Be," featuring country's Florida Georgia Line, and "I Got You." Raised in New York, she was a songwriter for other artists before becoming a solo star.

"What I'm learning is that not everybody is going to connect with you and understand you, and that's OK," she told The Associated Press in April, shortly before the release of her latest album, "Bebe." (AP)

NEWTON, Mass.: The public collection of DNA samples to help law enforcement solve crimes and identify human remains was postponed Saturday following objections of the American Civil Liberties Union.

Middlesex District Attorney Marian Ryan said in a statement that she postponed "DNA Drive Day" because of concerns raised by the local branch of the ACLU, as well as inclement weather.

It was billed as the first such event in Massachusetts in which

people could voluntarily submit DNA samples to aid law enforcement investigators. DNA samples provided to genealogy databases already have helped law enforcement solve cold cases and resolve missing person cases.

Ryan said her office will work with the ACLU chapter to resolve any concerns. "We believe that the



Bebe Rexha



Guetta

community will best be served by further conversation," she said.

Saturday's outdoor event at Newton City Hall would have allowed people to provide a sample to FamilyTree DNA. The DNA submissions would be uploaded free of charge to a pair of genealogy databases, FamilyTree DNA and GEDmatch, where the data could help investiga-

tors, officials said. (AP)

NEW YORK: A man stabbed a pit bull to death following a quarrel with the dog's owner in New York City's Central Park, officials said. The seriously injured dog was transported to a local animal clinic, where he was euthanized

after the stabbing Saturday evening, police said.

According to the New York Daily News, an argument broke out between the man and the woman when the assailant's unleashed dog began biting at the woman's pit bull. As she tried to separate the dogs, the man pulled out a switchblade and stabbed the pit bull mix. (AP)

People & Places

MILAN
a guy thing



Emporio Armani

Giorgio Armani

Emporio Armani

Giorgio Armani

Giorgio Armani

Giorgio Armani

Fashion

Asian elegance
Giorgio Armani, Zegna present fluid elegance

MILAN, June 20, (AP) — Milan Fashion Week opened and closed under a beating early summer sun.

Zegna wrapped up four days of shows Monday with an outdoor event set among bales of raw linen behind Milan's City Hall, allowing city workers a view out of their windows. For the sweltering fashion crowd, Zegna fashion offered iced coffee and linen baseball caps to keep things cool.

With temperatures rising, Milan designers focused on fluidity in dressing, allowing the body to move without constrictions. With one notable dissenter, runways offered thigh-revealing Bermuda shorts as an alternative to trousers even for city dressing. Gone are the long shorts of streetwear brands.

Some highlights from the final day of Milan Fashion Week of mostly menswear previews for next spring and summer:

Giorgio Armani's signature collection was meant to show the fashion public how the urban man ought to dress, even in the heat of summer.

"I didn't do any Bermudas," Armani noted after the runway show in his central Milan villa. "Bermudas imply being at the beach, and going around on vacation."

Still, he conceded that a front-row influencer wearing Bermuda shorts at his morning show had done so elegantly.

Designs

The 88-year-old designer said his designs start with a pencil and a blank piece of paper - a work process that was underlined by a large sharpened pencil that served as a backdrop for the runway show. His Giorgio Armani signature was cast on the back wall.

Jackets finished most looks, soft and hanging loosely, which Armani said was a nod to Asian elegance. Prints on silken shirts, jackets and trousers recalled weaving, echoed in the espadrilles and fishermen sandals. Straw brimmed Panama hats, meant for holidays, were more often carried than worn. The color palette progressed from washed out cream, tan and sage to black and navy - at times offset by flashes of red.

Armani defused the formality of the tailoring with linen, and by keeping jackets and blazers mostly unbuttoned, so a double-breasted jacket "is no longer a double-breasted jacket," Armani said.

"It is a way of dressing that is at once both elegant and comfortable," he said. "That is why the jackets."

The collection closed with four boardroom looks: formal dark suits, white shirts and ties. "This is to remind everyone that this is how a man dresses," Armani said.

Indian designer Dhruv Kapoor's collections are not just about style, they are about elevating the wearer's emotions, helping them to dream bigger. It's a lofty ambition, fitting with Kapoor's notion that apparel, with a tweak here and there, can tap the universe's energy.

To point, Kapoor showed spring-summer 2024 runway collection in a blue room, meant to have a calming effect.

A red jacket fires up emotions. Prints are inspired by crop circles, "which I read recently just by looking at that pattern will imprint certain things in your head, which you are going to use when the time is right for you," Kapoor said backstage.

The co-ed collection was modular with a loose, easy-to-wear silhouette. For him, a pleated kilt is worn over trousers, worn with a beaded star-burst studded jacket. The same star-burst appeared on a straight skirt for her, worn with a sci-fi print sweatshirt. Three bowling-style shirts are inspired by the covers of 1970s science fiction book

Style



Giorgio Armani



Giorgio Armani



Giorgio Armani



Giorgio Armani

Variety

HOUSTON: Milton Powell, a Houston rapper who performed under the name **Big Pokey** and is credited with elevating the city's hip-hop scene, died after collapsing during a show in **Texas**, a local official said Monday.

Tom Gillam III, a justice of the

peace in **Jefferson County**, where Powell was performing when he collapsed Sunday, said an autopsy to determine the cause of death was pending. He said Powell was 48.

Powell was a member of Houston's rap collective Screwed Up Click that was formed by the late **DJ Screw**. Powell was performing at a bar in Beaumont called Pour09, whose owner, **Min Dai**, told the Houston Chronicle that police were on site

and able to provide medical help "instantly" before emergency responders rushed the rapper to a hospital.

A statement on Powell's official Instagram page said he was "well loved by his family, friends, and his loyal fans."

Tributes from other artists poured in across social media.

Rapper **Bun B** called Powell "one of the most naturally talented artists" in Houston.

"He'd pull up, do what he had to do and head home. One of the pillars of our city," Bun B said on Instagram.

Big Pokey began rapping with Houston producer DJ Screw in the early 1990s releasing songs on many of DJ Screw's mixtapes. Big Pokey was featured on DJ Screw's mixtape "June 27th Freestyle" which became a landmark album in chopped and screwed hip hop.

His first full-length album, **Hardest**

arrest, police in **Colorado** said.

An officer watched him maneuvering inside the car before he got out on the passenger side in **Springfield**, a town of about 1,300 people on the state's Eastern Plains, police said in a Facebook post.

The man said he was not behind the wheel and clearly showed signs of being drunk, police said. He ran from the officer when asked about how much he had had to drink and was caught within about 20 yards (18 meters), police said.

After being taken to the hospital to be checked out, the man was arrested on suspicion of charges including driving under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs and driving while ability impaired as well as for previous warrants for his arrest. (AP)

WELLINGTON, New Zealand: A drug syndicate that tried to smuggle tons of methamphetamine from **Canada** to **Australia** and **New Zealand** by hiding it in shipments of maple syrup and canola oil has had its ruse busted, authorities said.

Authorities from the three nations say they worked together for more than five months to unravel the elaborate scheme that was worth billions of dollars.

Authorities in New Zealand and Australia say they've made a dozen arrests and expect more to come, while Canadian authorities said they are still investigating the case and aren't yet providing all the details.

Australian police said they intercepted four separate hauls of meth weighing more than six tons and filed charges against six men.

They said that in January, Canadian authorities alerted them that 2,900 liters (766 gallons) of liquid meth had been hidden in 180 bottles of canola oil bound for Australia.

They said Canadian authorities swapped out the meth for a harmless substance and allowed the shipment to continue.

Australian police said that two men then moved what they believed were the drugs to storage locations around the city of **Melbourne**. Two more shipments came in May and June, and the syndicate was also linked to a December shipment, Australian police said.

In New Zealand, police said the syndicate tried to hide more than three-quarters of a ton of meth in a shipment of maple syrup, the largest such shipment that had been intercepted at New Zealand's border. (AP)



Bun B



Big Pokey

Environment

Active volcano erupts

Philippines' poor risk lives in danger zone

CALBAYOG, Philippines, June 20, (AP): Delfina Guiwan's heart was pounding as she snuck back to her village, now abandoned and eerily quiet, in the fertile foothills of gently erupting Mayon volcano in the northeastern Philippines.

When patrolling police spotted her, they warned that the village is off-limits because of the danger of a violent eruption at any time. Guiwan, 47, said she knew the risks but begged to stay a few minutes more to get her daughter's school uniform from their shack and feed her pigs.

"I'm scared. We saw lava flowing down one night and a boulder rolled down, sounding like thunder," Guiwan told The Associated Press. "I'm praying this eruption won't get worse because our livelihood is here and it's difficult to stay in the evacuation camp with few toilets for so many, and the heat. Children are getting sick there."

Her village, Calbayog, lies in Mayon's northeastern foothills and is well within the 6-kilometer (3.7-mile) radius from the volcano's crater that officials have long designated a permanent danger zone, demarcated by concrete warning signs. Entry is prohibited, but thousands of poor villagers have flouted the restrictions and made it their home for generations. Lucrative businesses such as sand and gravel quarrying and sightseeing tours have also thrived openly despite the ban and the mountain's frequent eruptions - now 53 times on record since 1616.

The 2,462-meter (8,007-foot) volcano is one of the Philippines' top tourism draws because of its near-perfect cone shape. But it's also the most active of the country's 24 volcanoes and could erupt violently at any time.

That includes pyroclastic flows, which are superheated gas and volcanic debris that suddenly race down slopes at great speed and incinerate everything in their path. Another threat is lahar, a muddy stream of water, volcanic ash and rocks that can move as fast as cars and engulf areas up to several kilometers (miles) away.

Symbol

A terrifying symbol of Mayon's deadly fury is the belfry of a 16th-century Franciscan stone church which protrudes from the ground. It's all that's left of a baroque church that was buried by lahar along with the town of Cagsawa in an 1814 eruption which killed about 1,200 people, including many who sought refuge in the church, about 13 kilometers (8 miles) from the volcano.

The thousands of villagers who live within Mayon's danger zone reflect the plight of many impoverished Filipinos who are forced to live in dangerous places across the archipelago - near active volcanoes like Mayon, on landslide-prone mountainsides, along vulnerable coastlines, atop earthquake fault lines, and in low-lying villages often engulfed by flash floods, said **Richard Gordon**, the longtime chairman of the Philippine Red Cross and a former senator.

Each year, about 20 typhoons and storms lash the Philippines, which also lies along the Pacific "Ring of Fire," an arc of fault lines along the Pacific Ocean basin often hit by volcanic eruptions and earthquakes.

"It's really a problem of poverty," Gordon said, adding that the government should prepare a comprehensive plan to provide poor villagers with safe housing and sustainable livelihoods that would finally allow them to abandon high-risk settlements.

"They go there because they have no choice," Gordon said in a telephone interview.

Most residents were evacuated from Guiwan's village, Calbayog, last week when Mayon started to gently expel lava after days of unrest. Only the chirps of birds and crickets, the crowing of roosters and rustling of coconut trees in the cool breeze could be heard in the village, about 4 to 5 kilometers (2.5 to 3 miles) from the volcano.

AP journalists were allowed by police to briefly join a house-to-house patrol of a Calbayog neighborhood and saw a few defiant residents still in their houses. One villager insisted to police that he had to remain because the 40 roosters he had bred for cockfights might be stolen if he left. Dance music or radio news broadcasts could be heard at two houses, and at least three others had laundry hanging on clotheslines in the sun.

At Mi-isi, another village well inside the permanent danger zone in Mayon's southeastern foothills, longtime resident Mioning Asilo laughed off warnings from authorities and volcano scientists.

"I'm not scared, but outsiders will probably have a heart attack if they live here," the 54-year-old father of nine said, adding that he has lost count of the times he has witnessed Mayon's fury.

Asilo and his family have survived for decades off the proceeds from his vegetable farm, piggery, coconut grove and on-and-off work as caretaker of a nearby gravel and sand quarry.

"I was born here. I have not seen the fire and lava reach this village," Asilo said.

As he spoke, Mayon rumbled faintly and lava flowed from its swollen crater a kilometer (more than half a mile) down a gully near the village, in what scientists have described as a "very gentle" eruption so far.

Evacuations

But the government isn't taking any chances. Since the volcano began expelling lava a week ago, soldiers, police and local officials have moved more than 20,000 villagers from the danger zone in forced evacuations to 28 temporary shelters, mostly schools, according to the government's disaster-response agency.

With most classrooms now crammed with impoverished evacuees and their belongings, teachers have been forced to hold classes in school corridors, in chapels and under trees, Albay provincial education official Alvin Cruz said.

The crisis is an additional challenge for President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., who took office in June last year and inherited an economy battered by the coronavirus pandemic, which deepened poverty, unemployment, hunger and the country's debt. He flew to Albay on Wednesday to hand out food packs and reassure the evacuees of government help, but warned that Mayon's gentle eruption may drag on for months, keeping them away from their homes.

The number of displaced villagers could more than double if Mayon's eruption turns violent and life-threatening, which government volcanologists say is still possible within days or weeks. That could prompt an expansion of the danger zone and the forced evacuation of many more residents.

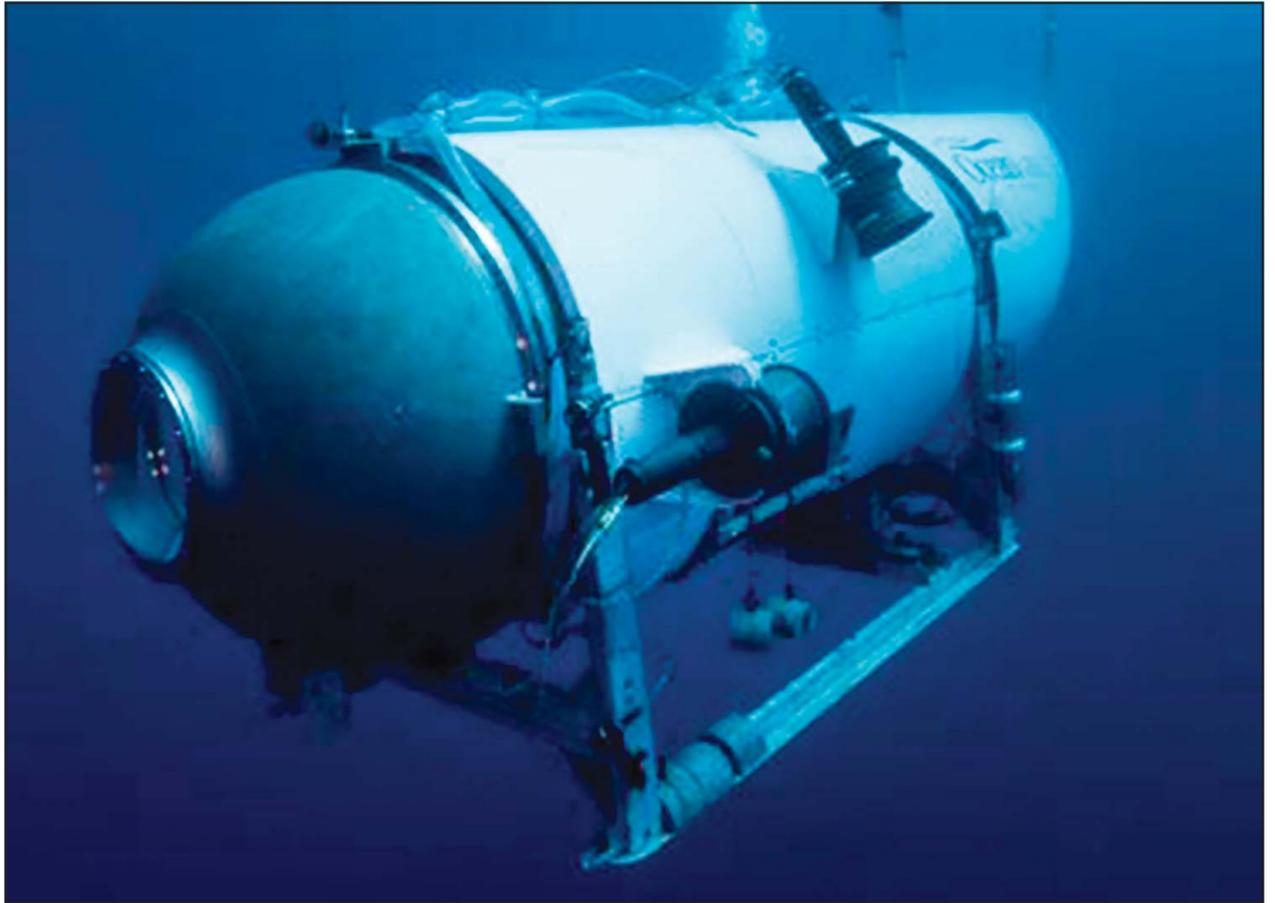
Thousands of villagers have been given homes away from Mayon in the past, but many returned to its fertile slopes because of inadequate livelihood options in government-established relocation sites, said Eddie Nunez, a resident of Bonga village, about 8 kilometers (5 miles) from Mayon's crater.

Nunez, 59, lost an uncle and cousin when they were hit by volcanic ash, steam and boulders in a sudden 1993 explosion while farming on Mayon's lower slopes. Dozens of other farmers were also killed, he said.

The lack of jobs and opportunities elsewhere forces people to continue risking their lives farming vegetables and scrounging for other sources of income at the foot of the volcano, Nunez said, comparing the choice to Russian roulette. "You either get lucky or you get hit," he said.



Gordon



This undated photo provided by OceanGate Expeditions in June 2021 shows the company's Titan submersible. On Monday, June 19, a rescue operation was underway deep in the Atlantic Ocean in search of the technologically advanced submersible vessel carrying five people to document the wreckage of the Titanic, the iconic ocean liner that sank more than a century earlier. (AP)

Search underway for missing sub that takes people to see Titanic

A rescue operation was underway deep in the waters of the Atlantic Ocean in search of a submarine that carries people to view the wreckage of the Titanic.

The Joint Rescue Coordination Centre in Halifax, Nova Scotia said the vessel was reported overdue around 9:13 p.m. Sunday, about 435 miles (700 kilometres) south of St. John's, Newfoundland. Lt. Cmdr. Len Hickey said a Canadian Coast Guard vessel and military aircraft were assisting the search effort, which was being led by the US Coast Guard in Boston.

OceanGate Expeditions confirmed the search for its five-person submersible and said its focus was

on those aboard the vessel and their families.

"We are deeply thankful for the extensive assistance we have received from several government agencies and deep sea companies in our efforts to reestablish contact with the submersible," the company said in a statement. "We are working toward the safe return of the crewmembers."

In 2021, OceanGate Expeditions began what it expected to become an annual voyage to chronicle the deterioration of the iconic ocean liner that struck an iceberg and sank in 1912, killing all but about 700 of the roughly 2,200 passengers and crew. Since the wreckage's discovery in 1985, it has been slow-

ly succumbing to metal-eating bacteria, and some have predicted the ship could vanish in a matter of decades as holes yawn in the hull and sections disintegrate.

In describing its first expedition, OceanGate said that in addition to archaeologists and marine biologists, the expeditions also would include roughly 40 paid tourists who would take turns operating sonar equipment and performing other tasks in the five-person submersible.

The initial group of tourists was funding the expedition by spending anywhere from \$100,000 to \$150,000 apiece. (AP)

The Conversation

Vaccines used in US based on only one type of virus

96.4% had COVID antibodies by fall 2022

By Matt Hitchens and Derek Cummings
University of Florida

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

Antibodies to SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, were present in the blood of 96.4% of Americans over the age of 16 by September 2022. That's according to a serosurvey - an analysis testing for the presence of these immune defense molecules - conducted on samples from blood donors.

A serosurvey like this one helps researchers estimate how many people have been exposed to any part of the coronavirus, whether via vaccination or infection. Both can trigger the generation of antibodies to SARS-CoV-2. And by identifying which kind of antibodies someone has in their blood, researchers can break down the 96.4% into different types of immunity: infection-derived, vaccine-derived and hybrid.

COVID-19 vaccines used in the United States are based on only one part of the virus - the spike, or S, protein. Researchers can tell that a person has been vaccinated and has not been infected if their blood has only anti-S antibodies that target that spike protein. If someone has anti-N antibodies, which target the virus's nucleocapsid protein, it's a sign that they've been infected by SARS-CoV-2. To reliably identify someone with hybrid immunity, a researcher would need to match someone who has anti-N antibodies to an official vaccination database.

Immunologists know that antibody levels decrease in the months after a COVID-19 infection or vaccination, and this is true for many pathogens. It's possible some people did have antibodies at one point, but they're no longer detectable. And not every infection leads to a detectable antibody response, particularly if the case was mild or asymptomatic.

Another factor is the accuracy of the antibody test. No test is perfect, so a small percentage of people who truly have antibodies might come up negative.

Together, these considerations

Next round of COVID-19 shots in fall to target latest omicron strain in US

NEW YORK, June 20, (AP): The next round of COVID-19 vaccines will target one of the latest versions of the coronavirus, the Food and Drug Administration has said recently.

FDA's decision came one day after an agency panel of outside advisers supported the recipe change. The agency told vaccine makers to provide protection against just one omicron strain, known as XBB.1.5.

Today's shots include the original coronavirus and an earlier version of omicron. They do still help prevent severe disease and death even as XBB variants have taken over. But protection gradu-

ally wanes over time and was short-lived against milder infection even before the virus, inevitably, evolved again.

The three U.S. companies that make COVID-19 shots said this week they had geared up to make the formula change, in anticipation of making many millions of doses available for the fall. One company, Pfizer, said it could have at least some doses ready as early as next month.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention will eventually decide whether to recommend the shot for nearly all Americans or just for certain high-risk groups.

mean that the 96.4% number is likely an underestimate. It seems reasonable to conclude that almost no one in this population has neither been infected by SARS-CoV-2 nor received a COVID-19 vaccine.

Effects

Serosurveys are useful for understanding how likely different types of people - of varying ages or races, for example - were to have been infected. For this purpose, a serosurvey can be much more reliable than using data on people who received a positive PCR test, or who report having had a positive rapid antigen test, because getting a positive test is heavily influenced by access to care, health care behavior and how severe your illness is. These are sources of what is called bias.

This bias has two effects: It leads to large underestimation of the proportion of the overall population infected, and it can lead to spurious differences between groups. For example, people with mild symptoms are less likely to get tested and are also likely to be younger. Researchers might draw the wrong conclusion that because they're not getting tested these people aren't actually catching the virus.

Looking at antibodies as a marker of infection is not biased by such

behavioral factors. Many serosurveys, including ones that we worked on in Chennai, India, and Salvador, Brazil, found similar or even higher seroprevalence in children compared with young adults, contradicting an early narrative that children were less susceptible to the virus. Instead, our results suggested that infections in children were less likely to be detected.

Antibodies are not just a marker of previous infection; part of their job is to help prevent future infection with the same pathogen. So, serosurveys can be used to understand levels of immunity in the population.

For some diseases, like measles, immunity is essentially lifelong, and having antibodies means you are protected. However, for SARS-CoV-2 this is not the case, because the virus has continually evolved new variants that are able to reinfect people despite their antibodies.

Nevertheless, many studies have shown that individuals with hybrid immunity will be more protected against future infection and variants than those with vaccine- or infection-derived immunity alone. It may be useful to know the proportion of the population with single-source immunity in order to target certain groups with vaccination campaigns. (AP)



Pfizer, (left), and Moderna bivalent COVID-19 vaccines are ready for use at a clinic, Nov. 17, 2022, in Richmond, Va. The Food and Drug Administration on Friday, June 16, told COVID-19 vaccine makers to update fall shots to target the latest omicron strain. (AP)

Discovery

Indonesia launches largest sat: Indonesia on Monday launched a USD-540-million telecommunication satellite from the US as part of efforts to connect remote areas of the Southeast Asian archipelago to high-speed internet.

"This first Indonesian satellite aims to distribute internet access evenly, particularly for purposes of education, medical, public services, people, and military and the police force," Acting Communications Minister Mahfud MD told the press.

Jakarta is partnering with **Elon Musk's** rocket company SpaceX for the initiative that aims to provide "even internet coverage" across the nation, added the minister. (KUNA)

Quake hits Myanmar coast: An earthquake was recorded off the southern coast of Myanmar on Monday with tremors also felt in Thailand, but there were no immediate reports of major damage.

The 5.1 magnitude quake was recorded about 15 kilometers (9.5 miles) south of Yangon, Myanmar's biggest city, at 10 kilometers (6 miles) below the surface at 8:10 a.m., according to Myanmar's meteorology department.

Thailand's meteorological department reported the earthquake as 6.0 magnitude at 8:40 a.m. and said tremors were felt in the capital Bangkok and nearby Nonthaburi province, about 450 kilometers (280 miles) from the epicenter.

The United States Geological Survey measured the earthquake at 5.6 magnitude. Different agencies often have different preliminary measurements for earthquakes.

Many people in high-rise buildings in Bangkok reported feeling the tremors for 15 to 30 seconds, according to the public report section of the Thai government's Earthquake Observation Division website.

There were no immediate reports of any significant damage or casualties. (AP)

Court sides with lobster fishers: A federal appeals court has sided with commercial fishermen who say proposed restrictions aimed at saving a vanishing species of whale could put them out of business.

The fishermen harvest lobsters and crabs off New England and oppose tough new restrictions on the way they fish that are intended to protect the North Atlantic right whale. The whale numbers only about 340 in the world and it's vulnerable to lethal entanglement in fishing gear.

The fishermen and the state of Maine appealed their case to the US Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit after losing in a lower court. The appeals

court said it disagreed with the lower court's ruling.

The appeals court ruling could mean that the federal government must take another stab at crafting new rules to protect the whales. The restrictions would limit where lobster fishers can fish and what kind of gear they can use to try to prevent the whales from becoming entangled in fishing ropes.

The changes would represent a potential worst-case scenario for the lobster fishing



Musk



Ginsburg

industry, wrote **Douglas H. Ginsburg**, the senior judge of the appeals court, in Friday's ruling.

"The result may be great physical and human capital destroyed, and thousands of jobs lost, with all the degradation that attends such dislocations," Ginsburg wrote.

The fishers sued the National Marine Fisheries Service, an arm of the federal government. The service declined to comment on the lawsuit. (AP)

Venus, aged 43, pulls off surprising win at Birmingham Classic

Tsitsipas, Medvedev and Shapovalov advance in Halle

BIRMINGHAM, England, June 20, (AP) — At age 43 and ranked No. 697, Venus Williams isn't done quite yet — especially on her favored surface of grass.

Williams upset 48th-ranked Camile Giorgi 7-6 (5), 4-6, 7-6 (6) after more than three hours at the Birmingham Classic on Monday for her first victory over a player in the top 50 in nearly four years.

Williams, a seven-time Grand Slam champion and five-time winner of the Wimbledon singles, was out for six months because of a hamstring injury sustained in Auckland in the first week of the year.

On her return last week, she lost to 17-year-old Celine Naef in the first round of the Libema Open in the Netherlands.



Venus

Williams said it was "touch and go" against Giorgi.

"There were so many moments where I thought, 'This match is over,' then she would hit a shot from out of nowhere," Williams said. "She pushed me to be better than what I thought I could be, and it's great for me.

"I haven't played a lot of matches, and it's great to come through."

There were also wins for third-seeded Magda Linette, fifth-seeded Anhelina Kalinina of Ukraine and Bernarda Pera of the United States in the Wimbledon warmup event.

Stefanos Tsitsipas, Daniil Medvedev and Denis Shapovalov progressed from the first round of the Halle Open, though some had an easier time at the grass-court tournament.

The second-seeded Stefanos Tsitsipas needed 2 hours, 22 minutes before he eventually prevailed against French player Gregoire Barrere 6-7 (6), 6-4, 7-6 (3).

Tsitsipas, who was upset by veteran French player Richard Gasquet in Stuttgart last week, was headed for another loss as he trailed by a set and a break at 3-1 down in the second set, but he recovered for a second-round meeting with Nicolas Jarry.

Top-seeded Medvedev, who lost last year's final, defeated American qualifier Marcos Giron 6-4 6-3. Shapovalov beat South African Lloyd Harris 7-6 (1), 6-4.

Nick Kyrgios withdrew to continue his recovery from a knee injury.

TENNIS

Former finalist Cameron Norrie launched his bid to win the grass-court Queen's Club Championship on home soil by beating Miomir Kecmanovic of Serbia 6-4, 7-6 (5).

The British No. 1, seeded No. 5 in west London, fended off one break point in the first set and let three match points slip before converting a fourth on Centre Court in the Wimbledon warmup event.

"It feels good to be back on the grass and back here playing in London in front of a full crowd," said Norrie, who lost in the 2021 final to Matteo Berrettini.

"It's always tricky, the first match on grass. I was really happy to get over the line."

British tennis fans are in for an extra treat this week, with Andy Murray — on a 10-match winning streak on grass after back-to-back titles in second-tier Challenger Tour events — competing in the singles and with Norrie in the doubles competition.

Murray won the doubles title at Queen's with Feliciano Lopez in 2019 as he began his comeback from hip surgery.

"I just asked him, 'Do you want to play doubles at Queen's?' He said, 'Yeah, let's do it.' It was pretty simple," Norrie said.

"I'm just going to enjoy it and get another match on the grass and hopefully just pick his brains on a few things. He's got a lot of confidence at the moment, a good guy to play with."

There was first-round disappointment for British No. 2 Dan Evans, who lost to American Sebastian Korda 6-4, 7-5 but Ryan Peniston advanced by beating Ugo Humbert 6-4, 6-2.

Sixth-seeded Lorenzo Musetti of Italy beat British wild card Jan Choinski 6-4, 6-2. Ben Shelton of the United States and Diego Schwartzman of Argentina also progressed to the second round.

Carlos Alcaraz is making his debut at Queen's this week and is the top seed.

Caroline Garcia defeated local favorite Sabine Lisicki 7-6 (2), 6-3 and Petra Kvitova also progressed from the first round of the Berlin Open.

The third-seeded Garcia was made to fight hard till she made the decisive break at 4-3 in the second set. The French player saved the three break points she faced and converted two from 13 opportunities. Both players hit 15 aces each.

"It's funny because we were both practicing at the same place and we practiced with each other and (then) we had to face each other in the first round. It's always this kind of story," Garcia said. "But it was really complicated ... it's always a good fight and I'm happy to see Sabine playing in a tournament again."

The 33-year-old Lisicki reached the Wimbledon final in 2013 but has had to contend with numerous injury setbacks in recent years and is ranked 308th.

Two-time Wimbledon champion Kvitova earlier defeated Czech compatriot Karolina Pliskova 6-3, 6-4. Croatia's Donna Vekic defeated Russian player Varvara Gracheva 6-3, 6-2.



Wake Forest starting pitcher Josh Hartle throws against LSU in the first inning of a baseball game at the NCAA College World Series in Omaha, Neb. (AP)

Lee delivers winning hit after making big defensive play in Wake Forest win

Deacons rally past LSU

OMAHA, Neb., June 20, (AP) — A few minutes after he made the defensive play of the game, Bennett Lee delivered the hit that put Wake Forest on the inside track to the College World Series finals.

The Demon Deacons came from behind to win a second straight one-run game at Charles Schwab Field, beating LSU 3-2 on Monday night in the game that determined control of their bracket.

Wake Forest is 7-0 in the NCAA Tournament and bidding to become the first No. 1 national seed since 1999 to win the championship.

"Every single guy is having the time of their lives right now," said closer Camden Minacci, who got the last five outs. "Who can beat us? It seems pretty much impossible. So the amount of fun we have is truly incredible."

Lee, the Deacons' catcher, made a spectacular play in the top of the eighth when he snagged third baseman Brock Wilken's bouncing throw and tagged out Tre Morgan to keep the game tied 2-2.

"Brock Wilken made a great play to get to the ball, and Bennett was there with an unbelievable pick and tag under pressure,"



Wake Forest players in the dugout, including Will Andrews (35), celebrate after the second out of the ninth inning against LSU in a baseball game at the NCAA College World Series in Omaha, Neb. (AP)

Deacons coach Tom Walter said. "It was a huge play in this ball game."

After Danny Corona lashed Thatcher Hurd's breaking pitch down the right-field line for a double in the bottom half, Lee followed with a base hit into left that brought Corona home.

Next up for Wake Forest (54-10) is a Wednesday meeting with the winner of a Tuesday matchup between SEC rivals LSU (49-16) and Tennessee. The Tigers beat Tennessee 6-3 here Saturday. The Deacons would have to lose twice to be denied a spot in the finals.

LSU starter Ty Floyd limited the Deacons to two hits and matched his career high with 10 strikeouts before he lost his command in the sixth inning. He walked the first three batters, prompting coach Jay Johnson to call on Hurd (6-3) to face the national home run co-leader in Wilken.

Wilken sent a ball up the middle for an RBI single, and the tying run came home when Justin Johnson hit into a double play.

The Tigers opened the scoring against Wake Forest starter Josh Hartle in the third. Tommy White singled in a run and scored from second when Morgan tripled on a fly

ball left fielder Adam Cecere lost in the sun.

Hartle went six innings and struck out nine, running his season total to a Wake Forest-record 140.

The Deacons turned back the Tigers in the eighth when things looked dire. LSU had runners on the corners with none out after Morgan doubled down the line and moved over when Hayden Travinsky reached on an error.

BASEBALL

Wilken backhanded Cade Beloso's grounder down the line, double-pumped and bounced a throw home to Lee, who put the tag on Morgan on a close play that stood up on video review.

"As soon as the ball was hit, I took off," Morgan said. "I knew he would have an awkward throw, so I tried to get a bit over to get in the way, but he made a great play."

Lee said the stage was set during a mound visit when Walter told Lee to let Wilken know to throw home if the ball comes his way.

"And then Beloso hits a little squibber, and that was actually a really good play by Brock," Lee said. "He said the ball was literally still spinning in his glove when he went to throw it. And from my perspective, I've done millions of picks in my life and I just took over."

Change Name

I, Fakhruddin, holder of Indian Passport No. S2390930 having permanent address Mumbai, India, 400003 residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as under: Fakhruddin Mala

Change Name

I, Taiyaba holder of Indian Passport No. V7775620 having permanent address Rajasthan, India, 327024 residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as under: Taiyaba Abul Fazal

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Chelsea sign Nkunku from Leipzig on 6-year contract

MANCHESTER, England, June 20, (AP) — Chelsea signed France forward Christopher Nkunku from Leipzig on a six-year contract on Tuesday.

The London club spent around \$630 million last season and has got its latest recruitment drive up and running with the deal for the highly rated Nkunku. His contract starts on July 1.

"A big effort was made to bring me to the club and I am looking forward to meeting my new coach and teammates and showing the Chelsea supporters what I can do on the pitch," the 25-year-old Nkunku said.

Chelsea endured a miserable first year under new owners Todd Boehly and Clearlake Capital. It recorded its lowest ever points total in the Premier League and missed out on qualification for Europe.

SOCCER

Managers Thomas Tuchel and Graham Potter were discarded and club icon Frank Lampard returned in an interim role to see out the season. Former Tottenham coach Mauricio Pochettino has been appointed and charged with the responsibility of turning around Chelsea's fortunes.

Nkunku is expected to kick off another busy summer at Stamford Bridge.

Nkunku has been capped 10 times by France and played for Paris Saint-Germain before joining Leipzig in 2019.

Diego Cocca was fired as coach of Mexico's national team on Monday, four days after a 3-0 loss to the United States in a CONCACAF Nations League semifinal.

The federation said Jaime Lozano will take over the national team. Lozano coached under-23 team to a bronze medal at the 2021 Tokyo Olympics.

Cocca was hired in February and led El Tri to three wins, a loss and three draws. El Tri had not lost to the U.S. by three goals in 23 years.

Several Mexican players had complained about the long rides to practice sessions preceding the match in Las Vegas.

Cocca took over from Gerardo Martino after Mexico was eliminated from the World Cup in the first round last fall, ending a streak of seven straight appearances — and exits — in the round of 16.

'29% of the players have not been paid'

FIFPRO releases report on disparities in the Women's World Cup qualifying

WASHINGTON, June 20, (AP) — The path to the Women's World Cup has been vastly uneven for the teams headed to Australia and New Zealand next month.

A report released Tuesday by FIFPRO, the global players' union, outlined the disparity in standards and conditions for qualifying for the teams that vied for the 32 spots in the tournament, which starts on July 20.

The report said 29% of the players have not been paid for taking part in qualifying tournaments. When players were paid, often it was based on performance in matches. Only 40% of players considered themselves professional athletes.

Additionally, 66% of players said they had to take unpaid leave or vacation days to play in qualifying events.

Nearly all of the players, 93% of the 362 players surveyed, believed they were not paid enough.

"In highlighting these conditions and the status of players across the globe, FIFPRO firmly calls on the industry to take a closer look at the qualification processes in each of the six confederations," FIFPRO urges in the report. "This is so we all can commit to meaningful changes that look at the overall opportunities the FIFA Women's World Cup can deliver to a greater number of players than those that just appear at the final tournament in July and August this year."

The report also found a lack of important safeguards for athletes, with 54% reporting they had not had a med-

ical examination prior to qualification. Thirty-three percent said there was not sufficient recovery time between games. A majority also felt that gym and recovery facilities were subpar or did not exist, and 32% said that stadiums and fields were not up to standard.

SOCCER

The survey included players from the 2022 qualifying tournament from the six confederations, including the Women's Asian Cup (AFC), the African Cup of Nations (CAF), the CONCACAF W Championship, Copa America Femi-



nina (CONMEBOL), Women's Nations Cup (OFC) and the Women's European Championship (UEFA). UEFA was the only confederation with a standalone qualification process. The other were also confederation championships. In CONCACAF and CONMEBOL, the qualification tournaments also served as Olympic qualifying.

The report urged the confederations to adopt a qualifying standard and structure with a standalone process for the World Cup. That would pave the way for more opportunities for women to play.

The report underscored the disparity within women's soccer globally. The United States, currently ranked No. 1 in the world and the two-time defending World Cup champion, successfully bargained for a contract that guarantees equal treatment and pay with the men's national team.

In contrast, Jamaica's national team recently took public concerns that its federation was not preparing the team with camps and exhibition matches in preparation for the World Cup. The players also noted they had not been paid for qualifying.

FIFA boosted the prize money for this year's Women's World Cup to \$110 million, up from the \$30 million prize fund the governing body paid out at the 2019 tournament in France. More recently, FIFA pledged that every player who takes part in the tournament will earn at least \$30,000. The paycheck rises if teams do well, with each player for the winning team earning \$270,000.

Paul, Shamet and other compensation sent to Wizards in exchange for Beal

Suns continue whirlwind of change under new owner Ishbia

PHOENIX, June 20, (AP): Mat Ishbia's five-month tenure as the new owner of the Phoenix Suns has produced a whirlwind of change.

Nobody seems completely safe - not even 12-time All-Star point guard Chris Paul - as the Michigan native continues his quest to deliver Phoenix its first NBA title.

The aggressive owner oversaw his latest big move Sunday, when the Suns put together the framework for a trade that would send Paul, Landry Shamet and other compensation to the Washington Wizards in exchange for three-time All-Star Bradley Beal.

Paul - making an appearance on ABC's 'Good Morning America' on Monday morning to promote his new

book - seemed just as shocked by the development as everyone else.

"I was surprised, too," Paul said. "I found out on the plane, yesterday, flying here for this. In this league, anything can happen, so you just figure out what's next."

Paul told the New York Times that he learned about the trade via text from his 14-year-old son. He also said that he believed former Detroit Pistons point guard Isaiah Thomas, who is friends with Ishbia, had a role in the deal. Ishbia has said that Thomas has no official role with the franchise.

"It's just - it's tough," Paul said. "Seriously, it is part of the business, and what you realize is that no one owes you anything. No matter how

you are with them or what you do, you realize that in this business, nobody owes you anything, as it should be.

"But when it comes through and my son texted me, I realize that, you know, Mat and Isaiah, I guess, just wanted to go in a different direction."

BASKETBALL

Paul came to the desert in 2020, bringing instant credibility to the Suns, who had languished near the bottom of the standings for the better part of a decade. The point guard formed a formidable backcourt with Devin Booker, and the Suns came agonizingly close to a championship, winning the first

two games of the NBA Finals against the Milwaukee Bucks in 2021 before losing the next four.

The Suns were also good in the past two regular seasons, but suffered back-to-back embarrassing playoff exits on their home floor.

That was apparently enough for Ishbia to decide that wholesale changes needed to be made.

Ishbia - who took over control of the team from the embattled Robert Sarver in February - hasn't been shy about making big moves, even before their latest playoff exit. The Suns added 13-time All-Star Kevin Durant in a blockbuster trade deal that sent Mikal Bridges, Cam Johnson and a bevy of first-round picks to the Brooklyn Nets.

The bold move failed to produce a championship, so Ishbia continued his overhaul.

The Suns recently fired coach Monty Williams, who was the NBA's Coach of the Year in 2022, and brought in Frank Vogel, who led the Lakers to a title in the Florida bubble in 2020. Now the team is moving on from the 38-year-old Paul and bringing in Beal, who has averaged more than 22 points per game over his 11-year career.

More changes could be on the horizon.

The Suns now have a stellar nucleus of Booker, Durant, Beal and Deandre Ayton, but not much help around them. The foursome will make about \$150 million next season and the Suns

will have to be creative as they try to add quality role players.

Another option would be trading Ayton, the No. 1 overall pick in 2018 who has had five up-and-down seasons with the franchise.

There doesn't seem to be a ton of obvious suitors for an Ayton deal, particularly after the 6-foot-11 center had an underwhelming performance in this year's playoffs.

But with Ishbia helping pull the strings these days, nothing seems impossible. The former Michigan State walk-on basketball player - who was part of the Spartans' championship team in 2000 - has made it clear no one in the organization is sacred as he pushes for a title.

Defender to decline player option

Warriors 'committed' to keeping Green, new GM

SAN FRANCISCO, June 20, (AP): The Golden State Warriors want to keep Draymond Green, yet the team is prepared for him to formally decline his \$27.5 million player option for the final year of his contract next season and become an unrestricted free agent seeking a long-term deal.

The Athletic reported Monday that Green would opt out. Green, who said in April he wants to retire with Golden State, would have to notify the Warriors of his decision by June 30.

"I saw the report, too. Until we get the paperwork and the filing we can't really comment or say much," new general manager Mike Dunleavy Jr. said Monday at his introductory news conference. "I will say it, I think Steve (Kerr) has said it, I'll reiterate, we really want Draymond back. What he means to this organization and this team in terms of trying to win at the highest level, we feel like we have to have him. So that's very important."

Kerr has applauded Green's fiery, emotional play. The season began with Green punching Jordan Poole at practice during training camp then taking a brief leave of absence from the team.

BASKETBALL

This spring, Green served a one-game suspension during the Warriors' 114-97 Game 3 victory in the first round of the playoffs that Golden State won in seven games. He vowed afterward not to change.

"Draymond won't be moved by no Draymond rules," he said. "I will continue to play the game how I play the game, operate how I operate, be exactly who I am, because that leads to winning."

In the fourth quarter of the Kings' 114-106 Game 2 win, Green stepped on the chest of Sacramento center Domantas Sabonis after Stephen Curry grabbed a defensive rebound.

In 2016, Green was suspended for a crucial Game 5 loss to LeBron James and the Cavaliers in the NBA Finals after accumulating too many flagrant fouls in the playoffs that season. The Warriors wound up losing in seven.

Dunleavy and owner Joe Lacob know there's much to do better this summer with the expectations that the Warriors will contend for another championship next season.

And, they hope, with Green a part of that core of players along with Curry and Klay Thompson that has won four titles together.

"Look, he's been a spectacular player for us. We would not have these championships without his involvement, no question," Lacob said of

Green.

"I think everyone understands that in this room, he's meant a lot to this franchise. He's a bit of a controversial player perhaps in some corners around the league, certain things that have happened over the years. He knows that. We know that. But the good overwhelms the bad is what I would say."

"... He's meant a lot. I think if he does come back that he will be very important to our success certainly going forward in the next few years."

Dunleavy, promoted from assistant GM to replace Bob Myers, is optimistic of keeping the roster together - Poole and the younger players, too.

Curry, Green and Thompson are still competing at an elite level.

"That's our hope. We love those guys and value them. I think there is a way to do it. That's something we'll have to work through. It certainly is possible," Dunleavy said. "The big thing is those guys are still playing at a high level. Steph conservatively is one of the top five players in the league. Draymond just had an incredible year. Essentially first team all defense. We're biased. One of the premiere defenders in the league. Klay has really returned well from his Achilles injury and his knee. Those guys are playing well at an older age."



Victor Wembanyama has arrived in the U.S. for the NBA draft.

The plane from France carrying Wembanyama - who almost certainly will be taken by the San Antonio Spurs with the No. 1 pick in Thursday's draft - arrived at Newark International Airport outside of New York City on Monday.

And even before becoming an NBA star, he got his first official taste of NBA stardom.

Some fans knew what flight he was on and when the plane was landing, and many were waiting. Wembanyama cheerfully signed autographs, scrawling his name onto basketballs and Spurs jerseys - some even with his name already on the back - before making his way into a waiting vehicle.

It's the start of a hectic few days for the 19-year-old French phenom who long has been considered a generational prospect the likes of which hasn't been seen since LeBron James entered the league in 2003. Wembanyama is expected to appear at a pre-draft media availability on Wednesday, then has the actual draft Thursday and likely will be in San Antonio sometime Friday.

The rest of his summer won't exactly be slow, either.

Arraez 'goes' 5 for 5 again as Marlins blank Blue Jays



Boston Red Sox's Jarren Duran hits a double, driving in two runs against the Minnesota Twins, during the fourth inning of a baseball game in Minneapolis. (AP)

Giants earn season-best 8th straight victory

MIAMI, June 20, (AP): Luis Arraez went 5 for 5 again to raise his batting average to .400, and Jorge Soler homered as the streaking Miami Marlins routed the Toronto Blue Jays 11-0 on Monday night.

Jon Berti had three hits and Jesús Sánchez doubled twice for the Marlins, who finished with a season-high 19 hits and won their fifth straight. Arraez's fifth single, a line drive to left field with the base loaded, scored two and highlighted a five-run seventh.

Bo Bichette had two hits for the Blue Jays, shut out for the first time this season.

Starting pitcher Bryan Hoeng threw four scoreless innings in a bullpen game for Miami. Hoeng allowed three hits and struck out a career-high five. Huascar Brazobán (1-1) followed and got the next six outs. He gave up one single.

Giants 7, Padres 4, 10 innings
In San Francisco, Mike Yastrzemski splashed a game-ending three-run homer into McCovey Cove in the 10th inning, and San Francisco rallied past San Diego for its season-best eighth straight victory.

Yastrzemski also connected in the sixth, giving him five career multi-homer games and two against San Diego. It was his fourth walk-off homer in the majors and second versus the Padres.

Camilo Doval (2-2) struck out Manny Machado for the first out of the 10th and got through it unscathed for the win.

Yastrzemski also scored with a headfirst dive on Patrick Bailey's tying sacrifice fly in a two-run ninth.

Juan Soto homered twice and Ha-Seong Kim hit a two-run single but San Diego blew a 4-0 lead. Ray Kerr (0-1) took the loss.

Rangers 5, White Sox 2
In Chicago, rookie Josh Jung hit his 15th home run, Jonah Heim had a late two-run single and Texas beat Chicago, which lost for the seventh time in nine games.

Andrew Heaney (5-4) pitched neatly into the sixth after struggling in three previous starts, and the Rangers opened the three-game series on a winning note after taking two of three from the Blue Jays. Heaney gave up two runs and five hits in 5 2/3 innings. Will Smith worked the ninth for his 13th save in 14 chances.

Nathaniel Lowe singled and scored

in the fourth against Tanner Banks (0-2) to make it 3-0. Banks allowed three runs and five hits in 3 2/3 innings in his first big league start as the White Sox used him as the opener in a bullpen game.

Diamondbacks 9, Brewers 1
In Milwaukee, Alek Thomas homered during Arizona's six-run first inning against Corbin Burnes. Merrill Kelly continued his road dominance and the Diamondbacks rolled to victory over Milwaukee.

Kelly (9-3) moved into the NL lead for wins by striking out seven and allowing just three hits and one run in seven innings. Kelly has produced five consecutive quality starts.

After getting called up from Triple-A Reno earlier in the day, Thomas went 2 for 4 and scored twice. His two-run homer into the second deck of the right-field seats capped the Diamondbacks' first-inning outburst against Burnes, the 2021 NL Cy Young Award winner.

Mets 11, Astros 1
In Houston, Francisco Lindor homered and drove in five runs, and Max Scherzer pitched eight fantastic innings for his longest outing with New York in their victory over a skidding Houston.

Scherzer (6-2) gave up just four hits and struck out eight to bounce back from consecutive rough starts against the Braves and Yankees.

Daniel Vogelbach, who tied a season high with three RBIs, homered off rookie Hunter Brown (6-4) to start the third. Brown allowed seven hits and a career-high six runs in 5 2/3 innings.

Yainer Diaz homered for the second time in three games, but the Astros couldn't do much else as they lost their

season-high fifth straight. Houston has scored just one run in three of its last five games as the team struggles to deal with an injury to star slugger Yordan Alvarez.

Reds 5, Rockies 4
In Cincinnati, Joey Votto homered and hit a go-ahead, two-run single in his return to the Reds' lineup after a 10-month absence that followed surgery, helping Cincinnati extend its longest winning streak in a decade and move into first place in NL Central for the first time since the opening week of the season

BASEBALL

Votto drove a first-pitch, belt-high fastball from Austin Gomber (4-7) about a dozen rows into the right-field seats for a 3-1 lead in the fifth. After circling the bases on his 343rd home run, Votto emerged from the Reds dugout for a curtain call, wearing the celebratory Viking helmet and cape that have followed Cincinnati long balls this season. He had not homered since last Aug. 6 against Milwaukee's Jake McGee.

Red Sox 9, Twins 3
In Minneapolis, Alex Verdugo tripled and drove in four runs, James Paxton pitched 6 1/3 effective innings and Boston beat Minnesota for their fifth straight win.

Triston Casas hit a two-run homer and Jarren Duran added three doubles for Boston, which has outscored opponents 40-14 during the win streak.

Paxton (3-1) gave up three hits and a walk while striking out seven. Twins catcher Christian Vázquez hit a three-run homer against his former team, his

first in 48 games in his first season in Minnesota.

Pablo López (3-4) allowed five runs - four earned - in 5 2/3 innings for Minnesota, which has lost four of five but remains two games ahead of Cleveland in the American League Central despite falling under .500 for the second time this season.

Cubs 8, Pirates 0
In Pittsburgh, Drew Smyly gave up three hits in five innings, Mike Tauchman hit a two-run single during a brief downpour and Chicago surged past Pittsburgh.

Smyly (7-4) worked around five walks to win his second straight start following a three-game losing streak. Tauchman finished with three hits and drove in three runs. Dansby Swanson added two hits as Chicago spoiled the major-league debut of highly touted Pirates prospect Henry Davis.

Oswaldo Bido (0-1) pitched well in his second major-league start save for a bumpy second inning that coincided with a short deluge that the teams played through even as the fans in the stands scrambled for cover.

Bido, who impressed in his debut last week against the Cubs, settled down after the skies cleared. Bido retired 12 of 13 batters in one stretch and struck out seven against two walks in six innings to boost his chances of sticking around a while longer.

Tigers 6, Royals 4
In Detroit, Kerry Carpenter hit a three-run homer in a five-run, seventh inning that lifted Detroit over Kansas and sent the Royals to their 12th loss in 13 games.

Miguel Cabrera singled and Jonathan Schoop doubled, chasing Royals starter Jordan Lyles in the seventh. Jake Rogers hit a two-run single off Taylor Clarke (1-1) that cut the deficit to 4-3, and Carpenter hit a two-out line drive down the right-field line for his sixth homer this season.

Cardinals 8, Nationals 6
In Washington, Brendan Donovan and Paul Goldschmidt hit back-to-back homers in the fifth inning, and St. Louis rallied from an early deficit to beat Washington in a June 17th matinee.

Donovan's three-run shot to right-center off Josiah Gray (4-6) tied the game 5-5, and Goldschmidt put the Cardinals ahead to stay when he lined a hanging curveball from Gray over the wall in left. Gray allowed a season-worst six runs in five innings.

Jack Flaherty (4-5) gave up six runs for the second consecutive start but won for the first time since May 15.

Génesis Cabrera got the final two outs in the seventh, Giovanni Gallegos worked the eighth and Jordan Hicks got three outs for his third save in three days while a big contingent of Cardinals fans stood and cheered behind their dugout.



In this Thursday, May 26, 2022 file photo, Golden State Warriors forward Draymond Green celebrates after scoring against the Dallas Mavericks during the second half in Game 5 of the NBA basketball playoffs Western Conference finals in San Francisco. (AP)

MLB Results/Standings

WASHINGTON, June 20, (AP): Results and standings from the MLB games on Monday.

Detroit	6	Kansas City	4	St. Louis	8	Washington	6	
Miami	11	Toronto	0	Chicago Cubs	8	Pittsburgh	0	
Boston	9	Minnesota	3	Cincinnati	5	Colorado	4	
NY Mets	11	Houston	1	Arizona	9	Milwaukee	1	
Texas	5	Chicago W. Sox	2	San Francisco	7	San Diego	10	
American League								
East Division				National League				
W	L	Pct	GB	W	L	Pct	GB	
Tampa Bay	51	24	.680	—	Atlanta	46	26	.639
Baltimore	44	27	.620	5	Miami	42	31	.575
New York	39	33	.542	10-1/2	Philadelphia	38	34	.528
Toronto	39	35	.527	11-1/2	New York	34	38	.472
Boston	38	35	.521	12	Washington	27	44	.380
Central Division				Central Division				
W	L	Pct	GB	W	L	Pct	GB	
Minnesota	36	37	.493	—	Cincinnati	38	35	.521
Cleveland	33	38	.465	2	Milwaukee	37	35	.514
Detroit	31	40	.437	4	Pittsburgh	34	37	.479
Chicago	31	43	.419	5-1/2	Chicago	34	38	.472
Kansas City	19	53	.264	16-1/2	St. Louis	30	43	.411
West Division				West Division				
W	L	Pct	GB	W	L	Pct	GB	
Texas	45	27	.625	—	Arizona	44	29	.603
Los Angeles	41	33	.554	5	San Francisco	40	32	.556
Houston	39	34	.534	6-1/2	Los Angeles	39	33	.542
Seattle	35	35	.500	9	San Diego	35	37	.486
Oakland	19	55	.257	27	Colorado	29	46	.387



New York Mets' Jeff McNeil (right) steals second base as Houston Astros shortstop Jeremy Pena tries to catch the throw from catcher Martin Maldonado during the sixth inning of a baseball game in Houston. (AP)



Tournament director Phillip Lahm presents the mascot for the UEFA EURO 2024 soccer championships in Gelsenkirchen, Germany. The mascot bear, that has no name so far, was shown to the public for the first time. (AP)

Sports

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England, France win again in qualifiers

Swiss drop pts

PARIS, June 20, (AP): Harry Kane and Kylian Mbappé carried on scoring as England and France made it four straight wins in European Championship qualifying while Switzerland dropped its first points.

Kane netted twice in England's 7-0 home rout of North Macedonia while Mbappé slotted in a penalty at the second attempt as Les Bleus edged visiting Greece 1-0.

The Swiss were coasting and then conceded two late goals against Romania in a 2-2 home draw.

Mbappé's twice-taken penalty in the second half moved him onto 40 goals for Les Bleus and only one behind fellow great Michel Platini - at the age of 24 - while Kane opened and closed the scoring with his record-extending 57th and 58th goals for England.

England's forward line of Kane, Bukayo Saka and Marcus Rashford all scored at Old Trafford, where Rashford plays for Manchester United.

Saka, who plays for Premier League runner-up Arsenal, grabbed a hat trick.

Substitute Valentin Mihailescu pounced in the 89th and in stoppage time for second-placed Romania in Lucerne.

SOCCER

Mbappé's 54th goal overall for France and Paris Saint-Germain this season beat the national record for club and country set by the late Just Fontaine in the 1957-58 season - the year Fontaine also set an individual scoring record with 13 at the '58 World Cup.

World Cup runner-up France has yet to concede a goal, while third-placed Ireland beat Gibraltar 3-0 in the other game to finally open its account.

Kane and defender Stefan Ristovski needed treatment after a clash of heads early on.

By the 29th minute, Kane was back on his feet and turning in Luke Shaw's cross from close range.

After Rashford's goal and Saka's triple, substitute midfielder Kalvin Phillips scored before Kane's penalty.

Second-placed Ukraine labored to a 1-0 home win against Malta thanks to Viktor Tsygankov's 72nd-minute penalty.

Ukraine is six points back from England.

With Croatia involved in the Nations League, Turkey moved further ahead at the top with a 2-0 home win against Euro 2016 semifinalist Wales.

The Welsh were reeling from losing at home to Armenia 4-2, and fell to goals in the last 20 minutes by striker Umut Nayir and midfielder Arda Güler.

Turkey has nine points, three ahead of Armenia, which moved up to second place after an injury-time penalty from Tigran Barseghyan helped them beat last-placed Latvia 2-1.

Finland and Kazakhstan won and were level on nine points, two ahead of Slovenia and Euro 2020 semifinalist Denmark after they drew 1-1 in Ljubljana.

Striker Andraž Šporar put Slovenia ahead in the 25th, only for Rasmus Højlund to equalize in the 42nd with his sixth goal in qualifying.

Finland routed last-placed San Marino 6-0. Forward Daniel Häkansson helped himself to a second-half hat trick after coming off the bench with 30 minutes left.

Veteran striker Teemu Pukki completed the scoring for the Finns with his 38th international goal.

San Marino has conceded 13 goals and scored none.

Kazakhstan won at Northern Ireland 1-0 thanks to Abat Aimbetov's 88th-minute goal.

Switzerland looked on course for victory No. 4.

Forward Zeki Amdouni notched his fourth and fifth goals in qualifying to put the Swiss in control at the break. But Romania stunned the Swiss supporters in Lucerne to stay unbeaten, and in close contention.

Third-placed Israel was one point behind Romania after beating Andorra 2-1, and Belarus won at home to Kosovo 2-1.



Republic of Ireland's Jason Knight (left), and Gibraltar's Louie Annesley battle for the ball during the Euro 2024 qualifying group B match between Ireland and Gibraltar at the Aviva Stadium, Dublin, Ireland. (AP)



England's Trent Alexander-Arnold, (right) is challenged by North Macedonia's Enis Bardhi during the Euro 2024 Group C qualifying soccer match between England and North Macedonia at Old Trafford in Manchester. (AP)

Kuwait win bronze at Special Oly

BERLIN, June 20, (KUNA): Kuwaiti athletes Hajar Al-Rashidi and Rawan Al-Balhan won Monday the bronze medal in the Bocce doubles competition after defeating German peers in the Special Olympics Summer Games held in Berlin.

This is the first medal won by Kuwait in this event.

In statements to KUNA, Deputy Director General of the Public Authority for Sports, Bashar Abdullah congratulated the two Kuwaiti athletes from on their achievement.

NZ marks 1 month to Women's WC

WELLINGTON, New Zealand, June 20, (AP): New Zealand has marked the one month countdown to the start of the Women's World Cup by creating a full-sized football pitch in the remote southern highlands of the South Island, in the shadow of New Zealand's highest mountain Aoraki Mount Cook.

The 105-meter long, 68-meter wide (114 yards by 74 yards) was built by hand on the tussocky plains of the McKenzie Country in front of the 3,724-meter (12,217-foot) mountain on which Sir Edmund Hillary trained for his successful assault on the summit of Mount Everest.

Two teams of local girls, named Pukaki and Tekapo after pristine alpine lakes nearby, were invited to play the first friendly match on the pitch on Tuesday, refereed by New Zealand Football National Referee Development Manager Lindsey Robinson.

"I came here today to referee the game in the most beautiful place on earth," Robinson said. "Aside from the stunning landscape it was a great game of football."

"I'm incredibly excited about so many visitors coming to New

Zealand to enjoy the game and enjoy this beautiful part of the world."

Tourism New Zealand worked with local indigenous Maori and the Department of Conservation to ensure the project was executed in a way that respected mana whenua (the rights of New Zealand's Indigenous people) and had no lasting impact on the land.

The pitch was created over six weeks, adhering to strict environmental and sustainability principles with a philosophy of "tread lightly" ensuring the land could be returned to its natural state.

The match between Pukaki and Tekapo ended in a 1-1 draw.

Eight-year-old Immy Ivey was amazed she was able to play beneath Aoraki Mount Cook.

"It's cool playing football in the mountains because when you score a goal, instead of just having plain grass, you can see the big mountains instead which is nice for a change," Ivey said.

New Zealand and Australia are co-hosting the Women's World Cup, which kicks off July 20 and features 32 teams. The final is set to be staged in Sydney on Aug. 20.

'Organizing committee cooperating'

Paris Olympic organizers headquarters searched in 'corruption' investigations

PARIS, June 20, (AP): French investigators searched the Paris Olympic organizers' headquarters on Tuesday as part of corruption investigations into contracts linked to the Games, according to officials, the third straight time graft allegations have dogged a Summer Olympics.

The Paris organizing committee said in a statement that a search was underway at their headquarters in the suburb of Saint-Denis, and said it was cooperating. It would not comment further.

Tuesday's search and other related raids were linked to two preliminary investigations related to the Olympics that had not previously been made public, according to an official with the financial prosecutor's office, who was not authorized to be publicly named according to office policy. One probe was opened in 2017 - the year Paris was picked by the International Olympic Committee as the 2024 host - and the other began last year.

Corruption allegations have hung over the world's biggest sporting event many times - from accusations surrounding how the Games were awarded in the first place to how contracts for construction, sponsorship and team services were handed out.

Accusations of vote buying linked to the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympics and the Tokyo Games in 2021 led to the removal of several members of the IOC.

Those scandals revived memories of ones surrounding the 2002 Salt Lake City Winter Games that led to reforms that limited IOC members' contact with candidate countries, though did not entirely remove the scope for corruption.

But Paris 2024 had gone to lengths to prove it would be different. The biggest event France is hosting in decades, the Games are being billed as a celebration of openness after two Olympics closed off by the COVID-19 pandemic, and as an example of democratic celebration after two World Cups tainted by human rights concerns in Qatar and Russia.

The IOC said in a statement it was informed by the organizers that they are cooperating with authorities. It did not comment further.

The raids unfolded as the IOC executive board began a two-day meeting

in Lausanne, Switzerland. IOC president Thomas Bach told reporters early Monday the meeting "of course will be about Paris, where we have some good news after the visit of the coordination mission and after my visit to France, to President Macron, and also the organizing committee."

Paris was awarded its Olympics six years ago - and at the same time the IOC also rewarded its only remaining bid rival, Los Angeles, with the 2028 Summer Games.

Avoiding a contested vote removed the scope for vote-trading and bribery in a process that has since changed again effectively to shut down public campaigning. Brisbane was picked two years ago as the 2032 Summer Games host after being pre-selected by the IOC to get exclusive negotiating rights.

The runup to the 2024 Games has seen turmoil in French sports.

Just last month, the president of the French Olympic Committee resigned following a period of intense infighting, prompting calls from Paris organizers for sports leaders to set differences aside and focus on delivering the Games.

Also, Noël Le Graët resigned as president of the French soccer federation in February after a government audit found he no longer had the legitimacy to lead because of his behavior toward women and his management style. Bernard Laporte resigned as president of the French Rugby Federation in January after he was convicted of corruption and illegally acquiring assets and handed a suspended prison sentence.

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