



NewsWatch

KUWAIT CITY: The Kuwait International Airport Customs Administration confirmed that every person entering or leaving the country through the various Kuwait ports must declare to the customs authorities the amount of currencies or financial instruments if the value exceeds 3,000 dinars or its equivalent in any foreign currency, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The daily said the authorities have also stressed that no gold bars can be taken out of the country without customs document saying it will benefit the passenger and enable him/her to enter the country of destination without any hassle.

KUWAIT CITY: The Interior Ministry announced Saturday introducing the biometric technology at all border crossing points as part of its strategy to use the latest technologies for improving border and state security.

In a press statement, the ministry clarified that all arrivals, nationals or expatriates, who are over 18 years of age would be subject to biometric scanning before entering the country.

This includes fingerprints, face recognition and eye scanning, it pointed out, adding that the new technology would be applied on entrants only.

The ministry said it opened four centers in Al-Jahra, Ali Sabah Al-Salem, Gharb Mishref and Farwaniya for travelers who want to register their biometric data before traveling. (KUNA)

WASHINGTON: Sudan's warring factions have agreed to a new short-term ceasefire, U.S. and Saudi mediators announced on Saturday, after several previous attempts to broker a truce that holds have failed.

Meeting in the Saudi port city of Jeddah, the Sudanese army and the Rapid Support Forces signed off on a seven-day ceasefire that is due to take effect on Monday 9:45 p.m. local time in Sudan, the U.S. and Saudi Arabia said in a joint statement. The ceasefire could be extended if both sides agree.

"Both parties have conveyed to the Saudi and U.S. facilitators their commitment not to seek military advantage during the 48-hour notification period after signing the agreement and prior to the start of the ceasefire," it said. (AP)

TEHRAN: Five Iranian border guards were killed in a clash with an unknown armed group trying to enter the country near the Pakistani border, state TV reported Sunday.

The fighting happened in the town of Saravan in the southeastern province of Sistan and Baluchistan, some 1,360 kilometers (850 miles) southeast of the capital Tehran. The report said the militants fled the area with casualties, but did not elaborate.

State TV originally reported that six guards were killed but later said there were five fatalities. Two border guards were also wounded in the clash. It did not blame the attack on any group and no group immediately claimed responsibility. There were no additional details.

The area is one of the least developed parts of Iran. The relationship between the predominantly Sunni residents of the region and Iran's Shiite theocracy has long been fraught. (AP)

RIYADH: Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council Jasssem Al-Budaiwi on Saturday expressed his strong condemnation of the irregular armed forces' storming and vandalizing the Qatari embassy in the Sudanese capital Khartoum.

In a statement, the GCC secretary general denounced all forms of violence and vandalism, especially those targeting headquarters of diplomatic missions and affiliate buildings in Sudan recently.

Al-Budaiwi reiterated the call upon parties of the conflict to act quickly for stopping military operations, exercise maximum restraint, abstain from escalation, respect international agreements and diplomatic norms that guarantee sanctity and safety of headquarters of diplomatic missions and their employees as well as to spare civilians effects of the conflict.

He called on all parties to respond positively to the Arab leaders during their summit in Jeddah for seeking a comprehensive political settlement that achieves security, stability, and prosperity for Sudan and its people. (KUNA)

ISLAMABAD: An Afghan military helicopter crashed in the country's north Sunday after hitting a power line base, killing at least two crewmembers, the Defense Ministry said.

The MD-530 chopper was patrolling in the area after it took off from northern Balkh province and crashed in the Kholm district in Samangan province, a ministry statement said.

Officials said the chopper hit the base of a high voltage power line before crashing.

It's unclear how many helicopters, including U.S. choppers, are in the hands of the Taliban-run government. As the U.S.-backed Afghan government collapsed in mid-August 2021, dozens of Afghan pilots fled to Central Asian countries, including Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. (AP)

WASHINGTON: The State Department offered Wednesday to allow the Republican chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee to view a classified cable from U.S. diplomats in Kabul sent shortly before the chaotic withdrawal from Afghanistan.

Rep. Michael McCaul of Texas had threatened earlier this week to make an unprecedented push to hold Secretary of State Antony Blinken in contempt of Congress if he did not turn over the so-called dissent cable.

In step ... Kuwait marks 6-decade commitment to UN ideals, values



Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah speaking at the UN General Assembly's Hall.

KUNA photo

Partnered for the sake of humanity

NEW YORK, May 21, (KUNA): The Kuwaiti mission at the UN headquarters in New York had marked its country's 60th anniversary of membership at the international organization.

The event saw the participation of a Kuwaiti national music band in addition to exhibitions displaying the history and culture of Kuwait.

In a televised message, broadcasted at the UN General Assembly's Hall, Kuwait Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah affirmed that Kuwait, since joining the UN, had worked diligently to boost cooperation and understanding amongst all members of the international organization.

He affirmed that he was proud of Kuwait's 60 years of accomplishments on the regional and the international levels, saying that his country had called for boosting security, sustainable development and human rights during its membership.

Sheikh Salem reflected Kuwait's keenness on continuing its efforts at the UN, affirming that his country was a reliable partner for the UN when it came to bolstering justice and moderation on a global scale.

On his part, Kuwait's Permanent Representative at the UN Ambassador Tareq Al-Banai delivered a speech during the occasion, which commended the strong ties between Kuwait and the UN.

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Eight solutions eyed

Manila legislator calls for ban as sides grope for common ground

KUWAIT CITY, May 21: In light of the ongoing Filipino labor crisis sources familiar with the file put forward a number of solutions that they deem necessary, and that can contribute to finding common ground for the two parties, on which they can build, especially since Filipino labor constitutes about 80 percent of domestic workers in Kuwait, reports Al-Rai daily.

The sources believed that there are 8 solutions that can help solve the problem, which are: ■ Allowing labor offices to transfer the residence of the worker to another sponsor, in the event that she does not wish to work with the first sponsor, while preserving the rights of both parties.

■ Educating workers about the need to abide by the laws and customs of the host country, and imposing fines on them in the event that they run away without convincing reasons, given that they have signed a two-year contract, and allow them to change the sponsor in the event of the expiration of the contract period.

■ The government shelter center receives all the fugitives immediately, in cooperation and with the employment and sponsor's office, to solve any problem as soon as possible before it escalates.

■ Strictly implementing penalties for those who cover up or harbor a runaway domestic worker, and hold him/her responsible to pay the value of the recruitment to the first sponsor.

■ Establishing a mechanism to follow up on the worker's receipt of her full salaries.

■ Not allowing the female worker to travel without the knowledge of the employer and the recruiting office.

■ Commitment to the unified model contract signed between the two countries for the recruitment of workers.

■ Not to seek partial or total suspension of sending workers to Kuwait, whenever an official demands that, on the background of any individual case.

The sources confirmed that "the embassy's reception of the runaway worker, issuing a travel document for her, and deporting her after recording her complaint, without waiting for the sponsor or the office to respond, and contenting herself with asking the Kuwaiti recruitment office to pay the ticket and delayed salaries, is a kind of injustice to the offices, and deepens the crisis, knowing that Kuwaiti law does not allow the deportation of any worker who has dues before obtaining a clearance.

Meanwhile, prominent Filipino parliamentarian has called for imposing a comprehensive ban on sending her country's workers to Kuwait, criticizing what she considered a failure on the Kuwaiti side to provide adequate protection for those workers.

This escalating demand came from Representative Rachel Arenas, Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee in the Philippine Parliament, who described her proposal as "a punitive response to the Kuwaiti government's decision regarding suspending the issuance of new visas for Filipino workers."

She added, "The proposed ban should remain in place until Kuwaiti government officials sit down with our officials and agree to our demands. Until this happens, we should not meet their demands and not submit to their intimidating measures."

Arenas concluded saying "It saddens me to see our workers abused and even killed at the hands of their employers. We should only send our workers to countries that treat them with dignity, protect their rights, and take into account their welfare."

Joint patrols considered

Aussie drones eyes for Manila

MANILA, May 21, (AP): Australia will provide surveillance drones and other high-tech gear to the Philippine coast guard and is considering whether to take part in joint patrols in the disputed South China Sea, Australia Foreign Minister Penny Wong said Thursday.

Wong, who held talks in Manila with her counterpart, Enrique Manalo, also thanked the Philippine government for its help in the discovery of a ship that sank during World War II in the northern Philippines, killing nearly a thousand Australians "in a very sad chapter in our history."

The United States and the Philippines, which are longtime treaty allies, have been holding talks on proposed joint naval patrols in the South China Sea, where China has fortified its vast territorial claims by transforming disputed reefs into missile-protected island bases and deploying Chinese coast guard and militia ships on constant patrols.

Aside from China and the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Taiwan and Brunei are also embroiled in the territorial disputes.

Washington lays no claims to the disputed waters but has deployed warships and fighter jets on patrols which it says are aimed at ensuring freedom of navigation and overflight.

In February, Australian Defense Minister Richard Marles and his Philippine counterpart said in Manila that they were looking at Australian and Philippine forces possibly carrying out joint patrols.

Responding to a question at a news conference Thursday about the prospects of Australia joining such patrols with the U.S. and the Philippines, Wong said that "we are open to cooperating with all our partners to exercise freedom of navigation and overflight."

"Our departments are discussing the best pathway to take this forward, and we want to keep working with the Philippines on that," Wong said,

without elaborating.

She added that Australia wants "a region that is predictable" where "sovereignty is respected."

In her talks with Philippine officials, Wong said she discussed ways to bolster security cooperation, including "Australia providing drone equipment, training and other technology to strengthen your coast guard in maritime domain awareness and protection capabilities."

The two countries are also discussing plans for more joint military training and exercises, Wong said.

The United States and Australia have both struck agreements with the Philippines for temporary visits by troops for joint combat exercises in the country. The Philippine Constitution prohibits the permanent basing of foreign troops and their involvement in local combat.

Wong thanked the Philippines for its help in the recent discovery of a sunken Japanese ship, the Montevideo Maru, off the northern Philippine province of Ilocos Norte.

A team of explorers announced in Australia last month that it had found the ship, which was transporting Allied prisoners of war when it was torpedoed off the Philippine coast in 1942, resulting in Australia's largest maritime wartime loss.

The Montevideo Maru was transporting prisoners and civilians who were captured after the fall of Rabaul in Papua New Guinea. The ship was not marked as carrying POWs, and on July 1, 1942, the American submarine Sturgeon, after stalking the ship through the night, fired four torpedoes which sank the vessel in less than 10 minutes. More than 1,000 prisoners from 14 nations were killed, including 979 Australians.

"This has been a very sad chapter in our history, and we are glad for your assistance in that work," Wong said.

Amini poster 'angers' Iran

TEHRAN, May 21, (AP): Iran's foreign ministry has summoned Switzerland's envoy in Tehran, local media reported on Sunday, amid tensions with Western countries.

A website affiliated with Iran's state television called YJC.ir reported that the Swiss ambassador, Nadine Lozano, was summoned after a Twitter account affiliated with the embassy in Tehran published a photo showing protest icon Mahsa Amini.

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This combination of photos provided by Axiom Space in 2023 shows astronauts, from left, Peggy Whitson, John Shoffner, Ali Al-Qarni and Rayyanah Barnawi. SpaceX's next private flight to the International Space Station awaited takeoff Sunday, weather and rocket permitting. (AP)

Ten-day trip

Saudis set for SpaceX launch

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla., May 21, (AP): SpaceX's next private flight to the International Space Station awaited takeoff Sunday, weather and rocket permitting.

The passengers include Saudi Arabia's first astronauts in decades, as well as a Tennessee businessman who started his own sports car racing team. They'll be led by a retired NASA astronaut who now works for the company that arranged the 10-day trip.

It's the second charter flight organized by Houston-based Axiom Space. The company would not say how much the latest tickets cost; it previously cited per-seat prices of \$55 million.

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INDEBTEDNESS

Business Plus



Loans pushing world's poorest countries to the brink of collapse

Beijing ... and now the bill



Police fire tear gas as protesters stormed the compound of Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe demanding he resign after President Gotabaya Rajapaksa fled the country amid an economic crisis in Colombo, Sri Lanka, Wednesday, July 13, 2022. Since Sri Lanka defaulted in 2022, a half-million industrial jobs have vanished, inflation has pierced 50% and more than half the population in many parts of the country has fallen into poverty. (AP)

month. That has made variable rate loans to countries suddenly much more expensive.

All of it is roiling domestic politics and upending strategic alliances.

In March, heavily indebted Honduras cited "financial pressures" in its decision to establish formal diplomatic ties to China and sever those with Taiwan.

Last month, Pakistan was so desperate to prevent more blackouts that it struck a deal to buy discounted oil from Russia, breaking ranks with the U.S.-led effort to shut off Vladimir Putin's funds.

In Sri Lanka, rioters poured into the streets last July, setting homes of government ministers aflame and storming the presidential palace, sending the leader tied to onerous deals with China fleeing the country.

China's response

The Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in a statement to the AP, disputed the notion that China is an unforgiving lender and echoed previous statements putting the blame on the Federal Reserve. It said that if it is to accede to IMF and World Bank demands to forgive a portion of its loans, so do those multilateral lenders, which it views as U.S. proxies.

"We call on these institutions to actively participate in relevant actions in accordance with the principle of 'joint action, fair burden' and make greater contributions to help developing countries tide over the difficulties," the ministry statement said.

China argues it has offered relief in the form of extended loan maturities and emergency loans, and as the biggest contributor to a program to temporarily suspend interest payments during the coronavirus pandemic. It also says it has forgiven 23 non-interest loans to African countries, though AidData's Parks said such loans are mostly from two decades ago and amount to less than 5% of the total it has lent.

In high-level talks in Washington last month, China was considering dropping its demand that the IMF and World Bank forgive loans if the two lenders would make commitments to offer grants and other help to troubled countries, according to various news reports. But in the weeks since there has been no announcement and both lenders have expressed frustration with Beijing.

"My view is that we have to drag them - maybe that's an impolite word - we need to walk together," IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva said earlier this month. "Because if we don't, there will be catastrophe for many, many countries."

The IMF and World Bank say taking losses on their loans would rip up the traditional playbook of dealing with sovereign crises that accords them special treatment because, unlike Chinese banks, they already finance at low rates to help distressed countries get back on their feet. The Chinese foreign ministry noted, however, that the two multilateral lenders have made an exception to the rules in the past, forgiving loans to many countries in the mid-1990s to save them from collapse.

As time runs out, some officials are urging concessions.

Asfaq Hassan, a former debt official at Pakistan's Ministry of Finance, said his country's debt burden is too heavy and time too short for the IMF and World Bank to hold out. He also called for concessions from private investment funds that lent to his country by purchasing bonds.

"Every stakeholder will have to take a haircut," Hassan said. China has also pushed back on the idea, popularized in the Trump administration, that it has engaged in "debt trap diplomacy," leaving countries saddled with loans they cannot afford so that it can seize ports, mines and other strategic assets.

On this point, experts who have studied the issue in detail have sided with Beijing. Chinese lending has come from dozens of banks on the mainland and is far too haphazard and sloppy to be coordinated from the top. If anything, they say, Chinese banks are not taking losses because the timing is awful as they face

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A dozen poor countries are facing economic instability and even collapse under the weight of hundreds of billions of dollars in foreign loans, much of them from the world's biggest and most unforgiving government lender, China.

An Associated Press analysis of a dozen countries most indebted to China - including Pakistan, Kenya, Zambia, Laos and Mongolia - found paying back that debt is consuming an ever-greater amount of the tax revenue needed to keep schools open, provide electricity and pay for food and fuel. And it's draining foreign currency reserves these countries use to pay interest on those loans, leaving some with just months before that money is gone.

Behind the scenes is China's reluctance to forgive debt and its extreme secrecy about how much money it has loaned and on what terms, which has kept other major lenders from stepping in to help. On top of that is the recent discovery that borrowers have been required to put cash in hidden escrow accounts that push China to the front of the line of creditors to be paid.

Countries in AP's analysis had as much as 50% of their foreign loans from China and most were devoting more than a third of government revenue to paying off foreign debt.

Two of them, Zambia and Sri Lanka, have already gone into default, unable to make even interest payments on loans financing the construction of ports, mines and power plants.

In Pakistan, millions of textile workers have been laid off because the country has too much foreign debt and can't afford to keep the electricity on and machines running.

In Kenya, the government has held back paychecks to thousands of civil service workers to save cash to pay foreign loans. The president's chief economic adviser tweeted last month, "Salaries or default? Take your pick."

Since Sri Lanka defaulted a year ago, a half-million industrial jobs have vanished, inflation has pierced 50% and more than half the population in many parts of the country has fallen into poverty.



Brad Parks, executive director of the research lab AidData, stands for a portrait at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Va., on Tuesday, May 16, 2023. Much of the credit for dragging China's hidden debt into the light goes to Parks, who over the past decade has had to contend with all manner of roadblocks, obfuscations and falsehoods from the authoritarian government. (AP)

Experts predict that unless China begins to soften its stance on its loans to poor countries, there could be a wave of more defaults and political upheavals.

"In a lot of the world, the clock has hit midnight," said Harvard economist Ken Rogoff. "China has moved in and left this geopolitical instability that could have long-lasting effects."

How it's playing out

A case study of how it has played out is in Zambia, a landlocked country of 20 million people in southern Africa that over the past two decades has borrowed billions of dollars from Chinese state-owned banks to build dams, railways and roads.

The loans boosted Zambia's economy but also raised foreign interest payments so high there was little left for the government, forcing it to cut spending on healthcare, social services and subsidies to farmers for seed and fertilizer.

In the past under such circumstances, big government lenders such as the U.S., Japan and France would work out deals to forgive some debt, with each lender disclosing clearly what they were owed and

on what terms so no one would feel cheated.

But China didn't play by those rules. It refused at first to even join in multinational talks, negotiating separately with Zambia and insisting on confidentiality that barred the country from telling non-Chinese lenders the terms of the loans and whether China had devised a way of muscling to the front of the repayment line.

Amid this confusion in 2020, a group of non-Chinese lenders refused desperate pleas from Zambia to suspend interest payments, even for a few months. That refusal added to the drain on Zambia's foreign cash reserves, the stash of mostly U.S. dollars that it used to pay interest on loans and to buy major commodities like oil. By November 2020, with little reserves left, Zambia stopped paying the interest and defaulted, locking it out of future borrowing and setting off a vicious cycle of spending cuts and deepening poverty.

Inflation in Zambia has since soared 50%, unemployment has hit a 17-year high and the nation's currency, the kwacha, has lost 30% of its value in just seven months. A United Nations estimate of Zambians not getting enough food has nearly tripled so far this year, to 3.5 million.

"I just sit in the house thinking what I will eat because I have no money to buy food," said Marvis Kunda, a blind 70-year-old widow in Zambia's Luapula province whose welfare payments were recently slashed. "Sometimes I eat once a day and if no one remembers to help me with food from the neighborhood, then I just starve."

A few months after Zambia defaulted, researchers found that it owed \$6.6 billion to Chinese state-owned banks, double what many thought at the time and about a third of the country's total debt.

"We're flying blind," said Brad Parks, executive director of AidData, a research lab at the College of William & Mary that has uncovered thousands of secret Chinese loans and assisted the AP in its analysis. "When you look under the cushions

of the couch, suddenly you realize, 'Oh, there's a lot of stuff we missed. And actually things are much worse.'"

Debt and upheaval

China's unwillingness to take big losses on the hundreds of billions of dollars it is owed, as the International Monetary Fund and World Bank have urged, has left many countries on a treadmill of paying back interest, which stifles the economic growth that would help them pay off the debt.

Foreign cash reserves have dropped in 10 of the dozen countries in AP's analysis, down an average 25% in just a year. They have plunged more than 50% in Pakistan and the Republic of Congo. Without a bailout, several countries have only months left of foreign cash to pay for food, fuel and other essential imports. Mongolia has eight months left. Pakistan and Ethiopia about two.

"As soon as the financing taps are turned off, the adjustment takes place right away," said Patrick Curran, senior economist at researcher Tellimer. "The economy contracts, inflation spikes up, food and fuel become unaffordable."

Mohammad Tahir, who was laid off six months ago from his job at a textile factory in the Pakistani city of Multan, says he has contemplated suicide because he can no longer bear to see his family of four go to bed night after night without dinner.

"I've been facing the worst kind of poverty," said Tahir, who was recently told Pakistan's foreign cash reserves have depleted so much that it was now unable to import raw materials for his factory. "I have no idea when we would get our jobs back."

Poor countries have been hit with foreign currency shortages, high inflation, spikes in unemployment and widespread hunger before, but rarely like in the past year.

Along with the usual mix of government mismanagement and corruption are two unexpected and devastating events: the war in Ukraine, which has sent prices of grain and oil soaring, and the U.S. Federal Reserve's decision to raise interest rates 10 times in a row, the latest this

editor's choice



Prayer Timings

Fajr	03:21	Asr	15:20
Sunrise ..	04:52	Maghrib ..	18:36
Zohr	11:44	Isha	20:05

Local

CIVIL ID STATUS INQUIRY: <https://e.gov.kw/sites/kgoenlsh/Pages/eServices/PACI/CivilIDStatus.aspx>

Weather

Expected weather for the next 24 hours:

By Day: Hot and relatively humid over coastal areas and partly cloudy with light to moderate southeasterly wind with speeds of 08-32 km/h.

By Night: Mild and relatively humid over coastal areas with light to moderate southeasterly wind to light variable wind with speeds of 08-28 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.

Station Max Exp Min Rec

Kuwait City	36	28
Kuwait Airport	37	28
Abdaly	39	21
Jahra	39	28
Salmiyah	31	28
Ahmadi	31	27
Nuwaib	37	27
Wafra	39	26

The bill

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big hits from reckless real estate lending in their own country and a dramatically slowing economy.

But the experts are quick to point out that a less sinister Chinese role is not a less scary one.

"There is no single person in charge," said Teal Emery, a former sovereign loan analyst who now runs consulting group Teal Insights.

Adds AidData's Parks about Beijing, "They're kind of making it up as they go along. There is no master plan."

Loan sleuth

Much of the credit for dragging China's hidden debt into the light goes to Parks, who over the past decade has had to contend with all manner of roadblocks, obfuscations and falsehoods from the authoritarian government.

The hunt began in 2011 when a top World Bank economist asked Parks to take over the job of looking into Chinese loans. Within months, using online data-mining techniques, Parks and a few researchers began uncovering hundreds of loans the World Bank had not known about.

China at the time was ramping up lending that would soon become part of its \$1 trillion "Belt and Road Initiative" to secure supplies of key minerals, win allies abroad and make more money off its U.S. dollar holdings. Many developing countries were eager for U.S. dollars to build power plants, roads and ports and expand mining operations.

But after a few years of straightforward Chinese government loans, those countries found themselves heavily indebted, and the optics were awful. They feared that piling more loans atop old ones would make them seem reckless to credit rating agencies and make it more expensive to borrow in the future.

So China started setting up shell companies for some infrastructure projects and lent to them instead, which allowed heavily indebted countries to avoid putting that new debt on their books. Even if the loans were backed by the government, no one would be the wiser.

In Zambia, for example, a \$1.5 billion loan from two Chinese banks to a shell company to build a giant hydroelectric dam didn't appear on the country's books for years.

In Indonesia, Chinese loans of \$4 billion to help build a railway also never appeared on public government accounts. That all changed years later when, overbudget by \$1.5 billion, the Indonesian government was forced to bail out the railroad twice.

"When these projects go bad, what was advertised as a private debt becomes a public debt," Parks said. "There are projects all over the globe like this."

In 2021, a decade after Parks and his team began their hunt, they had gathered enough information for a blockbuster finding: At least \$385 billion of hidden and under-reported Chinese debt in 88 countries, and many of those countries were in far worse shape than anyone knew.

Among the disclosures was that China issued a \$3.5 billion loan to build a railway system in Laos, which would take nearly a quarter of country's annual output to pay off.

Another AidData report around the same time suggested that many Chinese loans go to projects in areas of countries favored by powerful politicians and frequently right before key elections. Some of the things built made little economic sense and were riddled with problems.

In Sri Lanka, a Chinese-funded airport built in the president's hometown away from most of the country's population is so barely used that elephants have been spotted wandering on its tarmac.

Cracks are appearing in hydroelectric plants in Uganda and Ecuador, where in March the government got judicial approval for corruption charges tied to the project against a former president now in exile.

In Pakistan, a power plant had to be shut down for fear it could collapse. In Kenya, the last key miles of a railway were never built due to poor planning and a lack of funds.

Jumping to the front of the line

As Parks dug into the details of the loans, he found something alarming: Clauses mandating that borrowing countries deposit U.S. dollars or other foreign currency in secret escrow accounts that Beijing could raid if those countries stopped paying interest on their loans.

In effect, China had jumped to the front of the line to get paid without other lenders knowing.

In Uganda, Parks revealed a loan to expand the main airport included an escrow account that could hold more than \$15 million. A legislative probe blasted the finance minister for agreeing to such terms, with the lead investigator saying he should be prosecuted and jailed.

Parks is not sure how many such accounts have been set up, but governments insisting on any kind of collateral, much less collateral in the form of hard cash, is rare in sovereign lending. And their very existence has rattled non-Chinese banks, bond investors and other lenders and made them unwilling to accept less than they're owed.

"The other creditors are saying, 'We're not going to offer anything if China is, in effect, at the head of the repayment line,'" Parks said. "It leads to paralysis. Everyone is sizing each other up and saying, 'Am I going to be a chump here?'"

Loans as 'currency exchanges'

Meanwhile, Beijing has taken on a new kind of hidden lending that has added to the confusion and distrust. Parks and others found that China's central bank has effectively been lending tens of billions of dollars through what appear as ordinary foreign currency exchanges.

Foreign currency exchanges, called swaps, allow countries to essentially borrow more widely used currencies like the U.S. dollar to plug temporary shortages in foreign reserves. They are intended for liquidity purposes, not to build things, and last for only a few months.

But China's swaps mimic loans by lasting years and charging higher-than-normal interest rates. And importantly, they don't show up on the books as loans that would add to a country's debt total.

Mongolia has taken out \$5.4 billion in such swaps, an amount equivalent to 14% of its total debt. Pakistan took out nearly \$11 billion in three years and Laos has borrowed \$600 million.

The swaps can help stave off default by replenishing currency reserves, but they pile more loans on top of old ones and can make a collapse much worse, akin to what happened in the runup to 2009 financial crisis when U.S. banks kept offering ever-bigger mortgages to homeowners who couldn't afford the first one.

Some poor countries struggling to repay China now find themselves stuck in a kind of loan limbo: China won't budge in taking losses, and the IMF won't offer low-interest loans if the money is just going to pay interest on Chinese debt.

For Chad and Ethiopia, it's been more than a year since IMF rescue packages were approved in so-called staff-level agreements, but nearly all the money has been withheld as negotiations among its creditors drag on.

"You've got a growing number of countries that are in dire financial straits," said Parks, attributing it largely to China's stunning rise in just a generation from being a net recipient of foreign aid to the world's largest creditor.

"Somehow they've managed to do all of this out of public view," he said. "So unless people understand how China lends, how its lending practices work, we're never going to solve these crises." (AP)

600 males, females needed for science subjects

Plan to hire Palestinian, Jordanian teachers

KUWAIT CITY, May 21: The Ministry of Education (MoE) has identified the need for external recruitment of members of the educational staff for the next academic year of 2023/2024. It is working on contracting again with 600 male and female teachers from Palestine and Jordan in order to fill the shortage in schools and meet their requirements for teachers, reports Al-Qabas daily.

According to informed sources, the administrative sector received a letter from the Assistant Undersecretary for Public Education Osama Al-Sultan regarding the need of schools for non-Kuwaiti teachers for the next academic year.

The number of specializations required from externally contracted teachers for the next year is eight - English, French, Mathematics, General science, Chemistry, Physics, Biology and Geology.

Al-Sultan specified only two countries - Jordan and Palestine - to recruit new male and female teachers through the external contracting committees. No other nationality residing in the contracting country will be accepted.

The date for the official announcement of these contracts

and the submission of applications electronically, or the timing of the committees' travel, has not been determined due to the circumstances that the Ministry of Education is going through and the administrative vacuum that it suffers from. It is expected to be determined after the end of the year-end exams and the appointment of an undersecretary.

The Department of Coordination and Follow-up in the Public Education Sector has also determined the number of members of the educational staff required from the two countries in each specialization. The total number of required teachers is 590 male and female teachers in all specializations, which may increase or decrease according to the variables and existing requests.

There is a need for 80 male English language, 50 male French teachers, 270 male and female Mathematics teachers, 60 male and female General science teachers, 25 male and female Chemistry teachers, 60 Physics teachers, 25 Biology teachers, and 20 Geology teachers.

The sources indicated that the announcement of the opening of the door for external contracting for teachers

from Jordan and Palestine to work in the public education sector for the next academic year of 2023/2024 is ready in the administrative sector, and is awaiting the green light from Al-Sultan to upload it to the official website of the Ministry of Education.

They revealed that the Ministry of Education will ask its foreign counterpart to instruct the concerned authorities in the two countries to publish the announcement of the teacher's request in two of the widely circulated daily newspapers, twice for each newspaper on an internal page, and to announce the broadcast on the radio during appropriate periods, in comparison to what happened in previous years. Those applications will be received from the date of issuance of the announcement, until the arrival of the external contracting committees to conduct interviews.



Al-Sultan

Other Voices

State of our foreign affairs

By Ahmad alsarraf

We topped global measurement indicators in financial, political and administrative corruption, lack of transparency, and absence of freedoms! We are also the lowest ranked nation in the indicators of decline in education.

Very few of the competencies took up their jobs without parliamentary or governmental mediation. The selection of the approximately 500 higher-level employees is not often subject to aptitude tests, as is supposed, according to civil service laws.

And if it were applied, only a few would have passed it, and the best example is the tests conducted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs last March, to select 30 candidates for diplomatic positions abroad, and it is said that the number of those who applied to fill them is close to a thousand, none of them succeeded in the test, or very few, which "forced" the ministry to make another announcement asking those willing to join the foreign service to send applications.

This is the tragedy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in finding 30 candidates, even half-qualified, out of a thousand applicants and this is considered the first warning bell of the collapse that befell the state.

When education declines, so does the level of graduates in the area of medicine, engineering, chemistry, pharmacy, and even religion, because these are the result of bad courses, bad teachers, and semi-official condoning the wave of forged diploma holders that has swept all ministries, the university and the rest of the educational institutions, and this is most dangerous situation.

It is painful for this to happen after more than a hundred years of formal education in the country, and the opening of the first school of its kind in the Arabian Peninsula!

A former ambassador, who was dis-

tinguished by his knowledge and personality, says that he suffered a lot from the low level of education of the new diplomats who had joined the service, in addition to their unwillingness or willingness to learn the work.

The majority of them got the job, through intermediaries, for its great financial advantages, and for the temptations of working abroad. He was shocked by the ignorance of some of them in the simplest political matters, such as distinguishing between the flag of his state and the flags of other Arab countries, or the full name of the head of state, and the names of some important ministers, not even the name of the foreign minister, nor knowing the difference between the Sultanate, the Emirate and the Republic, and which of them applies to his "state."

He also discovered that some of them did not know the Sunnah, let alone even the date of Saddam's invasion of his homeland, or the causes of the invasion, or where Russia is located, and is it an European or Asian nation... and a lot of other semi-intuitive general information, for those who will assume a high diplomatic position. He added that the self-respecting ambassador does not really want to work with these people, nor for them to be among the country's representatives abroad.

A former Minister of Education made a comment on the great failure at the exams conducted by Ministry of Foreign Affairs saying that he receives several calls from the applicants who failed and their parents complaining about the difficulty of the exams and manipulation of the results despite the fact that the exams are electronically conducted and the result is announced immediately.

Sadly, parents of the applicants have issued a statement requesting Ministry of Foreign Affairs to overlook the results of the exams and hire their children. Apparently, they wanted to inform the world about the current level of education in Kuwait through their children!

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Standoff over workers continues

Kuwait refuses to budge on demands; delegation leaves

KUWAIT CITY, May 21: The preliminary discussions on May 16 and 17 in Kuwait by the visiting Filipino delegation to iron out differences on the resumption of sending domestic workers to Kuwait and Kuwait's decision to stop issuing visas for Filipinos failed to make a breakthrough, reports Al-Anba daily quoting reliable sources.

The sources indicated that a number of members of the delegation have already left the country, indicating that Kuwait rejects the dictates that the government of the Philippines desires and also rejects the special amendments it requests for its workers, whether those dealt with by the visiting delegation or what was put forward in the Philippine Parliament.

The source pointed out that the Kuwaiti law on employment regulates the mechanisms for residing workers of different nationalities, and it is not possible to enact a special law for workers of a specific nationality.

This came at the end of the official talks with the concerned authorities in the country at the Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs headquarters.

However, the Philippine government delegation affirmed its full respect for Kuwaiti laws, adding that there are more than 200,000 Filipino workers who consider Kuwait their second home, stressing keenness on the development of friendly and historical relations between the two countries.

The delegation explained that all measures taken by the Philippine embassy and the Philippine government are only to ensure the safety and well-being of their citizens, stressing that providing protection for citizens of any country abroad is a firm duty of consular offices under international law and agreements.

The members of the delegation expressed their thanks to the Government of Kuwait for its hospitality throughout the delegation's two-day visit, adding that their country would remain open to constructive dia-

30 for road repairs

KUWAIT CITY, May 21: The Ministry of Public Works has announced drastic maintenance of road works in all the governorates of the country in addition to the maintenance of the Jaber Al-Ahmad Bridge, and road repair works in the northern, central and southern regions, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The daily added, 30 international companies are invited to submit bids -- 5 from Japan, 3 from Korea, 4 Chinese, 3 French, 6 Turkish, a German company, an American company, 6 Indian companies and another from Hungary.

In a related context, the Public Works Authority announced the start of the appointment of conformity assessment bodies, local and international "neutral laboratories", wishing to work with the Ministry on contracts for the implementation and maintenance of roads, to carry out examination and calibration work, or to take samples.

logue on how to do so in order to address current concerns.

They stated that the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Department of Migrant Workers (DMW) in their country wished to reassure their workers in Kuwait as well as their families by providing them with full government support.

The Philippines was represented by senior officials from the Department of Foreign Affairs, the Department of Migrant Workers (DMW) as well as its affiliate agency, the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA).

'Graft cause of losses in property revenues'

'Article 1 doesn't guarantee loyalty'

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh

Arab Times Staff and Agencies

Turks in 2nd 'round polls'

KUWAIT CITY, May 21: For the second time in days, members of the Turkish community residing in Kuwait flocked to the polls at the Turkish embassy in the country, to cast their votes in the run-off of the presidential elections, between Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Kemal Kilicdaroglu, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The Turkish Ambassador to the country, Touba Nur Sonmez, appreciated the efforts of the concerned authorities in Kuwait, especially the ministries of Foreign Affairs and Interior, to provide all facilities for the success of the electoral process and the conduct of the elections for residents abroad.

Sonmez said in statements to reporters after casting her vote, that "these facilities have greatly contributed to facilitating the voters' participation in this democratic wedding," stressing that this "reflects the strength and durability of the bilateral relations between Turkey and Kuwait," which she described as "historic."

She revealed that "about 5,000 Turks are entitled to vote in these elections from the community in Kuwait," indicating that "this large participation of the people of our community reflects their great desire to participate in making the future of their country."

Sonmez praised the high turnout of the Turkish community at the ballot boxes in the first round, which amounted to about 66%, which is the highest percentage of voting in Kuwait than in any previous elections, explaining that "this percentage reflects the embassy's relentless efforts to spread awareness among the current people and encourage them to participate."

KUWAIT CITY, May 21: Former MP and 2023 parliamentary election candidate Muhammad Al-Mutair has defended the Ottoman Caliphate, pointing out that the latter protected Islam and Muslims for six centuries.

Al-Mutair denounced the attempts to distort the image of the caliphate by those who shed the blood of innocent people, displaced them, stolen their properties and demolished their houses. Apparently, he is replying to the statement of Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad on the Arab League Summit held recently in Saudi Arabia.

Meanwhile, former MP and candidate Abdullah Al-Mudhaf pointed out that revenues from public properties, including agricultural and industrial plots, would have been higher than oil income if only they were utilized properly. He cited as an example the improper distribution of plots; indicating one trader obtained industrial plots for a total annual rent of KD 46,000 and then rented them out for a total of KD19 million per year.

Former MP and candidate Al-Safi Mubarak Al-Saifi disclosed that corrupt individuals are spreading rumors about him for personal purposes.

He added the nullified 2022 Parliament was supposed to ratify bills on granting civil rights to Bedouins, but it was not given the chance to do so.

Commenting on some parties' call to make the right to participate in parliamentary elections as candidate and voter exclusive for those holding citizenship as per Article One of the Nationality Law, Al-Saifi clarified this is not the idea of the government or the political leadership. He warned that such calls are dangerous for the social fabric. He stressed that holding the Kuwaiti nationality according to Article One does not guarantee loyalty to the homeland, especially since many of those who have stolen public funds are under this category of citizenship.

Former MPs and candidates Marzouq Al-Khalifa and Hamed Al-Bazzali said the recent suicide of a prisoner at the Central Jail indicates that prisoners are exposed to inhumane treatment and difficult living conditions. They urged First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Interior and acting Minister of Defense Sheikh Talal Khalid Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah to conduct a thorough investigation to establish the actual circumstances that prompted the prisoner to take his own life and punish all those who will be proven to be behind the incident.

Meanwhile, Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) has recruited 150 volunteers to support the state's various entities in organizing the 2023 National Assembly elections due on June 6, according to Kuwait News Agency, KUNA.

The volunteers, from the young to the seniors, are eager to participate in Kuwait's celebration of democracy via providing assistance during the elections.

Speaking on this occasion, Anwar Al-Hasawi - the society's deputy chairman of the board - told KUNA that volunteers would be tasked with providing first aid medical assistance during the election in coordination with the Ministry of Health in addition to assisting senior voters in their journey to cast their vote.



Al-Mudhaf

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Son shoots his father to death; killer's death sentence upheld

Securitymen arrest 96 violators of residency laws



The ambassador with Governor of Jahra Nasser F. M. Al-Hajraf.

Indian envoy calls on Jahra Governor

The Indian Ambassador to Kuwait HE Dr Adarsh Swaika called on the Governor of Jahra HE Nasser F. M. Al-Hajraf, Sunday. The Indian envoy apprised the Governor of the steps being taken to strengthen bilateral relations, including in the fields of education, medical and healthcare and recruitment of professionals.

Lesser funds said raised this Ramadan

KUWAIT CITY, May 21: According to sources from the Ministry of Social Affairs, the proceeds of the 20th edition of the fund-raising project implemented during the month of Ramadan did not exceed KD 50 million, compared to more than KD 53 million collected during Ramadan last year, reports AlJarida daily.

The sources explained that the digital screen supervised by the ministry's Department of Charitable Societies and Foundations currently shows that the total donations amounted to about KD 42 million.

However, some associations are still working on entering their proceeds through the automated system.

The ministry's employees reviewed the reports received from the associations and audited the data and their conformity with the bank statement.

Every party that participated in the project will provide the ministry with a report on the final outcome of the project, its revenues and expenses, and will specify the type of implemented projects, whether inside or outside Kuwait.

KUWAIT CITY, May 21: A young bedoun has reportedly shot his father to death and escaped, reports Al-Rai daily.

The incident happened in Al-Firdous. According to a security source, disputes between the son and his father are behind the crime.

The source added, "The injured father was taken to the hospital, where he died," and the criminal men moved to the scene of the crime after informing the prosecution to remove the effects.

Personnel from the Criminal Evidences Department are looking for the escaped killer.

Death sentence upheld: The Court of Appeals, headed by Judge Nasr Al-Haid, upheld the death sentence imposed on a man who murdered his sister and her unborn child in the intensive care unit at Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The court commuted the sentence of another brother charged with attempted murder from life imprisonment to 15 years in prison.

In another case, the Court of Cassation upheld the life imprisonment imposed on a citizen who killed his wife in Ardiya.

96 people arrested: The intensified efforts of the Public Security Sector and the General Department of Residence Affairs Investigation in the Interior Ministry resulted in the arrest of 96 individuals in Salmiya and Fahaheel for violating the Residency and Labor laws, reports Al-Anba daily.

Three fake domestic labor recruitment offices were raided in Sabah Al-Nasser, which employed eight daily wage workers who were arrested as well.

Inmate commits suicide: The Ministry of the Interior announced that an inmate committed suicide inside the central prison, and that the Public Prosecution has been informed of the incident, reports Al-Rai daily.

Meanwhile, in a press statement, the Security Media Department of the Ministry of Interior said a committee has been formed comprising members from the ministries of the Interior, Health and the Kuwaiti Society for Human Rights and the Kuwaiti Transparency Society, to find out the circumstances of the suicide.

diwaniya

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

'Social networking sites are not to spread rumors'

"WHAT is published on Twitter does not serve the public interest, as the virtual world is a world of entertainment, acquaintance and communication, not an arena for battles, conflict, liquidation and spreading rumors and arbitrarily spreading accusations with the aim of creating sedition, which we are well aware is anomaly and a deviation from principles, morals, logic and legal procedures," Abdulaziz Khuraibet wrote for Al-Shahed daily.



Khuraibet

"Some people believe and imagine, in light of the encouragement, support, interests, and revenge between the old guard and the new, that posting posts and tweets on social networking sites and networks, including "Twitter", and using this platform and others to publish circulars, decisions, statements, letters of correspondence, general correspondence, and private messages, and adding to them a few rumors and linking them to news from here and there and attaching this to reports from the Audit Bureau is the step prepared in advance to fight and combat corruption within the new reform policy and approach.

"Organized gangs and networks whose goal is sedition and suspicion, made up of personal and fictitious accounts that feed licensed and unlicensed news networks with incorrect news, misleading rumors, and a number of accusations that contain a lot of lies, prejudice, and defamation of employees and leaders, in order to push and pressure towards investigation and accountability, as well as referral to retirement, and all of this is for those who confront these people by filing a complaint with the Public Prosecution office against those who abuse their day and night unjustly.

"What we know very well is that the accused is innocent until proven guilty according to strong and correct evidence that strengthens the accusation on the basis of truth, because when the evidence touches him with doubt, the inference is wasted, as the specialists and the law say, so the conviction is based only on strong and clear evidence that leads to certainty that does not accept any doubt. The validity of attributing the charge, in contrast to the innocence, in which it is sufficient for the court to question the evidence of the accusation.

"Therefore, the questions raised regarding the issue of fighting and combating corruption through platforms, networks and social sites, including "Twitter", concern us, especially since the laws are clear and we refer to:

■ Does anyone who is keen to fight and combat corruption have to publish without understanding what is dictated to him without knowledge of the requirements of administrative work in government agencies, as well as reviewing, knowing and taking note of the law...?

■ Do the tweets, in their vague form, constitute a fundamental defense and a means of legally permissible defense and proof?

■ Does anyone who publishes this and refers accusations to officials and leaders in government agencies have the right to request and submit, while he is not a party to the case, a portfolio of documents and files to the competent authority for consideration, where the topics raised in the virtual world are the means produced in the case and the alleged dispute is corruption?

What is published of information and data does not rise to the level and does not constitute a document for condemnation or to strengthen the position upon legal accountability. Therefore, we clarify once again and confirm that there is misuse of social networking sites and that "Twitter" is a site and network for social communication and for providing a service for micro-blogging and not an official site in which the required guarantee is paid to provide a portfolio documents and for the consideration of the court to decide on an allegation of defense and preservation of public money and the country.

"Whoever has important information and documents on any official, leader or government agency, he takes them to "Nazaha" and the competent authorities of the prosecution and courts, and does not empty the energy and effort to gain continuous gain on the pages of the "Twitter".

"The virtual world is not an arena for resolving disputes, nor issuing a final verdict of acquittal or conviction.

"Nevertheless, we find that some without awareness or a sense of responsibility on social networking sites and networks continue to publish everything they receive, even information and data that do not constitute a crime or a subject, and in return for that, others are keen to publish reports quoted from the State Audit Bureau website and republish them as a resounding scandal involving officials and leaders in government agencies, not remarks to be answered and reported."

Also:

Three years passed and now we are in the fourth year, and the National Fund for Small and Medium Enterprises development was unable to finance new initiators of small and medium enterprises throughout that period, in addition to the violations of the Fund's Audit Bureau report, which showed the Fund's inability to evaluate the work of the departments, and the lack of having a clear plan and goals," columnist Fawaz Ahmed Al-Hamad wrote for Al-Qabas daily.

"This is in addition to the presence of other violations related to weak control systems, so the fund is going through a difficult stage, and the government is unable to manage the fund properly, as all previous administrations of the Projects Fund did not have clear plans to develop the fund's performance.

"Demanding the abolition of the fund similar to the abolition of the Roads Authority did not succeed in managing and following up the paving of streets, and the National Fund for Small Projects Development did not succeed in our opinion in providing financing to the initiators, and perhaps because of poor management and follow-up, it contributed to the failure of many initiators, who obtained financing for their projects without a thorough study.

"The fund's suspension of financing may be unfair to new entrepreneurs, and contribute to creating a vacuum in the current market for some activities and services.

"Many entrepreneurs want to obtain financing to start their projects, but due to the fund's mismanagement, in our opinion, and the lack of a clear financing mechanism, the dreams of the initiators have evaporated.

"The government should establish specialized funds for small projects, by establishing a fund for agricultural and animal projects, a fund for technological projects, and another fund for industrial and chemical projects, and for the pharmaceutical industries.

"I visited Egypt four years ago to look at Cairo's Small and Medium Enterprises Fund, and I met their management, and they explained how to develop and finance industrial projects, and informed me that they provide free industrial lands and provide machinery and equipment to the Egyptian entrepreneurs, and follow up on their projects to help them continue and succeed in the project.

"While in Kuwait, they do not provide land or spaces for the entrepreneur, but rather they used to provide financing only in the past, and here is the problem, as there are not enough industrial spaces or storage facilities in Kuwait, and if they exist, the rental prices are very high not suitable for small business owners.

"The government must find solutions for owners of small projects, whose projects have stalled due to the corona pandemic and for other reasons, and that the government cancel the Small Projects Fund, or find another alternative to provide financing for new entrepreneurs, because through small projects, societies thrive and develop."

"Refusal to participate in the upcoming parliamentary election as a candidate – as it appears in published figures – is a dangerous indicator. It means reaching a popular conviction that the parliamentary institution is no longer capable of carrying out its work as it should, and that it is more effective to ignore such an institution and search for other paths and channels to convey the citizen's voice. Through such paths and channels, it is easy to confront the symbols of corruption," columnist Nasser Al-Abdali wrote for Al-Qabas daily.

"Those who were previously enthusiastic to run for election are no longer so, especially when they witnessed many of those who claimed to be fighters against corruption and those who uttered their famous cry of no return to the trio of corruption, rushed to ally with the thieves of public money in order to gain here and there. They also witnessed those trying to confront the wave of corruption being attacked and questioned day and night by the new coalition, so many have opted to stay away.

"Former National Assembly Speaker Ahmed Al-Saadoun's position has become clear, as every representative or candidate based their decision to run for the election on Al-Saadoun's bid for speakership regardless of who stands behind the campaign supporting him to reach that seat. The last time he occupied the seat, he wrapped all propositions, which we were glad to hear about after a long period in a scene that surrealist thinkers would have been unable to paint.

"I expect that the reluctance to run for election will be followed by the reluctance of voters to cast their votes. In my opinion, the latter will be the biggest disaster, because it means that we are facing a new phase whose features will be confined to two parties – authority and citizen. This is after the masses lost confidence in the government and parliament at the same time, and they are heading towards their demands."

— Compiled by Ahmed Al-Shazi

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Conference discusses latest developments in medical imaging & radiotherapy

Expert stresses importance of medical physicists' role in healthcare system

Decision implies to staff who served more than 34 years

MoE approves procedure to retire 180 local staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 21: The Minister of Education and Higher Education Dr. Hamad Al-Adwani has officially approved the procedures for the retirement of about 180 Kuwaiti employees and officials from various educational zones and from the Ministry of Education's head office because they spent more than 34 years in service, reports Al-Qabas daily.

According to informed sources, the administrative sector in the Ministry of Education is in the process of finalizing the procedures for referring these employees for retirement, and notifying them officially about the referral. It has already addressed the Public Institution for Social Security and obtained its approval, as well as verified their entitlement to the retirement pension.

The lists includes teachers, school principals, inspectors, directors of central departments, and mentors.

The decision to refer for retirement will be applied to those who have served for 34 years in the educational body as of the end of the academic year, according to each educational stage. For those with administrative jobs, the date of referral for retirement will be at the end of the current Gregorian calendar, which is December 31.

Meanwhile, the Assistant Undersecretary for Administrative Affairs

and Development Saud Al-Juwaizer affirmed the ministry's need to fill the position of head of the Security, Safety and Services Control Department in the General Services Department, Administrative Affairs and Development Sector, in addition to occupying the position of head of the Transportation Department to monitor services in the General Services Department in the Administrative Affairs and Development Sector.

Experience

According to the required conditions, those who wish to fill the position must have a university qualification in an appropriate specialty, and have experience in the field of work for not less than six years, or must have a specialized or high school diploma, completed a two-year course or its equivalent in this field, and have experience in field of work for a period of not less than 10 years.

As for the other conditions, the applicant must have an excellent competency report for the last two years, must be proficient in using a computer, must have completed specialized training courses that serve the job field, and passed the personal interview successfully.

The Ministry of Education also announced its need to fill the position of head of the Issuance Department in the Public Record Control Department of Public Services in

Kuwaiti teachers release document with 'demands'

KUWAIT CITY, May 21: A number of Kuwaiti teachers released a document titled "Teacher's Rights" with demands for improving their conditions and enhancing their role in educating future generations and developing the educational process, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The document included nine basic demands, on top of which is an increase in teachers' pensions, the adoption of the teaching job as a hard profession, preserving the teacher's cadre, and the approval of the teacher's protection law.

They demanded the approval of health insurance for teachers, and support for the proposal to reduce the retirement age for them, as well as approve the granting of a full retirement pension to the teacher, and

lieve them of administrative tasks.

They submitted a proposal to approve an organizational structure for educational jobs approved by the Civil Service Commission, and amend the items of competency evaluation and limit them to educational items only.

The presenter of the document, on behalf of his fellow teacher Abdullah Al-Sharif, affirmed to the daily that the release of the teacher's rights document reflects the real desire to improve the professional practices of generational educators and enhance their position in society.

He said it stresses the urgent need to improve the educational environment and enhance the role of teachers in improving the quality of education.

the Administrative Affairs and Development Sector under the same aforementioned conditions.

KUWAIT CITY, May 21, (KUNA): Head of Middle East Federation of Medical Physics (MEFOMP) Dr. Meshari Al-Nuaimi stressed the important of medical physicists role played in the health care system.

Al-Nuaimi who is head of Kuwait Cancer Control Center (KCCC) told KUNA, Sunday, on presiding over the presidency of the MEFOMP Conference in Muscat that the conference was launched with the participation of 40 international speakers in the field of radiation therapy, nuclear medicine and diagnostic radiology.

The event also hosted experts and legislators in radiation protection from International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the International Organization for Medical Physics, he added.

The conference would discuss

the latest developments in medical imaging and radiotherapy, such as artificial intelligence, in addition to providing professionals and scientists with an in-depth vision of future innovations and technologies in this field, he said.

More than 100 scientific papers have been received in various fields of medical physics, which will be presented at the conference, he added. An award will be allocated for the best research for an academic student, in order to encourage students.

This conference is an opportunity to exchange experiences on recent developments and technological breakthroughs, build networks to communicate with experts and academics from all over the world to raise the level of job performance.



Conferees taking part at the MEFOMP conference. KUNA photo



Ambassador Al-Qahtani, NCCAL's Al-Jassar welcome guests, curators of Kuwait pavilion at Biennale Architettura 2023. KUNA photo

Design inspired by intersections of space & time

Kuwait partakes in 18th Int'l Architecture Exhibition

ROME, May 21, (KUNA): Kuwait's pavilion opened Saturday at the Biennale Architettura 2023 (18th International Architecture Exhibition) in Venice, Italy.

Stressing significance of Kuwaiti presence in the venue, Ambassador in Rome Nasser Al-Qahtani, in a keynote speech, said the Biennale mirrors modern creativity within the global cultural movement, as it attracts a potpourri of architects to discuss visions and solutions for contemporary urban dilemmas, according to an embassy copy to KUNA. Dr. Mohammad Al-Jassar, Assistant Secretary General of National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL), was also present at

the event. Curators of 'Rethinking Rethinking Kuwait' pavilion for La biennale di Venezia say it explores new methods for architectural and urban design that emerges from the intersections of space and time.

The project is an ongoing investigation attempting to rectify the effects of modernist urban planning that led to the erasure of most of Kuwait's historic-built fabric.

The NCCAL-sponsored pavilion also delves into the ideas of "decolonization and decarbonization" by rethinking means of transportation and accessibility. It looks at Kuwait on a national scale with a focused study on

Kuwait City as a prototypical condition. It features various studies that explore transitional spaces in the city that ranges in scope and scale.

Meanwhile, Roberto Cicuto, President of Exhibition expressed belief that Biennale's true task is as an institution, and not only for architecture.

The Biennale's "Laboratory of the Future" program is enriched by Carnival; a six-month-long cycle of events, lectures, panel discussions, films, and performances.

It will be open to the public until Sunday, November 26, 2023 at the Giardini and the Arsenale, and at Forte Marghera; and curated by renowned architect Lesley Lokko.

CITRA preparing to increase Internet speed by three fold

Targeted rates in line with technological changes

KUWAIT CITY, May 21: In a new developmental to raise the efficiency of the Internet sector in the country, Communications and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA) plans to regulate high Internet speeds of up to 400 Mbps, up from the current maximum rate of 100 Mbps, reports Al-Rai daily.

The sources pointed out that what fuels the movement of CITRA is that the Ministry of Communications had some time ago developed the network to high capabilities, which included jumping at the speed of the target rate 3 times, and it is likely that this will be achieved in the next few months.

Framework

According to reliable sources within this framework the Chairman of the CITRA Board of Directors Amer Al-Omar and his deputy, Eng Abdullah Al-Azmi discussed with all CEOs of licensed internet providers their willingness to increase the internet speed according to the targeted rates, and in a way that contributes to raising customers' benefit with the maximum possible rates of service speed increase.

The sources stated that the targeted rates of increasing the speed of the Internet are in line with the technological changes that occurred in the needs of individual and corporate customers, which increased the use of the service and expanded its applications at great levels.

70% rise in net assets

Kuwait's Insurance Regulatory Unit posts KD 7.3m profits for FY 22-23

KUWAIT CITY, May 21, (KUNA): Kuwait's Insurance Regulatory Unit announced profits worth over KD 7.3 million (about USD 23.8 million) during the fiscal year 2022-2023.

In a press statement on Saturday, head of the unit Mohammad Al-Otaibi said that the unit achieved a rise in net assets by over 70 percent, compared to the previous fiscal year.

The unit has gained over KD 16 million (USD 52.19 million) in net revenues in the past three years, said Al-Otaibi, adding that about KD 11

million (USD 35.8 million) went to the state budget.

Meanwhile, he noted that the financial performance from 1 April, 2022 until 31 March, 2023 is the best recorded rate since the establishment of the unit.

The unit, established in 2019, regulates insurance activity and controls it in a fair, transparent and competitive manner, and develops insurance activity in line with international practices, while providing protection for all stakeholders involved in the insurance activity.

The sources pointed out that all licensed Internet providers have shown great willingness to meet the requirement of doubling the Internet speed, with the commitment of CITRA to remove all obstacles that may hinder this trend, indicating that among the points raised is work related to regulating the mechanism for switching to target speeds, and adjusting the price ceiling.

The sources said that CITRA has already begun to develop the required technical and financial scenarios, explaining that the efforts exerted for this include setting a new ceiling for prices, consistent with doubling the internet speed to the required rates, provided that any planned increase in this regard does not burden the customers, especially the small and medium enterprises.

It is noteworthy that, according to the price list set for 2021, the maximum ceiling for 100 Mbps speed consumption is 322 dinars annually.

The sources stated that the meeting of CITRA officials with service providers was not limited to the file of increasing the speed of the Internet, but rather included a number of other developmental issues in the sector, including increasing the ability of providers to activate various applications of modern technology, and raising the efficiency of their plans to develop their business in this field.

In addition, the meeting touched on improving the service to ensure the sustainability of its quality and limiting its interruption to the highest possible degree, provided that this is accompanied by the continuous development of its techniques.

The sources said CITRA officials stressed during the meeting their keenness to overcome the technical and coordination challenges facing the implementation of the work plans of Internet providers, in a way that ensures the continuous development of their business in line with the latest models used globally in their sector.

389 lecturers applied for academic posts

Abdullah Al-Salem University completes KU message

KUWAIT CITY, May 21, (KUNA): Abdullah Al-Salem University (AAU) aims at completing the message of the Kuwait University (KU) and meet present and future requirements during several specialties, said Dr. Adel Al-Hosainan, AAU Constituent Board Secretary General, Saturday.

In an interview with KUNA, Al-Hosainan expressed appreciation for confidence the board gained from the political leadership represented in His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. Al-Hosainan lauded the political leadership's support to establish the AAU as part of a series of the government universities in order to contribute to boosting science and meeting all labor market requirements.

The AAU published some advertisements for some supervising and administrative jobs, which include some heads for posts and employees, he said.

In addition, some 389 lecturers applied for some academic posts at the university, he said, adding that 50 percent of them are Kuwaitis and the others are from different countries, including the Arabs, all over the world.

Al-Hosainan indicated that the AAU includes three faculties of the bachelor's degree, namely College of Engineering and Energy which is divided into three majors; Biomedical Engineering, Energy Systems Engineering, Robotics and Mechatronics Engineering.



KUNA photo Dr. Adel Al-Hosainan



Sadaaqa poster

Sadaaqa presents Ravi Kohli

Sadaaqa celebrates the long and rich history of friendship and shared cooperation between India and Kuwait.

For centuries, Kuwaiti sailors and merchants sailed to Indian ports leading to a close relationship based on trade and cultural intermingling. In the beginning of the 20th century, Indians began relocating to the Arabian Gulf for work & business.

While following their own individual dreams, they contributed to the development of their adopted home.

Sadaaqa explores this symbiotic relationship and celebrates it through individual experiences.

On May 25, Sadaaqa focuses on the Kohli family of Kuwait.

The Kohlis are one of Kuwait's most well-known Indian families. Mr UC Kohli, grandfather of our guest, Mr Ravi Kohli left India more than a century back. After spending some

years in Iraq and Iran, he shifted to Kuwait in 1936. Here, he set up a spare parts business which was soon booming. Once established, Mr UC Kohli worked hard for the community. His footprints in the field of education is felt even today.

He founded the first Indian school here. Hundreds & thousands of students have passed out of the many branches of the school. Mr Ravi Kohli himself studied there before going to the USA to graduate in Business. After coming back to Kuwait, he had a short stint in the airlines industry. Post that he founded a company that dealt in corporate gifts. He also founded two of Kuwait's very popular Indian restaurants- Dawat and Taal.

In our May episode of Sadaaqa we celebrate the spirit of Indian families like Kohlis who have scripted their own narratives in a foreign land, giving back as much as they have taken.

In step ...

Continued from Page 1

Wherever the UN would seek virtue in the world, Kuwait would be there to support the international organization through commitment to the noble tenets of the UN charter, he affirmed.

Speaking during the occasion, United Nations General Assembly President Csaba Korosi said that since joining the UN in 1963, Kuwait had been an active and valuable member of the UN to through its commitment to its charter and efforts.

Despite its small size, Kuwait is working strongly to realize plans of the UN including the 2035 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

He asserted that the international community depended on the rational voice of the State of Kuwait in issues pertaining to regional and international security including issues connected with the Middle East.

Kuwait's humanitarian role also reflected its deep care regarding the plight of fellow human beings affected by conflict or natural disaster and the country plays an important role in reducing suffering worldwide, he said.

Along with Korosi, Deputy UN Secretary General Amina Mohammad, Kuwaiti Ambassador to Washington Sheikh Al-Zain Sabah Nasser Al-Saud Al-Sabah, Kuwait's General Consulate in New York City Azzam Al-Asfour, and a huge number of Arab, Islamic, and foreign diplomats attended the celebrations.

Amini poster

Continued from Page 1

Months of anti-government protests were sparked by the death of 22-year-old Amini in September, after Iranian morality police detained her for allegedly violating the country's strict Islamic dress code.

The Twitter account linked with the Swiss embassy in Tehran also posted an image of Iran's pre-revolutionary flag before its current theocracy came to power. The post added that the Swiss foreign ministry strongly condemned the recent execution of three Iranian protesters.

Iran announced Friday the executions of Majid Kazemi, Saleh Mirhashemi and Saeed Yaghoubi, without say-

ing how the deaths were carried out. Authorities alleged they have killed a police officer and two members of the paramilitary Basij group in the city of Isfahan in November during the demonstrations.

Iranian authorities have repeatedly accused Western powers of fomenting the unrest, without providing evidence.

Saudis set

Continued from Page 1

With its Falcon rocket already on the pad, SpaceX targeted a liftoff late Sunday afternoon from NASA's Kennedy Space Center. It's the same spot where Saudi Arabia's first astronaut, a prince, soared in 1985.

Representing the Saudi Arabian government this time are Rayyanah Barnawi, a stem cell researcher set to become the kingdom's first woman in space, and Royal Saudi Air Force fighter pilot Ali Al-Qarni.

Rounding out the crew: John Shoffner, the racecar buff, and Peggy Whitson, who holds the U.S. record for most accumulated time in space at 665 days.



Photos from the event.

Progressive Professional Forum holds AGM

PPF Transcend '23: Top professionals share key learning

KUWAIT CITY, May 21: Progressive Professional Forum Kuwait orchestrated Transcend '23 as part of its Annual General Meeting on May 11 at Kohinoor Hall, Fahaeel.

PPF Kuwait president Adv Thomas Stephen in his address stressed that PPF Kuwait has attained a respectable space among the top socially responsible professional organizations serving the community in Kuwait and in home land. Entering into the 10th anniversary celebrations, PPF Kuwait will continue its journey to contribute for the inclusive development of the society.

Top professionals in Kuwait had shared their key learnings and experience in Transcend '23. "A True Professional Story" shared by P.C. George, senior consultant engineer with Kuwait MEW, who was honored by Indian Navy as a War Hero contained an enlightening message to professionals to understand the growth, challenges and the importance of work-life balance while pursuing a professional career.

Schemes

Suresh C. Pillai, CEO of Mark Technologies had inspired the professionals and budding entrepreneurs with his "Success Journey of an Entrepreneur in Kuwait". In his presentation on "Experience, Exchange and Extend Resources for Circular Economic Growth", Valliappan, a corrosion specialist and consultant with KOC initiated a thought-provoking session on resources conservation and minimum waste generation. R. Naganadhan, Loka Kerala Sabha Member had shared updated information about various welfare investment and pension schemes by the State Government that are suitable for expatriates to continue a secured and comfortable retirement life.

An e-Magazine titled as Transcend '23 was released on the occasion by former president and senior PPF Kuwait member K. Santhosh Kumar. PPF Kuwait also announced a slogan contest for its members on the occasion of its 10th anniversary celebrations. Earlier, Mrs. Shery Sasi Rajan, General Secretary presented the report on PPF Kuwait ac-

tivities for the year 2022-23. Sreejith Palakkurishi, Treasurer submitted the financial report and Dr. Rajesh Varghese extended vote of thanks.

The event was well coordinated by Master of Ceremony, Shaji Madathil. Mementos were presented on behalf of PPF Kuwait to all the speakers and a dinner was also arranged. Prasanth Warrior, Vice President PPF Kuwait and convener concluded Transcend '23 with his vote of thanks.

Progressive Professional Forum (PPF), Kuwait is a secular collective for channelizing expertise, competence and social consciousness of professionals from various walks of life such as Engineers, Doctors, Advocates, Chartered Accountants, Management professionals etc. towards inclusive societal development.

Sustainable development movements in Kerala have lost contributions from those migrated professionals, who find no platforms to associate with such movements. This ground reality enforced us to form a new group by the name Progressive Professional Forum (PPF), Kuwait, to find a new way to bring the professionals under one umbrella and utilize their technical expertise, thoughts, campaigns, participation, funding etc. to help the state for new projects and march towards inclusive, sustainable development.

Forum's vision is inclusive development of society through a people centric approach to support the Governing machinery of State of Kerala and Local Administrative bodies by providing Technical collaboration in design, execution and servicing fields of viable social schemes aiming at people centered development.

To organize committed professionals from various walks of life for channelizing expertise, competence and social consciousness that enables individuals, groups, communities and other organizations to undertake integrated development of society for enhancement of wellbeing on a sustainable basis.

Visit: www.ppfkuwait.org, 65971184



Photos from the event.

'Donate Blood, Save a Child'

Pak Donors hold blood donation drive 'fight against thalassemia' in Kuwait

By M. Irfan Shafiq

KUWAIT CITY, May 21: The Pakistani Blood Donors Association (Kuwait Chapter), known as PAK Donors, organized a successful blood donation drive to mark International Thalassemia Day. The event was held at the Kuwait Central Blood Bank in Al Jabriya, Kuwait, and was dedicated to the fight against thalassemia. The slogan for the drive was "Donate Blood, Save a Child".

198 people registered for the blood donation drive. Organization PAK Donors expressed its gratitude to all the donors and volunteers who participated in the blood drive and emphasized the importance of regular blood donations,

particularly for patients suffering from thalassemia. The efforts of the organization were honored by the presence of the Ambassador of Pakistan to Kuwait, H.E Malik Muhammad Farooq.

Asha's Restaurant, a renowned establishment, proudly joined hands as a drive partner in the Pak Donors Blood Donation Camp. Their invaluable support and commitment contributed significantly to the success of the event. Asha's Restaurant, known for its delectable cuisine and warm hospitality, demonstrated its dedication to the noble cause of saving lives through blood donation. Their participation exemplifies their deep-rooted sense of social responsibility and their willingness to positively impact the community. The

organizers of the blood donation camp express their heartfelt gratitude to Asha's Restaurant for their generous contribution and unwavering support in making a difference in the lives of those in need.

The event was graced by many dignitaries in Kuwait, including the Ambassador of Pakistan in Kuwait H.E Malik Muhammad Farooq, Community Welfare attaché Farrukh Amir Sial and various Pakistani community heads. The presence of these dignitaries underscored the importance of the event and the commitment of the Pakistani community in Kuwait to serving humanity. Coast Investment and Development Co., a well-known Kuwait business organization, also

participated in the event under their CSR program.

In a statement, Nouman Aslam Ghuman, in-charge Coordinator of PAK Donors, said: "We are proud to organize our 21st blood donation drive to help fight against thalassemia. Our organization is committed to serving humanity and will continue to spread awareness about the importance of blood donation."

The event received support from various organizations and individuals, including the Kuwait Central Blood Bank, sponsors, donors, volunteers, and media partners. PAK Donors expressed its gratitude to all those who supported the cause.



A photo from the event.

Motivational speaker Sabarimala delivers talk thru online platform

Islamic Women's Association Kuwait conducts conference

KUWAIT CITY, May 21: Islamic Women's Association (IWA) Kuwait organized a women's conference titled "Liberalism: A Social Disaster".

The conference was inaugurated by KIG President Shareef P.T. In his inaugural speech, Shareef PT said that the healthy existence of human society depends on the family system and the propagators of neo-liberal ideas are making a conscious effort to destroy it. IWA President Mahbooba Anees presided over the meeting. The president reminded the audience to be aware of the neo-liberal culture, which leads to the destruction of the family and morals, undermines the cultural foundations, and to not lean towards them, and gain the moral strength to overcome temptations.

IWA Women's Wing State Committee Member CV Jameela Teacher, MSF Former National Vice President Advocate Fatima Tahlia, Social Worker and Writer Dr. Zoya Joseph delivered lectures at the conference. Motivational speaker and social activist Fatima Sabarimala spoke on the on-

line platform. Jameela teacher reminded that ideas like liberalism which rejects divine laws that advocates for the family structure are a threat to peaceful family life and discussion of such issues in homes can create a clear awareness in children about these wrong ideologies and guide them to the right path.

Dr. Zoya Joseph, who is also a college professor, pointed out that the anarchy and drug mafia taking over the colleges is another facet of liberalism and liberalism has some political dimensions beyond morality.

The speaker, Fatima Tahlia, said that liberalism, which rejects religions and values, is as dangerous as fascism,

and those who advocate for unlimited personal freedom are narrow-minded people who encroach on the personal freedom of others.

The theme song of the conference was performed by Jubeeba Sanoj, Aisha Shamma, Simi Akbar, Tasneem Ali Akbar, Femina Ashraf, Najia, and Nishida, and a musical performance

was performed by girls wing team Hana Nishad, Ifah Aftab, Ilham Mehek Shahid, Hana Sharif, Zulfa Maryam Anees, Suha Fatima, Anisul Atufa and Hama Ayesha.

A kid's zone was organized for the entertainment of the children at the event.

Nawal Farheen and Afsilah Sha-

hid Presented verses from the Holy Qur'an. IWA General Secretary and Program Convener Asha Doulath welcomed the audience and Secretary Sufia Sajid proposed the vote of thanks.

Nishad Elyath Edava, the director of the Sangeetha Shilpam and the Huda Abdullah, winner of the logo design competition were honored at the event.

KIG Vice Presidents Faisal Manjeri, Sakkeer Hussain Thuvvor, General Secretary Feroz Hameed, Youth India President Mahnas Mustafa, Assistant Program Convener Samiya Faisal, IWA Vice Presidents Warda Anwar, Najma Shareef, Treasurer Sabeena Razaq, IWA Kuwait former president Hafsa Ismail, assistant treasurer Shujaath Rishdin, secretary Sajna Zubair, Prominent socio-cultural leaders and representatives of various women's organizations in Kuwait such as Safia Siddique, Salina, Rafia Anas, Raseena Muhiyuddin, Usha Dileep, Aneja, Zeenat Yakub, Dr. Annie Valsan, etc. also attended the meeting.



A photo from the event.

	Change	Closing pts		Change	Closing pts		
JAPAN	- Nikkei	+0.77	30,808.35	UAE	- DFM	-0.31	3,544.53
PAKISTAN	- KSE 100	+0.34	41,614.87	EGYPT	- EGX 30	-0.58	16,745.54
PHILIPPINES	- PSEI	+0.54	6,664.55				
SAUDI	- Tadawul	+0.59	11,344.40				

Business

UK unemployment rate rises

United States debt ceiling negotiations in focus

By National Bank of Kuwait

The US dollar index soared to an eight-week peak reaching a monthly high of 103.624, before closing the week at 103.198. Furthermore, The EUR/USD currency pair fell by 0.48% for the week, ending the week at 1.0802, while GBP/USD closed slightly lower at 1.2444. The Japanese yen continued to weaken against the US dollar with the pair reaching a high of 138.74, a figure not seen since November of 2022. Stock indices across the globe finished the week with modest gains. The S&P500 gained 1.87%, with the Dow Jones jumping 1.48% while the NASDAQ rose by 2.82%.

North America

US Debt Ceiling Negotiations

The US debt ceiling negotiations is starting to enter its critical stages, as President Biden and his government hope that a deal can be struck with Republicans before the June 1st deadline. The current debt ceiling of \$31.4 trillion was reached on January 2023, and needs to be raised in order to fund payment obligations and budget deficits. The Treasury Department has been using sophisticated accounting measures to avoid default, however Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen has warned that these measures will be completely exhausted by the 1st of June deadline. President Joe Biden and US Republican congressman Kevin McCarthy voiced their willingness to reach an agreement soon. Biden stated, "We're going to come together because there's no alternative." McCarthy added, "We're on such a short timeline", but claimed that congress will "get it done." Biden left the G7 meeting in Japan in a hopeful bid to end the deadlock regarding the debt ceiling.

US Retail Sales

Retail sales in the United States increased by 0.4% m/m in April following two consecutive months of declines. However, the print was less than the forecasted figure of 0.8%. The increase on the month was driven by growth in online sales (1.2%) as well as food and drink sales (0.6%). Meanwhile, there was a noticeable decline in sales of motor vehicles and parts. Despite this, the subdued gain in retail sales relative to expectations raises concerns about the strength of consumers amid elevated inflation and interest rates. Markets are pricing in a pause for the next FOMC meeting following 10 consecutive rate hikes by the Fed.

US Unemployment Claims

The latest weekly unemployment claims reading to come out of the US showed a 22K decline from last week's reading of 264K, which was the highest since the week of October 30, 2021. The sudden surge in last week's reading was played down by the state Department of Unemployment Assistance as they linked the sudden increase to an abnormal jump in applications in Massachusetts. According to the department, unemployment insurance in the state witnessed "fraudulent claim activities in which people attempted to gain access to active UI accounts or file new UI claims using stolen personal

Highlights

- President Biden and Republican congressional representative Kevin McCarthy stated that they are willing to negotiate in order to raise the debt ceiling and avoid a catastrophic US government default.
- European Central Bank will continue to raise interest rates further to bring inflation back to its mid-term goal of 2%, however most of the tightening has already been done as the Eurozone economy is affected by higher consumer prices.
- Unemployment in Australia surges unexpectedly to 3.7% in April from 3.5% previously, with 4,300 jobs lost compared with an expected 25,000 added jobs.
- UK unemployment increased more than forecasted, coming in at 3.9% versus a forecast of 3.8%. Payrolls fell by 136,000 from March, marking the first fall in more than two years, while vacancies also reached new lows.
- The US Dollar has risen by approximately 1.5% this past month, reaching a monthly high above 103. Markets continue to be wary and monitor signs of development on discussions as to whether the United States will go into a crippling default as early as June 1, or if Congress decides to raise the US debt ceiling.

information so they can fraudulently obtain unemployment benefits." Rightly so, this week's reading showed the largest decline since the week of November 20, 2021.

Inflation in Canada

CPI in Canada rose by 4.4% in April, greater than market expectations of 4.1% and marking the first acceleration in headline figures since June 2022. On a monthly basis, this represents an increase of 0.7% versus a forecast and previous figure of 0.5%. The increase in inflation was driven by gains in food prices (7.7%), transportation prices (7.2%), and shelter prices (6.8%). Core CPI, which excludes such components, fell to 4.1% from 4.3% previously. The USD/CAD currency pair closed the week at 1.3498.

Europe

Eurozone GDP and Employment Growth in First Quarter

The Eurozone economy expanded by a modest 0.1% q/q for the first quarter of the year, in line with expectations, according to preliminary figures published by Eurostat. In the fourth quarter, GDP in the European Union eased 0.1%, while Eurozone GDP was flat. Year-on-year, GDP rose by 1.3% in the Eurozone from 1.8% in the fourth quarter, aligned with expectations. The Eurozone economy has been strained by higher energy and food prices in addition to the European Central Bank's aggressive tightening of monetary policy. Employment data released alongside GDP figures revealed the number of employed people doubled to 0.6% from 0.3% in the Eurozone and EU in the first quarter, the greatest increase since 2021.

Eurozone Inflation Rises by 0.1%

According to Eurostat, annual inflation in the Eurozone accelerated to 7.0% in April from 6.9% in March, matching consensus and in line with expectations. Eliminating volatile elements of energy and food, core inflation eased to 5.6% from 5.7% a month earlier, similarly in line with consensus. Markets expect the ECB to hike its key interest rates by 25 basis points at each of its next two meetings, as numerous central bank policymakers reiterated that the ECB may need to continue raising interest rates longer than anticipated until underlying inflation reveals signs of easing.

United Kingdom

UK Unemployment Rate Rises

In the UK, unemployment surprisingly increased to 3.9% versus a consensus of 3.8%. Meanwhile, payrolls fell by 136,000 from March, marking the first fall in more than two years, while vacancies dropped for the 10th time in a row reaching its lowest level since mid-2021. Despite the data supporting some speculators' expectations that the Bank of England might opt to pause its hiking cycle, markets are still pricing in a higher chance of a 25 bps hike for the upcoming June meeting.

Governor Andrew Bailey Delivers Hawkish Message

Bank of England governor Andrew Bailey warned that there is significant uncertainty over when inflation will drop back to the central bank's target of 2%. Speaking at the British Chambers of Commerce's annual conference, Bailey said that the risk of inflation staying higher for longer is "skewed significantly to the upside." He reiterated that while the central bank is committed to bring inflation down, it will take time. The Bank of England delivered 12 consecutive rate hikes in an effort to combat double-digit inflation, and Bailey warned that "further tightening in monetary policy would be required" if inflation figures remain elevated. The GBP/USD currency pair is down 1.25% on the week, last trading at 1.2444.

Asia Pacific

Reserve Bank of Australia's Meeting Minutes

Minutes of the Reserve Bank of Australia's policy meet-

ing earlier this month revealed that members discussed whether to pause or raise the cash rate by 25 basis points. Ultimately, policymakers opted to raise rates to reduce risks of deep-rooted inflation in the economy. Strong population growth, in addition to low rental vacancy rates and a stingy labor market supported a rate hike of 25 basis points, taking the RBA's cash rate to 3.85%.

Australia's Jobless Rate Rises

Australia's unemployment rate unexpectedly rose to 3.7% in April compared with the consensus and nearly 50-year low of 3.5% in March, indicating that higher interest rates have started to affect the job market, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). Employers cut 4,300 jobs, compared with a forecasted gain of 25,000 jobs, while the number of unemployed people rose by 18,000. Weaker employment data strengthens the argument for the bank to hold its cash rate at its next meeting on June 6. Following the release of the data, Reserve Bank of Australia's Governor Philip Lowe expressed the board's decision to closely monitor figures on the economy and inflation when concluding further policy decisions.

Commodities

OPEC+

Crude Oil futures ended the week with gains of 1.8% following news that Russia looks to continue its reduced oil production policy through the end of the year, instead of ending it in July. According to Russia's President Vladimir Putin, the condition in global oil markets is "absolutely stable" as Russia was cutting oil production at the "required level" in an attempt to support oil prices to be maintained within a certain range. As of May 1, Saudi Arabia and other OPEC+ countries joined Russia by cutting production. Brent crude futures settled at \$75.58 per barrel, whereas US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude futures reached a high of \$72.78, before ending the week at \$71.57 per barrel.

Kuwait

Kuwaiti Dinar

USD/KWD closed last week at 0.30705.

See Also Page 8

Rates - 21st May, 2023

Currencies	Previous Week Levels				This Week's Expected Range		3-Month
	Open	Low	High	Close	Minimum	Maximum	Forward
EUR	1.0854	1.0758	1.0904	1.0802	1.0590	1.0905	1.0860
GBP	1.2451	1.2389	1.2546	1.2444	1.2320	1.2570	1.2470
JPY	135.60	135.58	138.74	137.95	136.60	141.20	136.06
CHF	0.8967	0.8918	0.9062	0.8996	0.8875	0.9100	0.8911

Few following debate closely: poll

Most adults say pair the debt limit increase with deficit cuts

WASHINGTON, May 21, (AP): About two-thirds of U.S. adults say they are highly concerned about the impact on the national economy if the U.S. debt limit is not increased and the government defaults on its loans, according to a new poll, even as few say they have a solid understanding of the ongoing debt limit negotiations.

The poll shows about 6 in 10 say they want any increase in the debt limit to be coupled with agreed-upon terms for reducing the federal budget deficit. At the same time, Americans are more likely to disapprove than approve of how President Joe Biden and congressional negotiators on both sides of the aisle are handling negotiations. Still, slightly more approve of Biden's handling of the situation than of congressional Republicans.

The new poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research shows 27% say they approve of Biden and 26% say the same about congressional Democrats, while 22% approve of congressional Republicans. Close to half disapprove of each.

Sixty-six year-old Robert Hutchins says he somewhat approves of how House Speaker Kevin McCarthy and Republicans in Congress are handling negotiations.

"At least he's trying to do something," the Republican from Milton, Delaware, said of McCarthy's leadership over his conference. "The Democrats want to spend more money and they don't want any limit to it."

Hutchins said he doesn't have "any confidence whatsoever" in Biden and doesn't believe in abolishing the debt ceiling, as it serves as a constant reminder of the nation's debt load, which currently stands at \$31.4 trillion.

Otherwise, "you just think you have an unlimited credit card and you can spend whatever you want," he said.

Overall, about 2 in 10 U.S. adults say they are following negotiations

over raising the debt limit extremely or very closely, and about 4 in 10 are following somewhat closely. Similarly, about 2 in 10 say they understand the situation very well and about 4 in 10 say they understand it somewhat well.

Still, a clear majority - 63% - say they think negotiations over the debt limit should be coupled with terms to reduce the budget deficit. Nineteen percent say the debt limit should be raised without conditions and 16% say it should not be raised at all. Overall, the adults who say they understand the debate best are especially likely to say the debt limit should be increased without conditions - 37% say so, compared with 50% who say it should be tied to terms about reducing the budget deficit.

A default would likely spell catastrophe for the U.S. economy, with spillover throughout the globe, and would prompt a probable recession.

Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen warned this week that a national default would destroy jobs and businesses, and leave millions of families who rely on federal government payments to "likely go unpaid," including Social Security beneficiaries, veterans and military families.

An AP-NORC poll conducted earlier this year also shows little consensus on cuts that would make a dent in the deficit: While most Americans said the government spends too much overall, majorities favored increased spending on popular and expensive programs including Medicare and Social Security.

Similar percentages of Republicans and Democrats say they are following and understanding negotiations, and concern about the economy if the U.S. defaults is widely bipartisan. But about a third of Democrats say the national debt limit should be increased without conditions, while just 6% of Republicans say the same.



The U.S. Capitol is seen on Saturday, May 20, 2023, in Washington. President Joe Biden's administration is reaching for a deal with Republicans led by House Speaker Kevin McCarthy as the nation faces a deadline as soon as June 1 to raise the country's borrowing limit, now at \$31 trillion, to keep paying the nation's bills. Republicans are demanding steep spending cuts the Democrats oppose. (AP)

Republicans must move away from their extreme positions, says Biden

'No debt limit deal solely on its partisan terms'

HIROSHIMA, Japan, May 21, (AP): President Joe Biden said Sunday that Republicans in the U.S. House must move off their "extreme positions" on the now-stalled talks over raising America's debt limit and that there would be no agreement to avert a catastrophic default only on their terms.

In an effort to get negotiations back on track, Biden planned to call U.S. House Speaker Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., from Air Force One on the way back to Washington after a Group of Seven summit in Japan. World leaders at the gathering expressed concern

about the dire global ramifications if the United States were to be unable to meet its financial obligations.

"It's time for Republicans to accept that there is no bipartisan deal to be made solely, solely, on their partisan terms," Biden said at a closing news conference before he departed. The president said he had done his part in attempting to raise the borrowing limit so the U.S. government can keep paying its bills, by agreeing to significant cuts in spending. "Now it's time for the other side to move from their extreme position," he said.

Biden had been scheduled to travel from Hiroshima to Papua New Guinea and Australia, but cut short his trip in light of the strained negotiations with Capitol Hill.

"My guess is he's going to want to deal directly with me in making sure

we're all on the same page." Biden said about McCarthy before their expected conversation. A compromise remained within reach, the president said, despite their differences.

"I'm hoping that Speaker McCarthy is just waiting to negotiate with me when I get home," he said. "I'm waiting to find out."

GOP lawmakers are holding tight to demands for sharp spending cuts, rejecting the alternatives proposed by the White House for reducing deficits.

McCarthy tweeted on Saturday that it was the White House that was "moving backward in negotiations." The speaker contended that Biden would "rather be the first president in history to default on the debt than to risk upsetting the radical socialists who are calling the shots for Democrats right now."

Republicans want work requirements on the Medicaid health care program,

though the Biden administration has countered that millions of people could lose coverage. The GOP also introduced new cuts to food aid by restricting states' ability to waive work requirements in places with high joblessness. That idea, when floated under President Donald Trump, was estimated to cause 700,000 people to lose their food benefits.

GOP lawmakers are also seeking cuts in IRS money and asking the White House to accept parts of their proposed immigration overhaul.

The White House has countered by keeping defense and nondefense spending flat next year, which would save \$90 billion in the 2024 budget year and \$1 trillion over 10 years.

"I think that we can reach an agreement," Biden said, though he added this about Republicans: "I can't guarantee that they wouldn't force a default by doing something outrageous."



U.S. President Joe Biden speaks during a news conference following the Group of Seven (G7) leaders' summit in Hiroshima, western Japan Sunday, May 21, 2023. (AP)

Cyprus, Israel working on deal for natural gas pipeline

Cyprus and Israel are working on a deal to build a pipeline that will convey natural gas from both countries to the east Mediterranean island nation, where it will be liquefied for export by ship to Europe and potentially elsewhere, the Cypriot energy minister said Monday.

Minister Giorgos Papanastasiou said Monday he would soon visit Israel to hammer out a formal agreement. Once the deal is signed, the pipeline could be completed in 18 months. It will take 2 1/2 years to build a liquefaction plant on Cy-

prus once investors are secured.

So far, five sizeable gas deposits have been discovered off Cyprus' southern coastline. Israel has 11 such fields: the biggest, named Leviathan, contains an estimated 22 trillion cubic feet (623 billion cubic meters) of gas. Papanastasiou said he would meet later this month with energy companies licensed to explore for oil and gas inside Cyprus' exclusive economic zone - include French Total, Italy's Eni, ExxonMobil and Chevron - to scope out ways of collaborating on pro-

jects that would expedite getting their gas discoveries to market.

The minister said Israel agreed to the proposal pitched by the Cypriot government for the pipeline and liquefaction plant, which Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu disclosed on Sunday.

"The eastern Mediterranean has enough (gas) deposits. Most are inside Israel's exclusive economic zone, but Cyprus has sufficient quantities as well for this project to materialize," Papanastasiou told reporters. (AP)



People on the beach take photos of the 'Tungsten Explored' drilling ship, in the southern coastal city of Larnaca, Cyprus, on Nov. 3, 2021. Cyprus and Israel are working on a deal to build a pipeline that will convey natural gas from both countries to the east Mediterranean island nation, where it will be liquefied for export by ship to Europe and potentially elsewhere. (AP)

Global headwinds trigger oil price drop

Solid consumer spending in Q1 of 2023

By National Bank of Kuwait

Official consumer, monetary and banking data in the first quarter of 2023 continued to signal a normalization in Kuwait's non-oil economy post-pandemic. Closely watched leading indicators such as consumer spending, real estate sales and bank credit point to a moderation in non-oil activity amid still-elevated inflation, tighter monetary conditions and softening global macroeconomic conditions. Surprising on the upside in 1Q23, however, was the uptick in project activity, suggesting some increased momentum albeit from a very low base. The recovery in expatriate numbers in 2022, as seen in the official PACI population data, many of which will likely work on projects, further fleshes out a macroeconomic picture that is still fairly positive despite the more challenging conditions. This included in 1Q23 the resurfacing of troubles in the political sphere, which eventually culminated in the resignation of the government and a Constitutional Court ruling that voided the 2022 national assembly on procedural grounds and reinstated its predecessor. The 2020 parliament has since been dissolved by Amiri decree and fresh elections have been called for 6 June.

Anxieties over the trajectory of global economic growth in 2023 hammered oil prices, forcing several OPEC+ members including Kuwait to roll out further production cuts from the beginning of May over and above those approved last October. Real oil GDP for the year has therefore been revised down. Moreover, were oil prices to remain at current levels, which is not our expectation for the year, government fiscal policy may need to readjust, such that spending increases of the magnitude outlined in January's expansionary but still-to-be approved draft budget may be trimmed back.

Oil posts third quarterly loss in a row on recession fears

Oil prices were subjected to intense downward pressure in 1Q23 over market fears of an economic slowdown amid central bank rate hikes, stubborn inflation and bank failures in the US and Europe. Brent front month futures closed down 7.1% ytd at \$79.8/bbl in March, having fallen to a 15-month low of \$72.9/bbl earlier in the month. (Chart 1.) Local marker Kuwait Export Crude also posted its third quarterly decline, closing down 3.3% q/q at \$79.3/bbl by quarter's end.

With bearish sentiment in the ascendancy and China's post-Covid economic rebound still in its infancy, several OPEC+ members including Kuwait, Saudi and the UAE announced in early April additional, voluntary production cuts totaling around 1.2 mb/d effective May through to December. For Kuwait, the reduction in output amounts to 128 kb/d and a new quota of 2.55 mb/d. (Chart 2.) The OPEC+ announcement initially had its intended effect, arresting the decline in prices and then propelling them to a high of \$87/bbl by mid-April. The gains were transitory, however, and prices have mostly been in retreat ever since, struggling to shake off intensifying fears of a global recession - even while the physical market continued to signal some tightness amid successive US crude inventory draws, increased refining throughputs in China and suspended Kurdish oil exports. Despite the near-term macroeconomic anxieties, we still see the oil market tightening significantly in 2H23 and prices firming from current levels (to an average of \$85/bbl in 2023) after OPEC+ output cuts filter through and after China's economic rebound starts gaining traction.

Consumer spending still fairly robust

Figures published by the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) show the value of credit and debit card transactions (a proxy for consumer spending) increasing by a robust 13.8% y/y (3.8% q/q) in 1Q23. (Chart 3.) Local spending growth slowed to 13.4% y/y from 14.7% in 4Q22, while overseas spending grew by 19.8% y/y from 6.9% in the previous quarter.

While still solid, the data nevertheless reinforces our view that activity is normalizing after the post-pandemic surge and against a backdrop of stubbornly elevated inflation and higher borrowing costs. We think spending growth could moderate further ahead, though could also be supported by the government's expansionary but still-to-be-approved draft budget for FY23/24.

Real estate activity softens

In the real estate sector, demand has been moderating as the post-pandemic boom abates and activity returns to more normal levels. High valuations in the residential sector, rising borrowing costs and an uncertain macroeconomic and policymaking environment - especially over utility subsidy reforms and government land distributions - have all contributed to the slowdown. Total real estate sales slipped to KD714 million in 1Q23 (-15% q/q; -20% y/y), the lowest level since 3Q20. (Chart 4.) Residential (-24% q/q) and investment (-5.3% q/q) sector activity both declined, while commercial sales (+5.5% q/q) rose. Seasonal factors, such as the holy month of Ramadan, part of which extended into the annual comparison, may also have contributed to the easing in activity compared to last year, since the volume of transactions was noticeably down (-34% y/y). The price of real estate (both residential and investment properties) may have fallen in Q1, though was still up 4.7% y/y.

Our base case outlook for real estate activity in 2023 is one of continued moderation, especially amid softening local and international macroeconomic conditions. Increased plot distributions could help stimulate activity, though. The Kuwait Savings and Credit bank (SCB), through which plots are allocated and housing loans are granted, has requested an additional capital increase of KD275 million to meet the ever-increasing backlog of outstanding applications (90,915 as of March 2023). If approved, this could also help speed up and stimulate activity in the sector. The long-awaited mortgage law, although not expected this year, would also boost activity and real estate lending once implemented.

Project awards pick up in 1Q23 following lackluster 2022

Project awards surged in 1Q23, the second quarterly increase in a row, with the value of awarded contracts topping KD527mm (+78% q/q; +332% y/y).

The acceleration was mainly due to awards by the Ministry of Electricity & Water and Public Authority for Housing. Only three months into 2023 and the cumulative figure is already equivalent to almost three-quarters of the full value of awarded projects in 2022. MEED Projects has penciled in KD8.4bn worth of projects for 2023, which, if realized, would be a substantial improvement on last year. Admittedly, about half of that figure relates to KIPIC's Al-Zour Petrochemicals Complex (KD2.9bn) and Kuwait Authority for Partnership Projects' Al-Zour North Independent Water and Power project (KD1.2bn). Kuwait's projects market would benefit immensely from a government and parliament firing on all cylinders, helping to minimize bureaucratic delays including in the procurement of labor and raw materials.

Inflation proves sticky

Consumer price inflation rose to 3.7% y/y at end-1Q23 from 3.2% in December. (Chart 6.) Price rises in the food (+7.5% y/y; +1.3% q/q) and housing (+2.5% y/y; +1.1% q/q) components accounted for 57% of the y/y inflation rate, but on the whole price gains have been broad-based; the core rate (excluding food and housing) was back up at 3.1% in March from a 2022-low of 2.6% last November. The stickiness in the inflation print points to still-solid consumer demand even as the rate of growth in consumer activity across metrics such as cards spending, credit demand and real estate sales is one of moderation. The effects of previous monetary tightening are also likely still filtering through the system. We see inflation averaging 3.1% in 2023, down from last year's 4.0%.

Population recovers to near-pre-pandemic level

According to the latest demographic data from the Public

Highlights

- Strong consumer spending continued to support the economy in Q1, even as global headwinds pressured oil prices lower.
- Real estate sales slipped amid high residential valuations. We expect a continued moderation in activity in 2023.
- Domestic credit growth slowed to 5.1% y/y in March amid tighter monetary conditions; inflation trended up to 3.7% in March.
- Project activity surprised in Q1 with a surge in awards, despite legislative and bureaucratic impasse.
- Kuwait's population grew 8% in 2022 to 4.74 million, recovering to near its pre-pandemic level on returning expatriate workers.

Table 1: Population (period-end)

Year	Population (year-end, '000)			% y/y		
	Kuwaiti	Non-Kuwaiti	Total	Kuwaiti	Non-Kuwaiti	Total
2018	1,403	3,219	4,622	2.4	2.8	2.7
2019	1,432	3,344	4,776	2.1	3.9	3.3
2020	1,460	3,211	4,671	2.0	(4.0)	(2.2)
2021	1,489	2,997	4,386	2.0	(9.8)	(6.1)
2022	1,518	3,219	4,737	1.9	11.1	8.0

Source: PACI

Authority for Civil Information, Kuwait's population rebounded during 2022, increasing by 8.0% y/y to 4.74 million.

This is the fastest annual growth in 17 years and brings the total population back to just 0.8% below its pre-pandemic peak in 2019. The main driver was the return of expatriate workers (+11.1% y/y) after two years of pandemic-linked decline. The annual increase in Kuwaiti nationals eased to 1.9% in 2022. The growth rate of the Kuwaiti population may slow further over the coming years as the birth rate remains on a moderating trajectory. Overall expatriate employment in several labor-intensive sectors, such as real estate & construction, manufacturing and trade, continues to range below its 2019 peak; any pick-up in economic activity should therefore mean more demand for workers. Meanwhile, the number of expatriate domestic workers reached a record 772,000.

2022/23 fiscal balance to see first surplus in eight years

Amid elevated oil prices, Kuwait's fiscal position improved greatly over the fiscal year just ended (FY22/23). (Chart 7.) According to our estimates, the fiscal balance swung to a surplus of KD5.2 billion (9.6% of GDP), versus a deficit of KD3.0 billion (7.1% of GDP) a year before. If confirmed by the Ministry of Finance, this would be Kuwait's first surplus in eight years. Our estimate is based on the government limiting expenditure growth that year to 1.5% y/y.

In contrast, in the FY23/24 draft budget, which will need to be ratified by the incoming parliament, expenditures are projected to increase a hefty 12% y/y (budget-on-budget) to KD26.3 billion alongside expectations of a sizeable 17% decline in revenues to KD19.5 billion (based on a \$70/bbl oil price assumption). This could result in the reversal of last year's expected surplus to a deficit of KD6.8 billion (13% of GDP).

We note, however, that almost half of the planned expenditure increase relates to non-recurring payments (electricity subsidy arrears and accumulated employee salary leave compensation) and so there could theoretically be scope for current spending to ease back in future budgets. Given the historical tendency of the government to underspend on its budget allocation (especially on capex) and to base its spending on a conservative oil price assumption, we think the FY23/24 deficit could come in at about 3.0% of GDP in FY23/24 (zero if the non-recurring items are stripped out). The cancellation of the current legislative session and fresh parliamentary elections will have likely delayed further sign-off on bigger ticket expenditure items.

Softening credit growth, especially household

Domestic credit growth slowed to 5.1% y/y in March (+0.6% q/q), a third consecutive month of deceleration and a marked slowdown from the double-digit increase of 1H22. (Chart 8.) Credit to the household and business sectors has noticeably eased, to 6.7% y/y (-0.1% q/q) and 4.2% y/y (+1.2% q/q), respectively, as the operating environment normalizes (household and business credit were up 9.0% and 6.8%, respectively, in 2022) against a background of higher interest rates and lower price-competition among banks in terms of household credit especially. Meanwhile, slower lending to real estate companies-credit actually contracted m/m in three of the last four months-is one of the main factors behind the slowdown in business credit growth. Industry, construction and other services, in contrast, grew by a decent 3.0% q/q.

Looking ahead, business credit growth is unlikely to accelerate without considerable traction in the projects market, which in turn would likely depend on the return of a new government and an uptick in oil prices from current levels. That said, the rate-hike cycle could be nearing its end (see below), which could give corporates a little more certainty over their borrowing costs and lenders some impetus to expand corporate credit lines given weaker household credit demand.

Meanwhile, deposit growth also eased in 1Q23, to 3.4% y/y (+1.4% q/q), with private (+6.5% y/y) and government (+6.2% y/y) deposit growth slowing and public institution (-12.2% y/y) deposits contracting in March.

As of May, the CBK has hiked the discount rate by a cumulative 2.5% since March 2022 to 4.0%. (Chart 9.) This compares to a cumulative increase of 5.0% in the US Fed funds rate to 5.25% at the upper limit. Following its most recent 25 bps increase in early May, the Fed may pause its rate hiking cycle, and the indications are that both the Fed and the CBK are close to or have reached the terminal rate in the current cycle.

Equities dragged down by negative sentiment, uncertainty

Equities trended lower in 1Q23 amid rising borrowing costs and oil market volatility, which weighed on investor sentiment. Prices fell further in April and early May. The end of the earnings season and stocks going ex-dividend also added to the mood. Boursa Kuwait's All-Share Index lost 3.2% q/q in 1Q23 to settle at 7,051 at end-March, in line with declines in regional markets (the MSCI GCC dropped 3.0% q/q). (Chart 10.) Performances diverged in recent weeks, however, with Kuwaiti stocks extending losses-breaking the critical 7,000 level and touching lows unseen since November 2021-while GCC peers recovered better amid easing monetary headwinds and inflation as well as oil price-supportive OPEC+ policy. The under-performance could be attributed to domestic factors, including political uncertainty and the general absence of a catalyst.

Furthermore, turnover by value fell to just KD642 million in April, the lowest since July 2020, indicative of increased uncertainty and risk aversion, while market capitalization fell to KD45.6 billion from a high of nearly KD50 billion in November. Looking ahead, Kuwait's equity market will continue to take its cues from global economic and market developments as well as from signs of an improving political backdrop, potentially after June's elections.

See Also Page 7

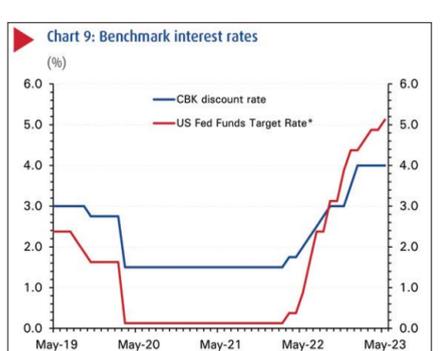
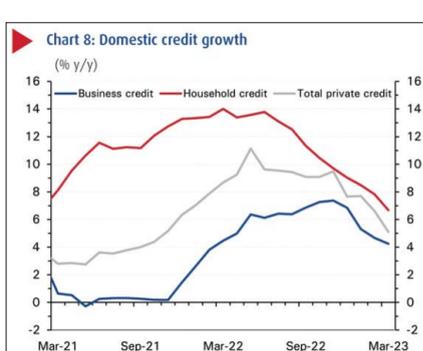
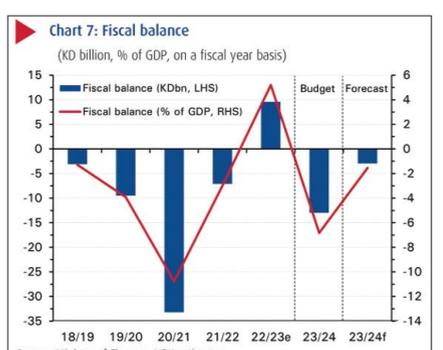
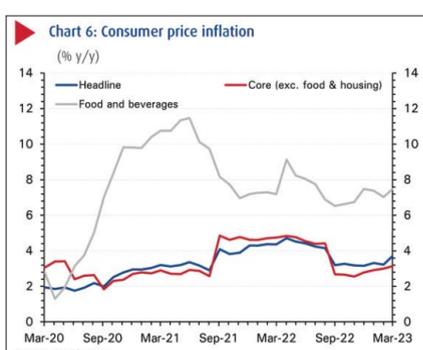
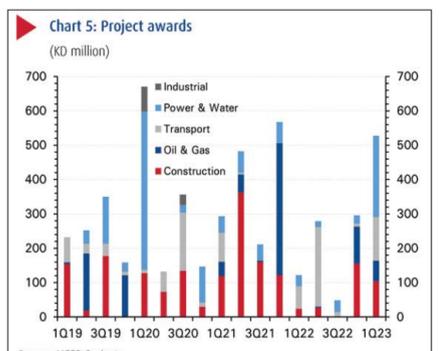
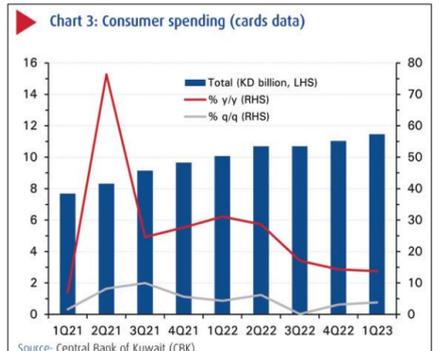
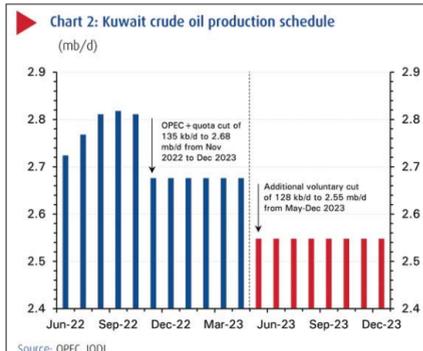
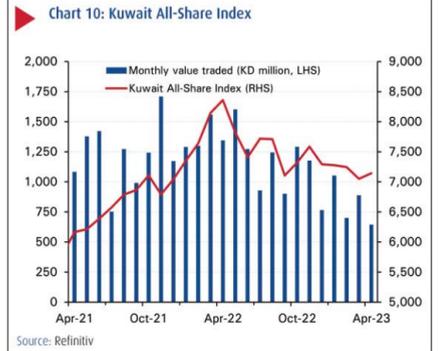
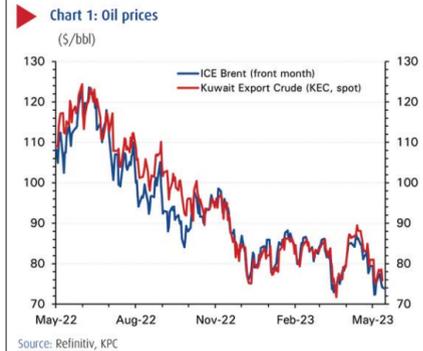


Table 1: Key economic data

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Estimates/forecasts	
							2023	2024
Nominal GDP	36.6	41.7	41.3	32.4	42.0	54.3	52.6	53.6
Oil	15.4	19.8	18.9	11.2	18.8	29.1	25.8	24.9
Non-oil	21.2	21.9	22.4	21.3	23.2	25.2	26.8	28.8
Real GDP	-4.7	2.4	-0.6	-8.9	1.2	7.6	-0.3	3.3
Oil	-9.2	2.4	-1.0	-8.9	-1.0	12.1	-3.7	2.7
Non-oil	1.3	2.5	-0.1	-8.8	3.8	2.6	3.8	3.9
Private credit (end-year)	3.1	4.2	4.3	3.5	6.3	7.7	...	...
Money supply (M2, end-year)	3.8	3.9	-1.2	2.7	-0.5	6.0	...	...
Inflation (% y/y, average)	1.5	0.6	1.1	2.1	3.4	4.0	3.1	2.5
Fiscal balance (before FGF transfers)	-8.9	-3.1	-9.5	-33.2	-7.1	9.6	-2.9	1.0
Revenues	43.7	49.3	41.6	32.4	44.2	49.8	43.7	45.8
Oil	39.0	44.2	37.2	27.1	38.6	46.0	39.3	41.2
Non-oil	4.7	5.1	4.5	5.3	5.7	3.8	4.3	4.5
Expenditures	52.6	52.4	51.1	65.6	51.4	40.2	46.6	44.7
Transfers to Future Generations Fund	4.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	...	...	...
Fiscal balance (after transfers to FGF)	-13.2	-3.1	-9.5	-33.2	-7.1	9.6	-2.9	1.0
Investment income*	15.7	13.3	14.9	15.5	17.4	13.5	15.5	15.4
Public debt	19.0	13.9	9.9	10.7	4.4	3.0	2.9	2.7
Current account balance	3.4	11.2	10.1	1.4	26.9	34.1	30.6	32.0
Exchange rate (KD per US\$1, average)	0.303	0.302	0.304	0.307	0.302	0.307	...	...
CBK discount rate (percent, end-year)	2.75	3.00	2.75	1.50	1.50	3.50	...	...
Kuwait export crude price (\$/bbl, avg)	51	69	64	41	70	100	85	90
Oil production (million bbl, average)**	2.70	2.74	2.68	2.44	2.41	2.71	2.61	2.68

Source: Central Statistical Bureau, Ministry of Finance, Central Bank of Kuwait, NBK estimates.
*Based on estimated figures by CSB and NBK. ** Uses JODI/OPEC direct communication figures.

BUSINESS

A visitor to the 21st China Beijing International High-tech Expo looks at a computer chip through the microscope displayed by the state-controlled Tsinghua Unigroup project which has emerged as a national champion for Beijing's semiconductor ambitions in Beijing, on May 17, 2018. (AP)



UK unveils \$1.2b strategy to boost computer chip industry

Britain's government unveiled its long-awaited semiconductor strategy Friday, catching up with similar efforts by Western allies seeking to reduce reliance on Asian production of the computer chips that are essential to modern life.

Under UK plan, the country's semiconductor industry will get up to 1 billion pounds (\$1.2 billion) in government investment over the next decade. The amount is dwarfed by the US Chips Act, which provides \$52 billion in government incentives, and the European Union's \$43

billion euro (\$46 billion) chip program.

The money provided by the British government will be focused on research and development, design and intellectual property and on cutting-edge compound semiconductors. The first 200 million pounds will be provided between 2023 and 2025.

"Our new strategy focuses our efforts on where our strengths lie, in areas like research and design, so we can build our competitive edge on the global stage," Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said.

The strategy is aimed at boosting the

domestic chip industry, as well as alleviating supply chain disruption and protecting Britain's national security.

Semiconductors - tiny computer chips - control everything from cars and smartphones to washing machines and medical devices. Most of the world's advanced chips are produced in Asia, especially Taiwan and South Korea, a vulnerability that was exposed during the coronavirus pandemic when supply lines were scrambled, leading to extended shortages of manufactured products. (AP)

Is the new CEO being set up to fail?

Linda Yaccarino may be 'exactly what Twitter needs'

NEW YORK, May 21, (AP) - Less than two months into his \$44 billion purchase of Twitter, Elon Musk declared that whoever took over as the company's CEO "must like pain a lot." Then he promised he'd step down as soon as he found a replacement "foolish enough" to want the job.

That person, Musk announced, is Linda Yaccarino, a highly-regarded advertising executive from NBCUniversal. She'll start in six weeks. How long she'll last might depend on her pain tolerance.

When Musk tweeted recently that he's found a new CEO but didn't say who, one word stuck out: "she." Some of his more extreme Twitter followers took immediate issue with the new CEO's gender, but the fact that Musk hired a woman is actually notable simply because it is so rare - in business overall and especially in the tech industry - to see female chief executives.

Her appointment renewed questions about the "glass cliff," a theory that women - as well as underrepresented minorities - are more likely to be hired for leadership jobs when there's a crisis, which sets them up for failure. The term was coined in 2005 by University of Exeter professors Michelle Ryan and Alex Haslam, and there have been plenty of famous examples since then, from Yahoo's Marissa Mayer to the UK's Theresa May.

Could Yaccarino be headed toward it?

"Her credentials are impeccable and she's been extremely successful so far. But she's also been in settings where her success was achievable," said Jo-Ellen Pozner, a business professor at Santa Clara University who studies corporate governance. "I mean no disrespect to her or to diminish her in the least. I just think that this is an impossible situation for basically anybody."

Whether or not she succeeds depends in part on how much Musk is willing to step back from Twitter's day-to-day operations. The Tesla and SpaceX CEO said he will continue to serve as Twitter's executive chairman - Yaccarino's boss - as

well as its chief technology officer, reporting to her. He added that Yaccarino "will focus primarily on business operations."

From the moment Yaccarino's name was confirmed, advertising industry experts hailed the decision as a good one - perhaps the only one - to steer Twitter toward stability and profitability. Yaccarino oversaw NBCUniversal's market strategy and advertising revenue for its broadcast, cable and digital assets, which totaled nearly \$10 billion. In comparison, Twitter's final quarterly revenue as a public company, reported in July, was just \$1.17 billion.

"She is exactly what Twitter needs to start rebuilding advertiser trust, bring back big advertisers and really start improving Twitter's ad business," said Jasmine Enberg, an analyst at Insider Intelligence who follows Twitter. "That said, there are still a lot of challenges and Yaccarino is going to have her hands full from day one."

Verification

Musk's tenure at Twitter's helm has been chaotic at best. He began his first day firing the company's top executives, followed by roughly 80% of its staff. This has meant that Twitter has far fewer engineers to ensure that the site is running smoothly and far fewer content moderators to help rid it of hate speech, animal cruelty and graphic violence.

He's upended the platform's verification system and has scaled back safeguards against the spread of misinformation. It's been some of these changes - along with Musk's own penchant for spreading misinformation and engaging with prominent conspiracy theorists and far-right figures - that analysts say soured many advertisers on the platform.

"Elon Musk has been telling us for months repeatedly that Twitter's problems are the result of advertisers pulling away. But that's not the source of his problems.

Advertisers pulling away are a symptom of the problems at Twitter. He's created chaos. He's eliminated internal controls. He's eliminated critical functions like content moderation. He's made the user experience very unpredictable. He's allowed dangerous voices to flourish," Pozner said. "Nobody - man, woman, alien - is going to be able to right this ship given these circumstances."

The glass cliff theory holds up in business as well as politics, and, according to a 2011 Harvard Business Review report, "does not seem to apply to organizations with a history of female leaders."

Twitter, like most tech companies, does not have a strong history of female leaders. Its founders were all men, as were all five of its CEOs, including Musk. While female chief executives are rare across industries, they are exceptionally rare in tech. Of the 340 CEOs in a recent survey of S&P 500 companies, 18 were women, up from 16 in 2020. In tech, prominent female CEOs include Oracle's Safra Catz and chipmaker AMD's Lisa Su.

Yaccarino seems ready to go head-to-head with Musk, though it's not clear how that'll play out. In a recent on-stage interview with him, she asked Musk if he could commit to not tweeting after 3 a.m. Agreeing that he's "gotten myself in trouble a few times" with late night/early morning tweets, he responded with a noncommittal "I will aspire to tweet less at 3 a.m."

She also asked Musk if he's open to let advertisers "influence" his vision for Twitter, in "product development, ad safety, content moderation" so they could get more excited about investing in the platform.

Musk quickly shut her down.

"It's totally cool to say that you want to have your advertising appear in certain places in Twitter and not in other places, but it is not cool to try to say what Twitter will do," he said. "And if that means losing advertising dollars, we lose it. But freedom of speech is paramount."

'Concern of outside hackers'

TSA testing 'facial recognition' at airports, raising privacy concerns

BALTIMORE, May 21: (AP) - A passenger walks up to an airport security checkpoint, slips an ID card into a slot and looks into a camera atop a small screen. The screen flashes "Photo Complete" and the person walks through - all without having to hand over their identification to the TSA officer sitting behind the screen.

It's all part of a pilot project by the Transportation Security Administration to assess the use of facial recognition technology at a number of airports across the country.

"What we are trying to do with this is aid the officers to actually determine that you are who you say you are," said Jason Lim, identity management capabilities manager, during a demonstration of the technology to reporters at Baltimore-Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport.

The effort comes at a time when the use of various forms of technology to enhance security and streamline procedures is only increasing. TSA says the pilot is voluntary and accurate, but critics have raised concerns about questions of bias in facial recognition technology and possible repercussions for passengers who want to opt out.

The technology is currently in 16 airports. In addition to Baltimore, it's being used at Reagan National near Washington, D.C., airports in Atlanta, Boston, Dallas, Denver, Detroit, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Miami, Orlando, Phoenix, Salt Lake City, San Jose, and Gulfport-Biloxi and Jackson in Mississippi. However, it's not at every TSA checkpoint so not every traveler going through those airports would necessarily experience it.

Captures

Travelers put their driver's license into a slot that reads the card or place their passport photo against a card reader. Then they look at a camera on a screen about the size of an iPad, which captures their image and compares it to their ID. The technology is both checking to make sure the people at the airport match the ID they present and that the identification is in fact real. A TSA officer is still there and signs off on the screening.

A small sign alerts travelers that their photo will be taken as part of the pilot and that they can opt out if they'd like. It also includes a QR code for them to get more information.

Since it's come out the pilot has come under scrutiny by some elected officials and privacy advocates. In a February letter to TSA, five senators - four Democrats and an Independent who is part of the Democratic caucus - demanded the agency stop the program, saying: "Increasing biometric surveillance of Americans by the government represents a risk to civil liberties and privacy rights."

As various forms of technology that use biometric information like face IDs, retina scans or fingerprint matches have become more pervasive in both the private sector and the federal government, it's raised concerns among privacy advocates about how this data is collected, who has access to it and what happens if it gets hacked.

Meg Foster, a justice fellow at Georgetown University's Center on Privacy and Technology, said there are concerns about bias within the algorithms of various facial recognition technologies. Some have a harder time recognizing faces of minorities, for example. And there's the concern of outside hackers figuring out ways to hack into government systems for nefarious aims.

With regard to the TSA pilot, Foster said she has concerns that while the agency says it's not currently storing

'Law is unconstitutional'

TikTok content creators file suit against Montana over 'app ban'

HELENA, Mont., May 21, (AP) - Five TikTok content creators have filed a lawsuit seeking to overturn Montana's first-in-the-nation ban on the video sharing app, arguing the law is an unconstitutional violation of free speech rights.

The Montana residents also argued in the complaint, filed in federal court late Wednesday without public notice, that the state doesn't have any authority over matters of national security. Republican Gov. Greg Gianforte signed the bill into law Wednesday and said it would protect Montana residents' private data and personal information from being harvested by the Chinese government.

The ban is scheduled to take effect on Jan. 1, 2024.

"The law takes the broadest possible approach to its objectives, restricting and banning the protected speech of all TikTok users in Montana to prevent the speculative and unsubstantiated possibility that the Chinese government might direct TikTok Inc., or its parent, to spy on some Montana users," the complaint states.

"We expected a legal challenge and are fully prepared to defend the law," said Emily Flower, spokeswoman for the Montana Department of Justice.

TikTok has argued the law infringes on people's First Amendment rights.

However, spokesperson Brooke Oberwetter declined to comment on the lawsuit Thursday. She also declined to say whether the company helped coordinate the complaint.

The plaintiffs are Montana residents who use the video-sharing app for things like promoting a business, connecting with military veterans, sharing outdoor adventures or expressing their sense of humor. Two of them have more than 200,000 followers.

Shares

One content creator, Carly Ann Goddard, shares videos about living on a ranch, parenting, recipes and home decor. Her account has 97,000 followers and has allowed her to roughly triple her family's household income, the complaint states. TikTok creators can make money in several ways, including by being paid to advertise products to their followers.

The lawsuit - filed just hours after Gianforte signed the measure into law - states the ban would "immediately and permanently deprive Plaintiffs of their ability to express themselves and communicate with others."

the biometric data it collects, what if that changes in the future? And while people are allowed to opt out, she said it's not fair to put the onus on harried passengers who might be worried about missing their flight if they do.

"They might be concerned that if they object to face recognition, that they're going to be under further suspicion," Foster said.

Jeramie Scott, with the Electronic Privacy Information Center, said that while it's voluntary now it might not be for long. He noted that David Peckoske, who heads TSA, said during a talk in April that eventually the use of biometrics would be required because they're more effective and efficient, al-

"Montana can no more ban its residents from viewing or posting to TikTok than it could ban the Wall Street Journal because of who owns it or the ideas it publishes," the plaintiffs' attorneys wrote.

The case could serve as a testing ground for the TikTok-free America many national lawmakers have envisioned. Cybersecurity experts say it could be difficult to enforce.

Some lawmakers, the FBI and officials at other agencies are concerned the video-sharing app, owned by ByteDance, could be used to allow the Chinese government to access information on U.S. citizens or push pro-Beijing misinformation that could influence the public. TikTok says none of this has ever happened.

A former executive at ByteDance alleges the tech giant has served as a "propaganda tool" for the Chinese government, a claim ByteDance says is baseless.

Banned

China passed laws in 2014 and 2017 that compel companies to cooperate with the country's government for state intelligence work. TikTok says it has never been asked to hand over its data and it wouldn't do so if asked.

"TikTok is spying on Americans. Period." Montana Attorney General Austin Knudsen told a legislative committee in March. "TikTok is a tool of the Chinese Communist Party. It is owned by a Chinese company, and under China law, if you are based in China, you will cooperate with the Chinese Communist Party. Period."

More than half the US states, including Montana, and the federal government have banned TikTok from government-owned devices.

Montana's law would prohibit downloads of TikTok in the state and would fine any "entity" - an app store or TikTok - \$10,000 per day for each time someone "is offered the ability" to access the social media platform or download the app. The penalties would not apply to users.

Opponents say Montana residents could easily circumvent the ban by using a virtual private network, a service that shields internet users by encrypting their data traffic, preventing others from observing their web browsing. Montana state officials say geofencing technology is used with online sports gambling apps, which are deactivated in states where online gambling is illegal.

though he gave no timeline.

Scott said he'd prefer TSA not use the technology at all. At the least, he'd like to see an outside audit to verify that the technology isn't disproportionately affecting certain groups and that the images are deleted immediately.

TSA says the goal of the pilot is to improve the accuracy of the identity verification without slowing down the speed at which passengers pass through the checkpoints - a key issue for an agency that sees 2.4 million passengers daily. The agency said early results are positive and have shown no discernible difference in the algorithm's ability to recognize passengers based on things like age, gender, race and ethnicity.



Kuwait Airways officials cut ceremonial cake during the launch of its Elite Lounge at the Terminal 4.



A photo of the Kuwait Airways' Elite Lounge

Lounge designated for Royal and First Class Passengers

Kuwait Airways 'inaugurates' the Elite Lounge at Terminal 4

KUWAIT CITY, May 21: Kuwait Airways announces the inauguration of its Elite Lounge at the Terminal 4 on Sunday, 21 May, 2023, designated for Royal and First Class passengers, in addition to Platinum Card holders of the Oasis Club.

The Elite Lounge was inaugurated by Kuwait Airways Chairman, Captain Ali M. Al-Dukhan, KAC's Board Members, and the Chief Executive Officer of Kuwait Airways, Eng. Maen Razouqi, in the presence of the Acting Director General of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation, Mr. Saleh Al-Fadaghi, the Director General of the General Department of Airport Security at the Ministry of Interior, Brigadier General Essa Al-Falakawi, the CEO of Incheon Korea Airports Management Company, Mr. Jung June Ahn and various officials representing Kuwait Airways, Civil Aviation and the Ministry of Interior. As part of the inauguration, a tour of the lounge was conducted for the officials, highlighting the various services available to the customers.

On the side lines of the inauguration, Kuwait Airways Chairman, Captain Ali Al-Dukhan felicitated the attendees on the opening of the Elite Lounge at Terminal 4, revealing the new image of the Blue Bird, which was announced in the beginning of this year. At the same time, Al-Dukhan also commended the efforts extended by Kuwait Airways' employees in implementing and completing the prepa-

rations of the lounge with a high level of efficiency and in a short time, to provide distinguished services to the passengers of Royal and First Class.

Moreover, Al-Dukhan expressed his happiness at the opening of the Elite Lounge, held in the presence of officials from Civil Aviation and the Ministry of Interior and extended appreciations to them for their continuous support and cooperation. He indicated that the opening of the Elite Lounge comes within the policies of the company to develop the services provided to its valued customers and coincides with the increasing demand and requirements for travel at Terminal 4.

Providing

Al-Dukhan concluded by saying, "Kuwait Airways strives diligently to provide distinct services and assist its passengers, whether at Terminal 4 or at any of its outstations. The company's role is not limited to providing transportation, but rather serving and meeting the requirements and preferences of its customers, whether by providing multiple travel destinations or high level and flexible services offered before, or during their travel, as well as ensuring a pleasant experience onboard."

On his part, the Director General of Civil Aviation, Mr. Saleh Al-Fadaghi expressed his sincere appreciation to Kuwait Airways employees headed by the Chairman, Captain Ali Al-Dukhan and the Executive Management for

their extensive efforts and preparations leading to the completion of the Elite Lounge. He also extended his best wishes for further success and in promoting the Blue Bird to greater extent in the future.

Al-Fadaghi added that the Elite Lounge was designed, planned, and arranged in a distinct and appealing manner to provide comfort and services, that are based on the requirements of this segment of customers.

Al-Fadaghi also urged the employees of Kuwait Airways to extend greater efforts in the service of the civil aviation sector in Kuwait and the air transport industry in general.

Features of the Elite Lounge The Elite Lounge is designated for the passengers of Royal and First Class, in addition to Platinum Card holders of the Oasis Club. The lounge is specifically designed and equipped with the latest features and technology, with a capacity of 80 seats, four large size television screens to display flight schedules, in addition to Wi-Fi facilities for passengers to browse the internet.

The lounge which has an area of 250 square meters, offers passengers with an array of the finest selection of local and international cuisine to suit varied tastes and preferences.

The lounge was designed and implemented within 120 days by a Kuwaiti contracting company specialized in decor and under the supervision of Kuwait Airways Engineers.



The campaign visual

KFH announces winners of Al-Rabeh draw

Kuwait Finance House (KFH) announced the winners of the Al-Rabeh draw with 20 customers winning cash prizes worth KD1,500 each for the 17th and 18th week of 2023. KFH announced Mohamed Amer as the monthly winner of 1 kilo Gram of KFH Gold for the month of April 2023. The winners of KD 1,500 are: Abdullah Al-Mutairi, Abdulaziz Al-Sulaili, Abdullah Al-Fraji, Faleh Al-Abdali, Marwan Raheel, Mubarak Al-Dousari, Abeer Khattab, Saud Al-Metlaqem, Hanea Marzouk, Mansour Al-Aslawi, Marram Al-Shemmari, Mohamed Othman, Yousef Al-Barood, Tariq Al-Azmi, Zarina Zaher, Abdul-

hadi Al-Rashidy, Musaad Al-Mutairi, Abdullah Al-Hashemi, Mohamed Khan, Mohamed Al-Muheemeeed. The AlRabeh campaign provides prizes and draws that offer customers several chances of winning "weekly, monthly and quarterly". The campaign crowns 536 winners throughout the year. The draw took place under the supervision of a representative from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. The campaign is part of KFH's ongoing efforts to offer exceptional products and services that meet customers' aspirations, enhance the

Bank's leadership in the local and global markets, as well as reflect its excellence in offering innovative banking solutions as per the highest quality standards. The Al-Rabeh account is a salary account available to customers wishing to transfer their salaries and manage their personal accounts. Customers can open Al-Rabeh account in any of KFH branches in Kuwait, or through the Bank's online channels. The account can be opened in the Kuwaiti Dinar and is targeted for customers wishing to transfer their salaries and manage their personal accounts.

'Mission to simplify RAS'

MIRA seeks FDA approval for robotic-assisted surgery device

LINCOLN, Neb., May 21: Virtual Incision Corporation has announced its De Novo request was submitted and is under substantive review by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The submission seeks authorization to market the MIRA Surgical System for use in bowel resection procedures and comes on the heels of Virtual Incision's completed Investigational Device Exemption (IDE) clinical study.

If granted, MIRA will become the first robotic-assisted surgery (RAS) device to obtain marketing authorization through the De Novo pathway for use in bowel resection procedures, making it a trailblazer in soft tissue robotics. Beyond granting Virtual Incision the ability to commercialize MIRA in the US for its intended use, authorization may lay the foundations for expanded procedural indications, entry into international markets, additional instruments and accessories, and future generations of the surgical system.

"Throughout the history of RAS, only a few companies have managed to reach this significant milestone," said John Murphy, president, and chief executive officer of Virtual Incision. "If we are successful with our submission, the FDA De Novo pathway will establish MIRA in a brand-new medical device category of miniaturized RAS. Our design is disruptive and highly differentiated among the current landscape of available and emerging technologies. We are proud of the data we collected, as it demonstrates the capabilities of MIRA in one of the most complex multi-quadrant abdominal procedures. We also observed many operational efficiencies that make the miniaturized approach so unique and potentially scalable to the millions of patients who could be candidates for RAS each year."

Leverage

If Virtual Incision obtains marketing authorization, the company plans to initiate a limited launch of MIRA in select centers across the US. These centers will aim to leverage the efficiencies created with MIRA to expand the number of patients they can treat with RAS. Their experiences will serve as best practices for the broader launch. In the longer term, the objective is to enable wide adoption in any healthcare facility for any patient undergoing abdominal surgery.

MIRA is the world's first miniaturized robotic-assisted surgery (RAS) system. Its small, sleek form factor is designed to offer the benefits of RAS during abdominal surgical procedures without the logistical inefficiencies of traditional mainframe robotics. The easily accessible device weighs approximately two pounds and offers internal triangulation with shoulders, arms, and infinite wrist roll inside of the body. It can be used in any operating room – a dedicated mainframe room is unnecessary. With its drape- and dock-free design and portability, MIRA is quick to set up, clean up, and move between cases. Its conveniently accessible design positions it to be used as a standalone system or a complementary tool for facilities that already own a mainframe. With MIRA, every operating room is RAS-ready. The MIRA Surgical System is an Investigational Device and is not available for sale.

Virtual Incision is on a mission to simplify robotic-assisted surgery (RAS), so more patients and their surgeons can access its benefits every day. Headquartered in Lincoln, Nebraska, and holding over two hundred patents and patent applications, the company is developing MIRA, the first-of-its-kind miniature RAS platform. Virtual Incision's goal is to make every operating room RAS-ready.

Drug delivered directly to gut microbiome

Rebyota safe and effective in preventing rCDI in patients with comorbidities: study

PARSIPPANY, NJ, USA, May 21: Ferring Pharmaceuticals has announced that Open Forum Infectious Diseases has published a retrospective analysis of data evaluating the safety and efficacy of Rebyota™ (fecal microbiota, live – jslm) for the prevention of recurrent Clostridioides difficile (C. diff) infection in a range of adult patients representative of those seen in clinical practice – including patients with irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) and inflammatory bowel disease (IBD).

In the analysis, patients with recurrent C. diff infection (rCDI) and treated with Rebyota under the Assured Active Treatment (AAT) program were retrospectively identified across five clinical trial sites. The AAT program offered Rebyota to adults not eligible for clinical trial participation or who needed additional treatment following study participation. The primary objective was to evaluate the safety and tolerability of Rebyota through six months after treatment. The secondary objectives were to evaluate efficacy in preventing rCDI within eight weeks of treatment and sustained response for six months after treatment. The primary safety set (PSS) which served as the analysis set for the safety and efficacy endpoints, included 64 patients who were Rebyota treatment naive and had comprehensive medical records for six months following treatment.

In the PSS, most treatment-emergent adverse events (TEAEs) were mild to moderate in severity and comparable between patients with comorbid conditions and the overall patient population. The most common TEAEs occurring in five percent or more of patients in the PSS were GI disorders at 45.3%, including abdominal pain (14.1%), diarrhea (14.1%), bloating (6.3%), gas (6.3%) and nausea (6.3%), and infections at 25%, including urinary tract infection (10.9%) and C. diff infection (7.8%). Serious TEAEs were experienced by 12.5% of patients. There were no serious adverse events related to Rebyota or the administration procedure. Four patients in the PSS received Rebyota via colonoscopy. In the PSS, 82.8% of Rebyota-treated patients responded at eight weeks, and 88.7% of those patients maintained a sustained response through six months.

"People who experience recurrent C. diff infection often have chronic gastrointestinal conditions that can also cause uncomfortable and painful symptoms, making their infection-related symptoms even more difficult to manage," said Paul Feuerstadt, M.D., F.A.C.G., A.G.A.F., Yale University School of Medicine and lead author. "This is the first analysis evaluating safety and efficacy of Rebyota in patients who are often seen in clinical practice struggling with other gastrointestinal illnesses in addition to C. diff infection, who may be able to prevent recurrence of C. diff infection with a microbiome-based treatment following antibiotics."

In the PSS, 70.3% of patients had gastrointestinal and nonspecific inflammation and dysfunctional conditions, and 65.6% had immune-mediated/autoimmune disorders at baseline. Comorbid conditions included irritable bowel syndrome

(21.9%), microscopic colitis (10.9%), Crohn's disease (7.8%) and ulcerative colitis (6.3%). Furthermore, 17.2% of patients were also taking medication capable of causing immunosuppression at the same time they received Rebyota. "People living with IBD in particular are at an increased risk of developing C. diff infection and experience higher rates of recurrence," said Elizabeth Garner, M.D., M.P.H., Chief Scientific Officer, Ferring Pharmaceuticals US. "We are pleased to see that the analysis from the AAT program is consistent with results from the prospective clinical trials. We are committed to ongoing research to help as many patients as possible who are living with recurrent C. diff infection."

C. diff infection is a serious and potentially deadly infection that impacts people across the globe. The C. diff bacterium causes debilitating symptoms, such as severe diarrhea, fever, stomach tenderness or pain, loss of appetite, nausea and colitis (an inflammation of the colon). C. diff infection can be the start of a vicious cycle of recurrence, causing a significant burden for patients and the healthcare system. It has been estimated that up to 35% of C. diff infection

events.

"By breaking down barriers and forging deep collaboration, PICI can accelerate the development of breakthrough immune therapies and turn all cancers into curable diseases," said Tarak Mody, PhD, chief business officer at PICI. "This mission-focused collaboration with Guardant Health aims to identify the molecular drivers of treatment response in clinical practice, provide significant learnings in PDI resistance mechanisms, and serve as a valuable resource to the PICI research network for biomarker discovery, target validation, and clinical trial design."

Generate

The project marks the first real-world immuno-oncology study collaboration for Guardant Health and will enable the company to significantly expand its access to real-world outcomes data for immunotherapies correlated to specific biomarkers, cancer type and stage.

"The collaborative study with PICI is an excellent opportunity for us to explore the value of genomic and epigenomic tumor profiling in real-world immuno-oncology therapy settings," said Helmy Eltoukhy, Guardant Health chairman and co-CEO. "The study will generate

deeper insights about the tumor microenvironment and its response to therapy, which will enable us to respond to cancer evolution faster and, eventually, modify immunotherapy treatment paradigms for better patient outcomes."

Guardant Health and PICI intend to begin publishing data generated by the study later in 2023.

Guardant Health is a leading precision oncology company focused on helping conquer cancer globally through use of its proprietary tests, vast data sets and advanced analytics. The Guardant Health oncology platform leverages capabilities to drive commercial adoption, improve patient clinical outcomes and lower healthcare costs across all stages of the cancer care continuum. Guardant Health has commercially launched Guardant360®, Guardant360 CDx, Guardant360 TissueNext™, Guardant360 Response™, and GuardantINFINITY™ tests for advanced-stage cancer, and Guardant Reveal™ for early-stage cancer. The Guardant Health screening portfolio, including the Shield™ test, aims to address the needs of individuals eligible for cancer screening. For more information, visit guardanthealth.com and follow the company on LinkedIn and Twitter.

cases recur after initial diagnosis and people who have had a recurrence are at significantly higher risk of further infections. After the first recurrence, it has been estimated that up to 65% of patients may develop a subsequent recurrence. Antibiotics – the current standard of care for treatment of C. diff infection – treat the disease but can also be a contributing factor to the cycle of recurrence.

Rebyota is a pre-packaged, single-dose 150 mL microbiota suspension for rectal administration consisting of a liquid mix of up to trillions of live microbes – including Bacteroides. Rebyota is delivered directly to the gut microbiome and is administered by a healthcare professional in one visit.

Rebyota (fecal microbiota, live – jslm) is indicated for the prevention of recurrence of Clostridioides difficile (C. diff) infection in individuals 18 years of age and older, following antibiotic treatment for recurrent C. diff infection.

Rebyota is not indicated for the treatment of C. diff infection. Important safety information (bold) You should not receive Rebyota if you have

a history of a severe allergic reaction (e.g., anaphylaxis) to Rebyota or any of its components.

You should report to your doctor any infection you think you may have acquired after administration.

Rebyota may contain food allergens. Most common side effects may include stomach pain (8.9%), diarrhea (7.2%), bloating (3.9%), gas (3.3%), and nausea (3.3%).

Rebyota has not been studied in patients below 18 years of age.

Clinical studies did not determine if adults 65 years of age and older responded differently than younger adults.

You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to FDA. Visit www.FDA.gov/medwatch or call

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Jonathan Glazer rocks Cannes with a chilling Holocaust drama

CANNES, France, May 21, (AP) — Jonathan Glazer's "The Zone of Interest," a chilling Auschwitz-set drama shot through "a 21st century lens," has delivered the Cannes Film Festival's first critical sensation by approaching the Holocaust from an unlikely perspective.

"The Zone of Interest," which premiered to rave reviews Friday night, dramatizes the life of a fictional German family whose handsome home and tasteful gardens abut the outer wall of Auschwitz. There, they live a mostly peaceful, mundane life, while incinerators rumble in the background, smoke rises from the gas chambers, and muffled screams can be heard.

The father is Rudolf Höss (Christian Friedel), a Nazi commandant who designed Auschwitz, who lives with his wife, Hedwig (Sandra Hüller) and children. "The Zone of Interest," loosely based on a Martin Amis novel, rigorously follows the family's daily lives while atrocity thumps next door.

"What it's trying to do is talk to the capacity within each of us for violence, wherever you're from, and to try to show these people as people and not as monsters was a very important thing to do," Glazer told reporters Tuesday. "The great crime and tragedy is that human beings did this to other human beings."

"It's very convenient to distance ourselves from them as much as we can because we think we don't behave that way," added Glazer.

"But we should be less certain than that."

Following its premiere, "The Zone of Interest" quickly rose to the top of forecasts for the Palme d'Or, the festival's top prize to be handed out May 27. Critics lauded the film's formal rigor in capturing the capacity of people to compartmentalize horror.

"The Zone of Interest," Glazer's first film since 2013's grimly elegant science fiction "Under the Skin," proceeds largely without story in almost documentary fashion. It's set almost entirely in the orderly hallways and flower beds of the Höss home. Glazer said he and his filmmaking team, using up to 10 cameras at once, tried "to make ourselves as absent as possible, almost as authorless as possible."

Recognize

"It had so little to do with acting what we were doing," said Hüller. The process, she said, was more about being present.

Glazer sought to avoid movie tropes to bring viewers into a life they might recognize as their own, composed mostly of chores, work and child-rearing. For Glazer, it was about creating something "in present tense, not as a museum piece or something in aspic."

"It needed to be presented with a degree of urgency and alarm," said the 58-year-old British filmmaker.

Höss is based on Karl Bischoff, the concentration camp's builder.

A trip to Auschwitz, in which Glazer visited Bischoff's home, inspired him to make "The Zone of Interest," which A24 will release in theaters at a not-yet-announced date. He returned to shoot it at the camp in Poland.

"It was never an option for it to be shot anywhere else," he said. "We tried to look for a place to shoot in other parts of Poland, but I kept gravitating back to Auschwitz."

As in "Under the Skin," Glazer uses a wide spectrum of techniques to create a densely layered visual and auditory experience. The score is by Mica Levi. Key in the process, Glazer said, was to avoid all the usual trapping of period films. Props were authentic but new. Glazer wanted a "present day" precision to make "The Zone of Interest" cut through history to reach today.

Glazer isn't the only British filmmaker in Cannes with a formally daring film that seeks to bridge Holocaust past with the present. Steve McQueen debuted his lengthy documentary "Occupied City," which combines narrated accounts of Nazi atrocities in Amsterdam with present-day footage from those locations.

To Glazer, finding new ways to make the Holocaust real and immediate drove him to make "The Zone of Interest."

"It's important to try to find a new paradigm for it so that a new generation can understand it," Glazer said.

Film

Variety



Cate Blanchett poses for photographers upon arrival at the premiere of the film 'Killers of the Flower Moon' at the 76th international film festival, Cannes, southern France, Saturday, May 20. (AP)

Film

An American epic about greed and exploitation

Scorsese debuts 'Killers' to loud applause

WASHINGTON: The Supreme Court ruled in favor of a photographer who claimed the late **Andy Warhol** had violated her copyright on a photograph of the singer **Prince**.

"Lynn Goldsmith's original works, like those of other photographers, are entitled to copyright protection, even against famous artists," Justice **Sonia Sotomayor** wrote in an opinion joined by six of her colleagues.

The case involved images Warhol created of Prince as part of a 1984 commission for Vanity Fair. Warhol used one of Goldsmith's photos as a starting point, a so-called artist reference, and Vanity Fair paid Goldsmith to license the photo. Warhol then created a series of images in his signature style.

Vanity Fair chose one of the images - Prince with a purple face - to run in the magazine. The magazine ran another image from the series on its cover following Prince's 2016 death. It was that second use that the justices dealt with in the case.

Lawyers for Warhol's foundation had argued that the artist had transformed the photograph and there was no violation of copyright law. But a majority of the justices said a lower court had correctly sided with Goldsmith.

Some amount of copying is acceptable under copyright law as "fair use." To determine whether something counts as fair use, courts look to four factors set out in the federal Copyright Act of 1976. A lower court found that all four factors favored Goldsmith. Only the first factor was at issue in the Supreme Court case and Sotomayor wrote that: "The first factor favors Goldsmith." (AP)

LAS VEGAS: Country music star **Garth Brooks** promises no two shows of his new Las Vegas residency opening Thursday night will be the same.

From the occasional special guest to a rotating cast of band members, Brooks, in an interview hours before his first show at the Colosseum at Caesars Palace, even teased the possibility that fans may hear new music for the first - and last - time at "Garth Brooks/Plus One."

"We're going to do stuff tonight that they'll never hear again because it just didn't work or we

CANNES, France, May 21, (AP) — Martin Scorsese unveiled "Killers of the Flower Moon" at Cannes on Saturday, debuting a sweeping American epic about greed and exploitation on the bloody plains of an Osage Nation reservation in 1920s Oklahoma.

Scorsese's latest - starring Leonardo DiCaprio, Lily Gladstone and Robert De Niro - is one of his most ambitious. Adapting David Grann's nonfiction bestseller, it stretches nearly three and a half hours and cost Apple \$200 million to make.

Nothing has been more anticipated at this year's Cannes Film Festival than "Killers of the Flower Moon" - a historical epic, a bitter crime film and a Great Plains Western - which appeared to meet those expectations. It drew a lengthy standing ovation and repeated cheers for Scorsese, 80, who premiered his first film at Cannes since 1985's "After Hours."

"We shot this a couple of years ago in Oklahoma. It's taken its time to come around but Apple did so great by us," Scorsese said, addressing the crowd after the screening. "There was lots of grass. I'm a New Yorker."

The red carpet drew a wide spectrum of stars. Along with the film's expansive cast, attendees included Apple CEO Tim Cook, as well as actors Cate Blanchett, Salma Hayek, Paul Dano and Isabelle Huppert.

Though Grann's book affords many possible inroads to the story, Scorsese and co-writer Eric Roth center their story on Ernest Burkhart (DiCaprio), in his seventh collaboration with Scorsese, a WWI veteran who falls for Mollie Brown (Gladstone), the member of a wealthy Osage family.

Since finding oil reserves on their land, the Osage were then the richest people per capita in the country. But that wealth is closely controlled by appointed white guardians. A series of murders prompts increased panic among the Osage, who are preyed on by a host of greedy killers.

Though Grann's book devoted many pages to the connections between the cases and the birth of the FBI, less time is spent in Scorsese's film on the murder investigations. (Jesse Plemons plays an agent from the just-formed Bureau.) Instead, "Killers of the Flower Moon" captures the manipulation and murders of Native American people through the dynamics in Ernest

and Mollie's relationship.

"Killers of the Flower Moon," which is playing out of competition in Cannes, opens in US theaters on Oct. 6.

Meanwhile, Indiana Jones and Harrison Ford swung into Cannes on Thursday for the world premiere of "Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny" in one of the most anticipated events of the French Riviera festival.

Fedoras abounded in the throngs of onlookers who watched Ford and company hit the red carpet.

Ford walked hand in hand with his wife, Calista Flockhart, and later joined his cast mates as John Williams' score played across the red carpet. Among those in attendance were Disney chief Bob Iger, Lucasfilm's Kathleen Kennedy and filmmaker Steve McQueen.

Ford, 80, who has said "Dial of Destiny" will be his last performance as the character, also received an honorary Palme d'Or from the Cannes Film Festival. Last year, Cannes feted "Top Gun Maverick" and Tom Cruise in a similar manner.

Attendance

Inside the theater, Ford was greeted with thunderous applause. He beamed and looked around the theater before receiving the honorary Palme.

"I'm very touched. I'm very moved by this. They say when you're about to die, you, you see your life flash before your eyes. I just saw my life flash before my eyes," Ford said after a clip reel of his career was played.

"A great part of my life, not all of my life," Ford continued, thanking Flockhart as well as "Dial of Destiny" director James Mangold and co-star Phoebe Waller-Bridge.

It's not the first "Indiana Jones" film to premiere in Cannes. The fourth installment, "Indiana and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull" launched at the 2008 edition of the festival. Critics and fans alike dismissed "Crystal Skull" as a misjudged sequel, though it still made \$790 million worldwide.

This time, "Dial of Destiny" is hoping to make a similar if not larger global impact without its famous filmmakers. The new film, which the Walt Disney Co. will release June 30 in the U.S., is the first "Indiana" film not directed by Steven Spielberg or with a story credit

to George Lucas. Instead, Mangold ("Ford vs. Ferrari," "Logan") takes the reins for a film co-starring Waller-Bridge, Antonio Banderas and Mads Mikkelsen.

Also:

CANNES, France: A year and a half after the fatal shooting of its cinematographer **Halyna Hutchins**, the **Alec Baldwin** Western "Rust" is back on the market at the Cannes Film Festival, shopping for international buyers.

Last month, "Rust" resumed shooting in **Montana** to finish the independently financed production that shut down following Hutchins' death in October 2021. **Matthew Hutchins**, her widower, is serving as an executive producer on the film as part of a settlement over a wrongful death lawsuit.

The Cannes film market, which is centered in the Palais des Festivals but has no relation to the official festival lineup, is where "Rust" was first formed as a production in 2000. Goodfellas, a sales company formerly known as Wild Bunch International, is handling sales.

"Rust" still lacks North American distribution.

New Mexico prosecutors dropped criminal charges against Baldwin in April. Involuntary manslaughter charges against Baldwin were abandoned three weeks after a new prosecutor team took over the case, though the same charge currently remains for weapons supervisor **Hannah Gutierrez-Reed**. Assistant director **David Halls** has pleaded no contest to a misdemeanor charge of negligent use of a deadly weapon.

Now, producers are seeking buyers for a film synonymous with Hutchins' on-set death. Director **Joel Souza** was also wounded.

"This is an unprecedented film in regards to the circumstances," producer **Ryan Donnell Smith** told The Hollywood Reporter. "We're trying to keep realistic expectations but shepherd this in the best way we can."

Baldwin, though, has booked another film circulating the Cannes market. The actor is to join the cast of "Kent State," a dramatization of the 1970 killing of four students by the National Guard protesting the Vietnam War on the Ohio college campus. In the film, written and to be directed by **Karen Slade**, Baldwin is to play **Robert I. White**, Kent State's then president.

just never finish it," Brooks told The Associated Press with a grin. "We're going to get very personal, so if you're not planning on getting some mud on you tonight, don't show up. It's going to get down and dirty."

Earlier in the day, Brooks also announced that Caesars Palace had extended his residency with



Dion

Brooks

18 additional dates next year after tickets sold out quickly when they went on sale in late 2022.

"When the 2023 shows went on sale, I felt extremely fortunate and blessed," Brooks said in a morning statement. "To even think I would get to do this for another year makes me happier than I can explain."

Fans who missed out on tickets

for this year will receive early access to the 2024 dates during a presale opportunity before tickets go on sale May 31 to the general public. The 2024 shows are scheduled between April and July.

Built in the early 2000s to house **Celine Dion**'s record-breaking residency and inspired by the architecture of ancient Rome, the

Colosseum has been described by some as the home of the greatest entertainers in the world.

Brooks on Thursday called it an honor to join a long line of artists who have held residencies there, including **Madonna**, **Cher**, **Mariah Carey**, **Elton John** and **Adele**. The theater has about 4,100 seats. (AP)

Features

ARABIC TIMES

MONDAY, MAY 22, 2023

People & Places

Architecture

Decolonization explored

Venice Biennale '23 gives voice to Africa

VENICE, Italy, May 21, (AP): Scottish-Ghanaian architect **Lesley Lokko** is giving a platform to voices that have long been silenced at this year's Venice Architecture Biennale, which opened Saturday, the first ever curated by an African, featuring a preponderance of work by Africans and the African diaspora.

The 18th architectural Biennale, titled "The Laboratory of the Future," explores decolonization and decarbonization, topics about which Africans have much to say, Lokko said, citing the long exploitation of the continent for both human and environmental resources.

"The Black body was Europe's first unit of energy," Lokko told The Associated Press this week. "We have had a relationship to resources since time immemorial.



Lokko

We operate at a place where resources are not stable. They are also often fragile. They're often exploited. Our relationship to them is exploitative."

Lokko tapped global stars like David Adjaye and Theaster Gates among 89 participants in the main show - more than half of them from Africa or the African diaspora. To reduce the Biennale's carbon footprint, Lokko encouraged the participating architects, artists and designers to be as "paper-thin" as possible with their exhibits, resulting in more drawings, film and projections as well as the reuse of materials from last year's contemporary art Biennale.

"This exhibition is a way of showing that this work, this imagination, this creativity, has been around for a very, very long time," Lokko said. "It's just that it hasn't found quite the right space, in the same way."

It is a fair question why an African-centric exhibition has been so long in coming to such a high-profile, international platform like Venice.

Okwui Enwezor, the late Nigerian art critic and museum director, was the first African to head the Venice Biennale contemporary art fair, which alternates years with the architectural show, in 2015. Lokko was the first Biennale curator selected by President Roberto Cicutto, who was appointed in 2020 during the global push for inclusion ignited by the killing of George Floyd in the United States.

Impediments

"This is more for us than for them," Cicutto said, "to see the production, hear the voices we have heard too little, or heard in the way we wanted to."

Impediments in the West to inclusive events with a focus on the global south were evident in the refusal by the Italian embassy in Ghana to approve visas for three of Lokko's collaborators, which Lokko decried this week as "an old and familiar tale."

A refocusing of the North-South relationship is suggested in the main pavilion's facade: a corrugated metal roof cut into deconstructed images of the Venetian winged lion. The material is ubiquitous in Africa and other developing regions, and here offers free shade. The lion, native to Africa and for centuries a symbol of Venice, serves as a reminder of how deeply cultural appropriation runs.

"I don't see any lions around here," Lokko said wryly.

Inside, Adjaye's studio exhibits architectural models created "outside the dominant canon," like the Thabo Mbeki Presidential Library in South Africa that takes inspiration from pre-colonial buildings. Ghanaian artist Ibrahim Mahama explores the colonial exploitation in the installation, "Parliament of Ghosts."

And Olalekan Jeyifous, a Brooklyn-based Nigerian national, creates a sprawling retro-futuristic narrative around the fictional formation of a united African Conservation Effort, something he imagines would have been constructed a decade after African decolonization in an alternative 1972.

His is no utopia. This new global Africa he imagines is flattened, at the expense of local traditions.

"It's never utopia/dystopia. Such binary Western terms, that I'm really interested in operating outside of," he said. "It's not just: 'We've solved all the problems now. Everything's fantastic. It's never that simple.'"

More than in previous editions, the 64 national participants responded to Lokko's themes with pavilions that found a natural echo with the main show and its focus on climate change issues and an expanded, more-inclusive dialogue.

Denmark offered practical solutions for coastal areas to work with nature to create solutions to rising seas, proposing Copenhagen islands that invite the sea in to form canals, not unlike Venice's. The strategy contrasts with Venice's own underwater barriers, which, underscoring the urgency of the issue, had to be raised during the Biennale preview week outside the usual flood season and for the first time ever in May.

Heritage

Decolonization was a natural theme at the Brazilian pavilion, where curators Gabriela de Matos and Paulo Tavares show the architectural heritage of indigenous and African Brazilians, and challenge the "hegemonic" narrative that the capital, Brasilia, was built in the "middle of nowhere."

"Decolonization is really a practice," Tavares said. "It's an open word, like freedom, like democracy."

The US Pavilion looked at ubiquitous plastic, invented and propagated in the United States, and how to cope with its durability, under the title "Everlasting Plastic." In one of the five exhibits, Norman Teague, a Chicago-based African American artist, designer and furniture-maker, used recycled plastics from such everyday items as Tide laundry detergent bottles to create one-off baskets, referencing weaves from Senegal and Ghana.

Teague said he was inspired by Lokko's themes to consider "how I could really think about the lineage between the continent and Chicago."

Ukraine returns to the Biennale with two installations that, in the gentlest possible way, serve as a reminder that war continues to rage in Europe. The pavilion in the Arsenale has been decked out in black-out materials to represent ad-hoc, if futile protective measures ordinary Ukrainians are taking against the threat of Russian bombardment.

In the center of the Giardini, curators Iryna Miroshnykova, Oleksii Petrov and Borys Filonenko have recreated earthen mounds that served as barriers against 10th century invaders. Though long abandoned, overtaken by modern farming and sprawl, they proved effective against Russian tanks last spring.

Despite their serious message, the curators said they hope visitors will come to lounge, and that children will be left to roll down the grassy hills.



This image released by Magnolia Pictures shows Joel Edgerton, (left), and Sigourney Weaver in a scene from 'Master Gardener.' (AP)

Film

Edgerton is a sly and captivating performer

Murky drama in 'Master Gardener'

By Lindsey Bahr

Paul Schrader plants the seeds of an intriguing melodrama in his latest creation "Master Gardener."

Sigourney Weaver is a wealthy dowager with a stately name (Norma Haverhill), a large house and a dog she's named porch dog. She also has a horticulturist (Joel Edgerton) in her employ who she occasionally calls on for extracurricular, indoor activities. There's even a big charity auction coming up that she and the gardening staff are intensely focused on.

But this being a Schrader film (he wrote and directed), it is mostly window dressing. There even is a palpable (and, I'd imagine, intentional) artificiality to the whole endeavor, creating an unease that looms over the most mundane and superficially pleasant interactions. The ceremony never feels quite right. The house, though grand, is also sparse in its décor. It feels like a set - not a place that a real human being lives. We don't even get to see the charity auction in full swing, never fulfilling Edgerton's Narvel Roth (yes, Narvel) tease how much fun it is to "watch grown men in pastel pants outbid each other for a flower."

This story is about a man with a violent past who has been saved by the precision of gardening. Even if it's not a perfect trilogy, it's at least in dialogue with his recent films "The Card Counter" and "First Reformed," both about solitary, tortured men whose professions double as metaphor. Actually, that's true of most Schrader films. And it invites some memorable writing, mostly in voiceover, as Norvel opines and explains that "gardening is a belief in the future."

But Narvel didn't come into the

world as a gardener, or Narvel for that matter - these are identities he adopted later in life. This dutiful, buttoned up green thumb has underneath his practical coveralls a body covered in telling tattoos and a memory full of racially motivated murders. He is reformed now, mostly, but the music gets ominous when the shirt comes off and he stares at his past in the mirror. Like any good gardener knows, he can try to manage nature but that only goes so far.

Premise

The chaos factor comes in the form of Norma Haverhill's great-niece, whose drug-addict mother has died and who she decides should apprentice with Narvel in the garden. Maya (Quintessa Swindell) quickly takes to gardening, clashes with Norma (who called her "mixed blood") and is reluctant to form a relationship and falls for Narvel.

Before he started shooting the film, Schrader said he was thinking about a man torn between two women, one old enough to be his mother, one young enough to be his daughter.

"What would happen in 'Taxi Driver' if Cybill Shepherd and Jodie Foster went out to get coffee?" he asked.

That premise, while possibly interesting, is really only given one scene that's not quite as revelatory as Schrader suggested. And it certainly does nothing with the idea of Narvel being torn - once the young one enters the picture, beyond one rejection out of decorum, you know exactly where Narvel has fixated his gaze. Does this fit in with the gardening metaphors? Is Maya's mixed race supposed to be more meaningful

because of his past? Are we really supposed to buy their connection or their ability to save one another? It's a little murky.

That kind of goes for the whole movie, which moves at a glacial pace even when it veers into thriller and revenge territory. But Edgerton is a sly and captivating performer. Weaver makes a meal out of every backhanded remark (and outfit), and Swindell, who is nonbinary, is a luminous presence.

Like a haphazardly planted garden, it's lot of ideas that don't seem to create anything terribly coherent but it has its individual pleasures nonetheless.

"Master Gardener," a Magnolia Pictures released in US theaters Friday, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association for "brief sexual content, nudity and language." Running time: 107 minutes. Two and a half stars out of four.

Also:

LOS ANGELES: Cristian Mungiu's "R.M.N." is one of the cinematic highlights of the first half of 2023. The latest from the acclaimed Romanian filmmaker ("4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days") is a powerful microcosm of a migrant drama that has played out all around the world. A mountainous Transylvania village is increasingly torn apart by violent nationalist impulses that course through the town's civic life in response to a handful of foreign workers. Mungiu, the pioneering filmmaker of the Romanian New Wave, crafts an unflinching societal portrait both gripping and grim. Currently playing in theaters, "R.M.N." is available on-demand beginning Friday. (AP)



Salma Hayek poses for photographers upon arrival at the premiere of the film 'Killers of the Flower Moon' at the 76th international film festival, Cannes, southern France, Saturday, May 20. (AP)



Bailey



Amis

Variety

NEW YORK: British novelist **Martin Amis**, who brought a rock 'n' roll sensibility to his stories and lifestyle, has died. He was 73.

His death on Friday at his home in Florida, from cancer of the esophagus, was confirmed by his agent, Andrew Wylie, on Saturday.

Amis was the son of another British writer, **Kingsley Amis**. Martin Amis was a leading voice among a generation of writers that included his good friend, the late **Christopher Hitchens**, **Ian McEwan** and **Salman Rushdie**.

Among his best-known works were "Money," a satire about consumerism in London, "The Information" and "London Fields," along with his 2000 memoir, "Experience."

Jonathan Glazer's adaption of Amis' 2014 novel "The Zone of Interest" premiered Saturday at the Cannes Film Festival. The film, about a Nazi commandant who lives next to Auschwitz with his family, drew some of the best reviews of the festival.

The Holocaust was the topic of Amis' novel "Time's Arrow" and **Josef Stalin's** reign in Russia in "House of Meetings," examples of how his writing explored the dark soul.

"Violence is what I hate most, is what baffles me and disgusts me most," Amis told The Associated Press in 2012. "Writing comes from silent anxiety, the stuff you don't know you're really brooding about and when you start to write you realize you have been brooding about it, but not consciously. It's terribly mysterious."

Amis was a celebrity in his own right, his life often chronicled by **London** tabloids since his 1973 debut, "The Rachel Papers." (AP)

NEW YORK: Songwriter and poet **Pete Brown**, who co-wrote "Sunshine of Your Love" and "White Room" for the short-lived rock supergroup Cream in the 1960s, has died. He was 82.

The **London**-based Brown died of cancer late Friday, according to a post on his Facebook page.

A poet who worked in the same circles as **Allen Ginsberg** and **Spike Milligan**.

Brown was asked by drummer **Ginger Baker** to help write songs for Cream, a band he had formed with guitarist **Eric Clapton** and bass player **Jack Bruce**.

He also helped write the group's song,



Animation director Benoit Feroumont, (from left), music editor Yuko Harami, director Pablo Berger, and Artistic Director Jose Luis Agreda pose for photographers at the photo call for the film 'Robot Dreams' at the 76th international film festival, Cannes, southern France, Sunday, May 21. (AP)

"I Feel Fine," and formed a songwriting partnership with Bruce after Cream broke up that lasted more than four decades. (AP)

NASHVILLE, Tenn: The city of Nashville is naming a street after Grand Ole Opry pioneer **DeFord Bailey**, the "Harmonica Wizard" whose popularity and contributions to country music and blues are still being recognized decades later.

On Saturday, DeFord Bailey Avenue will be officially dedicated in the Edgehill neighborhood of Nashville where Bailey lived most of his life until his death in 1982. Two of Bailey's grandsons, **Carlos DeFord Bailey** and **Herchel Bailey** will perform at a concert after the dedication.

Bailey overcame huge obstacles on his way to stardom. He contracted polio as a child, which led him to learn the harmonica while he was bedridden. He came from a family of Black musicians and his music created a link between the rural "Black hillbilly music" he learned living in Smith County, Tennessee, and the contemporary country music that was being formed on the Opry stage.

"He traveled throughout the South with **Roy Acuff**, **Bill Monroe** and **Minnie Pearl** and that gang there, and he was the star of the show," said his grandson **Carlos DeFord Bailey**. (AP)

The Conversation

Thriving in adversity

Gorillas reveal clues to defeat misfortune

By Stacy Rosenbaum, University of Michigan and Robin Morrison, University of Exeter

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



In 1974, an infant mountain gorilla was born in Volcanoes National Park in Rwanda. Researchers named him Titus. As is typical for young gorillas in the wild, Titus spent the first years of his life surrounded by his mother, father and siblings, as well as more distant relatives and unrelated gorillas that made up his social group.

In 1978, however, tragedy struck. Poachers killed Titus' father and brother. In the chaos that followed, his younger sister was killed by another gorilla, and his mother and older sister fled the group. Juvenile Titus, who was at a developmental stage similar to that of an 8- or 9-year-old human, experienced more tragedy in his first four years of life than many animals do in a lifetime.

In people, a rough start in life is often associated with significant problems later on. Early life adversity can take a wide variety of forms, including malnutrition, war and abuse.

People who experience these kinds of traumas, assuming they survive the initial event, are more likely to suffer health problems and social dysfunction in adulthood and to have shorter life spans. Often, these outcomes trace back at least in part to what public health researchers call health risk behaviors - things like smoking, poor eating habits and a sedentary lifestyle.

But researchers have documented the same kinds of problems in adulthood in nonhuman animals that experienced early life adversity. For example, female baboons who have the hardest childhoods have life spans that are on average only half as long as their peers that have the easiest. Activities like smoking and unhealthy food choices can't be the whole story, then, since animals don't engage in typical human health risk behaviors.

Unhealthy

Given the connection between adverse events while young and poor health later in life, one might expect that Titus' unlucky early years would predict a short, unhealthy adulthood for him. However, there are interesting hints that things might work differently in mountain gorillas, which are one of humans' closest living relatives.

As scientists who have spent many years studying wild gorillas, we have observed a wide variety of early life experiences and an equally wide variety of adult health outcomes in these great apes. Unlike other primates, mountain gorillas don't appear to suffer any long-term negative effects of losing their mothers at an early age, provided that they reach the age at which they are old enough to have finished nursing.

Losing your mother is only one of many bad things that can happen to a young gorilla, though. We wanted to investigate whether a pattern of resilience was more generalized. If so, could we gather any insight into the fundamental question of how early life experiences can have long-lasting effects?

To do this, we needed exceptionally detailed long-term data on wild gorillas across their lifetimes. This is no mean feat, given gorillas' long life spans. Primatologists know that males can survive into their late 30s and females into their mid-40s.

The best data in the world to conduct such a study comes from the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund, which has been following individual mountain gorillas in Rwanda almost daily for 55 years. We conducted doctoral and postdoctoral research with the Fossey Fund and have collaborated with other scientists there for more than 20 years.

From their database, which stretches back to 1967, we extracted information on more than 250 gorillas tracked from the day they were born to the day they died or left the study area.

We used this data to identify six adverse events that gorillas younger than age 6 can endure: maternal loss, paternal loss, extreme violence, social isolation, social instability and sibling competition. These experiences are the gorilla equivalent of some kinds of adversity that are linked with long-term negative effects in humans and other animals.

Many young gorillas didn't survive these challenges. This is a strong indication that these experiences were indeed adverse from the perspective of a gorilla.

We were surprised to discover, however, that most of the repercussions of these hardships were confined to early life: animals that survived past the age of 6 did not have the shorter life spans commonly associated with early life adversity in other species.

In fact, gorillas that experienced three or more forms of adversity actually had better survival outcomes, with a 70% reduction in the risk of death across their adult years. Part of this hardness, especially for males, may be due to a phenomenon called viability selection: Only the strongest animals survive early adversity, and thus they are also the animals with the longest life spans.

Resilient

While viability selection may be part of the story, the patterns in our data strongly suggest that as a species, mountain gorillas are also remarkably resilient to early adversity.

Although our findings corroborate previous research on maternal loss in gorillas, they contrast with other studies on early adversity in humans and other long-lived mammals. Our study indicates that the negative later-life consequences of early adversity are not universal.

The absence of this connection in one of our closest relatives suggests there might be protective mechanisms that help build resiliency to early-life knocks. Gorillas may provide valuable clues to understand how early life experiences have such far-reaching effects and how people can potentially overcome them.

While there is still much left to explore, we suspect that gorillas' food-rich habitat and cohesive social groups could underpin their resiliency. When young gorillas lose their mothers, other social group members fill in the companionship hole she leaves behind. Something similar may happen for other types of early adversity as well. A supportive social network combined with plentiful food may help a young gorilla push through challenges.

This possibility underscores the importance of ensuring that human children who experience early adversity are supported in multiple ways: socially, but also economically, especially since early adversity is particularly prevalent among children living in poverty - itself a form of adversity.

And what became of Titus? Despite his difficult start in life, Titus went on to lead his group for two decades, siring at least 13 offspring and surviving to his 35th birthday, making him one of the most successful gorillas the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund has ever studied.

Though Titus' story is only a single anecdote, it turns out that his resiliency is not so unusual for a member of his species. (AP)



Fossey



Alexandra Fountaine, a medical student at Ohio University, poses for a picture in front of the Ohio Statehouse in Columbus, Ohio, Thursday, May 11. Fountaine testified before a committee earlier this month advocating for a bill that would ban pelvic exams on unconscious patients without their express consent. (AP)



A tranquilized black bear falls from a tree outside of a home on May 14, in Traverse City, Mich. Representatives from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, DNR Conservation Officers, Traverse City Police, Traverse City Fire and Traverse City Light and Power were able to remove the bear after several tranquilizer darts with plans to relocate it. (AP)



Brosse



Ebrard

Discovery

US returns sculpture: Mexico announced Friday that a huge 2,500-year-old Olmec stone sculpture has been returned from the United States.

The almost six-foot-tall (two-meter) "Monster of the Earth" sculpture appears to represent the gaping maw of a monster that is big enough to swallow people, and may represent a symbolic entrance to the underworld.

Experts say the sculpture is important because of the insights it provides on the cosmological vision of the Olmecs, considered a founding culture of Meso-America.

Foreign Relations Secretary **Marcelo Ebrard** said the sculpture was handed over at the Mexican consulate in Denver, Colorado, on Friday.

Experts believe the sculpture was taken clandestinely in the 1960s from Chalcatzingo, a lesser-known ruin site south of Mexico City.

"It was like an open wound, not having this artifact," Ebrard said. (AP)



Ban woodlands smoking: French lawmakers have voted to ban smoking in all forests and woods during the fire season, part of a series of proposed measures to tackle growing destruction and dangers from climate change-related blazes.

National Assembly lawmakers voted 197-0 in a first reading on Wednesday night of a proposed law to better prevent and tackle forest fires. The draft has already passed through the Senate.

An amendment also adopted by lawmakers would ban smoking in or near all forests and woods when authorities deem the fire-risk to be elevated. The fire season that was commonly in summer is now extending to other months in drought-hit areas of southern France and other parts of Europe where climate warming poses the greatest risks.

France's firefighters have already battled woodland-destroying blazes that started unusually early this year. Droughts that hit France last year have been compounded by shortages of rain this past winter, leaving tinder-dry woodlands at even greater risk.

The smoking ban will build on an existing forest law that already bans the lighting of fires within 200 meters of wooded areas. It aims to reduce the risk of fires started by discarded cigarettes - a frequent cause of blazes, especially when woodlands are tinder-dry. The government says human activity is by far the most frequent trigger of forest fires in France, responsi-

Health

New laws eyed for medical students in US

'Consent required for pelvic exams'

COLUMBUS, Ohio, May 21. (AP): A new batch of states are looking to legislate the level of informed consent when it comes to medical students performing pelvic exams for educational purposes on unconscious patients.

At least 20 states already have consent laws for this practice. Montana's governor signed a bill in April, Missouri has legislation that needs the governor's signature to become law and Ohio lawmakers are also considering it.

Colorado lawmakers want to go a step further, with Democratic Gov. Jared Polis expected to sign a bill that one bioethicist calls the broadest she's seen - and says may go too far - due to a requirement of naming the involved students ahead of time and introducing them to the patients.

Proponents "see the Colorado bill as a model we hope other states will pass," said Elizabeth Newman, public policy director at the Colorado Coalition Against Sexual Assault, which testified in favor of the legislation.

It's hard to track and quantify how often medical students are asked to do intimate exams - like pelvic, rectal or prostate exams - on patients who are anesthetized. Opponents of the various bills and laws, who are often doctors, argue it's government overreach which could compromise the established trust between patient and provider and should instead be left to recommendations from medical associations.

Typically, a patient signs a number of forms giving broad consent for a range of procedures that might be medically necessary while someone is anesthetized. That can also include consent for educational purposes.

"Most folks just sign them and assume they are going to get the care that they need," said Colorado Democratic Rep. Jenny Willford, who co-sponsored the bill.

But patients often don't know they were examined while unconscious, and if they do, they may fear coming forward, according to Newman. Plus, she said, medical students who could report it are often afraid to raise concerns with superiors who have power over their careers.

Colorado's bill would require an informed consent process, as well as ensure that the pelvic, breast, rectal or prostate exam is within the scope of the treatment. While this would be required even without students, practitioners are excepted from the consent process in emergency situations.

The bill goes beyond others across the US to include whistleblower protections for medical students who want to speak out, as well as liability for doctors and hospitals if they don't follow the consent rules. It's also unique in the requirement that the involved students would be named on the consent form, and be introduced to the patient prior to the procedure.

Limit

Kayte Spector-Bagdady, a clinical ethicist, said Colorado's proposal is the broadest she's seen and worries that listing the names of involved students could limit learning opportunities. Getting consent is typically done days or weeks ahead of time, but students may be unavailable on the day of the procedure - and Colorado's proposed law wouldn't allow others to step in and learn, she said.

"We want people to generally know how to take care of women, and (these exams are) a critical component of that," said Spector-Bagdady, who co-authored a 2019 recommendation by the Association of Professors of Gynecology and Obstetrics for such exams. "It's a balance of respecting the autonomy of our patients and ensuring that the next time they go see a doctor, that doctor knows how to care for them properly."

That association's 2019 recommendation, endorsed by major obstetric and gynecological professional associations, says students should only perform pelvic exams that are "explicitly consented to" and "related to the planned procedure."

Newman, however, said the mandates are important not only for patients to give complete informed consent, but for medical students to know that the client has given their consent and to learn the rules governing the consent process.

Alexandra Fountaine, a medi-

cal student at Ohio University, was asked to do a pelvic exam on an unconscious female patient by the doctor overseeing Fountaine's training on her first day of rotation at an OhioHealth hospital in Columbus.

She said she didn't know whether the woman, who was anesthetized for an abdominal surgery that Fountaine said didn't require a pelvic exam, had given consent for it.

Fountaine also did not ask the physician whether the woman had consented, telling The Associated Press that students are taught "to be seen and not heard." Fountaine said the physician assured her that doing a pelvic exam was fine and "for her education."

"I initially froze," said Fountaine, who didn't end up doing the exam but told the physician she did when her back was turned. The experience led Fountaine to testify in front of an Ohio House committee; her school says it supports students "on their professional journey."

OhioHealth, which has several teaching hospitals, told the AP in a statement that its policies "regarding patient consent are consistent with current law" and that attending physicians oversee patient exams, which are "a component of the medical education process."

There can be an intense disconnect between patient understanding and provider understanding on consent and procedures, said Phoebe Friesen, a bioethicist at McGill University in Montreal whose research helped bring the practice back into focus following the #MeToo movement.

Providers view these unconscious exams as strictly medical or educational; the vagina and other intimate areas are "just another body part," so specific informed consent isn't necessary.

But for patients, Friesen believes it's absolutely necessary. Such exams can leave a patient feeling robbed of their bodily autonomy, or even retraumatize people who have survived sexual assault.

"The solution is so simple," Friesen said. "Just ask people whether they're comfortable with this particular practice."

ble for 90% of blazes.

Lawmaker **Anthony Brosse**, who proposed the smoking amendment, said it would make the legislation clearer for French citizens.

Senators and National Assembly lawmakers will work next on a final draft of the proposed law before its expected

adoption.

Forest fires have long regularly afflicted France, one of the most wooded countries in Europe. But they generally used to start later in the year. Major wildfires in Europe are now starting earlier, becoming more frequent and harder to stop, and doing more damage. Scientists

say they'll likely get worse as climate change intensifies. The Mediterranean region is warming faster than the global average. (AP)



Cases for killing eagles decline: Criminal cases brought by US wildlife officials for killing or harming protected bald and golden eagles dropped sharply in recent years, even as officials ramped up issuing permits that will allow wind energy companies to kill thousands of eagles without legal consequence.

The falloff in enforcement of eagle protection laws - which accelerated in the Trump administration and has continued under President Joe Biden - was revealed in US Fish and Wildlife Service data obtained by The Associated Press.

It comes amid growing concern that a proliferation of wind turbines to feed a growing demand for renewable energy is jeopardizing golden eagle populations already believed to be declining in some areas.

Dozens of permits approved or pending would allow roughly 6,000 eagles to be killed in coming decades, government documents show. Most permits are for wind farms, and more than half the killed birds would be golden eagles.

The AP's findings - that significant numbers of eagles continue to die while fewer criminal cases are pursued - underscore a dilemma facing the Biden administration as it tries to confront climate change. (AP)



Environmental Development Director Misti Sporer of Duke Energy is seen on an observation tower at the company's Top of the World wind farm, on April 24, 2023, in Rollings Hills, Wyo. Sporer said the company has reduced, but not eliminated, collisions of eagles into turbines by installing a computerized camera network that detects incoming birds. (AP)

Orioles become 2nd team to reach 30 wins

Rays down Brewers

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla., May 21, (AP): Harold Ramírez, Yandy Díaz and Christian Bethancourt homered, and the major league-leading Tampa Bay Rays beat the Milwaukee Brewers 8-4 on Saturday.

Zach Eflin (6-1) allowed three runs, four hits and struck out eight for the Rays (34-14), who improved to 21-3 at home this season. Despite the great start, the Rays hold just a 3 1/2 game lead over Baltimore (30-16) in the tough AL East.

Jason Adam entered with two on in the ninth and retired both his batters to get his sixth save.

The Brewers (24-21), tied with Pittsburgh for first in the NL Central, got homers from Owen Miller and Brian Anderson. Milwaukee has lost four of five.

Orioles 6, Blue Jays 5, 10 innings

In Toronto, Ryan Mountcastle scored the go-ahead run in the 10th inning when third baseman Matt Chapman's throw hit him in the back on Austin Hays' grounder, and Baltimore became the second team to reach 30 wins.

Ryan O'Hearn tied his career high with four RBIs, including a three-run homer in the eighth off Jordan Romano that tied the score 5-5. Cedric Mullins hit a solo homer as the Orioles (30-16) won for the fourth time in five games.

George Springer hit a two-run home run and Danny Jansen hit a solo homer for the Blue Jays. Toronto has lost three straight and five of six since sweeping a three-game series against Atlanta last weekend.

Félix Bautista (3-1) pitched the last two innings and struck out his final four batters.

Rangers 11, Rockies 5

In Arlington, Corey Seager had a two-run home run among three hits and Jon Gray won in his first start against his former club as Texas (28-17) is one win short of the franchise's best record through the first 45 games.

BASEBALL

The Rangers, averaging a major league-best 6.20 runs per game, knocked out Kyle Freeland (4-5) after two innings - scoring four runs in each. Freeland allowed six earned runs and nine hits with no strikeouts.

Gray (4-1), who spent his first seven big-league seasons with Colorado before signing with Texas in December 2021, allowed one run and five hits in five innings, throwing 93 pitches. He struck out six and walked two.

Yankees 7, Reds 4, 10 innings

In Cincinnati, Aaron Judge had a go-ahead single in the 10th inning for his fourth hit of the game, and New York beat Cincinnati after cutting outfielder Aaron Hicks.

New York overcame a 4-1 deficit in a three-run fifth inning against Luke Weaver on Isiah Kiner-Falefa's homer, Judge's RBI double off the left-field wall and Anthony Rizzo's run-scoring single.

Greg Allen opened the 10th as the automatic runner on second. He advanced on Gleyber Torres' flyout and scored on Judge's single off Ian Gibaut (3-1). Anthony Rizzo followed with a two-run homer.

Clay Holmes (2-2) allowed a walk in a scoreless ninth, and Ryan Weber pitched the 10th to give the Yankees seven pitchers with saves, the most of any big league team.

Red Sox 4, Padres 2

In San Diego, Emmanuel Valdez hit a three-run homer and Chris Sale allowed just three hits - two of them home runs - in seven innings and Boston sent San Diego to its fourth straight loss and 11th in 13 games.

The 34-year-old Sale (4-2) had his fourth strong start and helped the Red Sox win their fourth straight game. The lefty allowed homers to Juan Soto and Fernando Tatis Jr. but otherwise shut down a superstar-studded offense with baseball's third-highest payroll that continues to look lost at the plate.

Sale got all the backing he needed when Valdez drove a pitch from Joe Musgrove (1-2) several rows into the right field seats with one out in the second,



Arizona Diamondbacks' Ketel Marte (4) hits a solo home run off Pittsburgh Pirates starting pitcher Mitch Keller during the first inning of a baseball game in Pittsburgh. (AP)

his third. Sale allowed Soto's shot to right-center leading off the second, his eighth, and Tatis' 440-foot shot into the second deck in left leading off the sixth, his seventh.

Kenley Jansen, who blew each of his previous two save opportunities, walked two in the ninth before closing it out for his 10th save and first since he earned his 400th career save on May 10.

Astros 3, Athletics 2

In Houston, Yordan Alvarez hit a tiebreaking home run in the eighth inning to propel Houston over Oakland.

The game was tied at 2-2 with no outs in the eighth when Alvarez sent a pitch from Richard Lovelady (0-2) into the seats in right field for his team-leading 10th homer this season.

Jose Altuve doubled in a two-run first inning for Houston for his first hit of the year after going 0 for 4 in his season debut Friday night. Altuve missed the first 43 games after fracturing his right thumb in the World Baseball Classic.

Hector Neris (3-1) allowed one hit in a scoreless eighth for the win. Ryan Pressly pitched a scoreless ninth for his eighth save.

Diamondbacks 4, Pirates 3

In Pittsburgh, Pavin Smith hit a go-ahead, two-run homer in the seventh inning to lift Arizona over Pittsburgh.

Smith's third homer of the season came off Robert Stephenson (0-2) and helped the Diamondbacks overcome a 3-2 deficit after Pirates ace Mitch Keller was pulled following six strong innings.

Ketel Marte also homered for Arizona, which won for the sixth time in its last eight games.

Ke'Bryan Hayes accounted for all the Pirates' scoring with a bases-loaded triple that brought home two runs. He has back-to-back games with at least three RBIs for the first time in his career.

The home run made a winner of Kyle Nelson (4-1),

who retired three batters after relieving rookie starter Brandon Pfaadt. Miguel Castro worked around a lead-off walk to Rodolfo Castro in the ninth for his fourth save.

Marlins 1, Giants 0

In San Francisco, Braxton Garrett and three relievers combined on a three-hitter, and Miami scored an unearned run in the eighth inning on a Jon Berti single to beat San Francisco.

Miami scored in the eighth against Tyler Rogers (0-4). Garrett Hampson reached on third baseman J.D. Davis's fielding error, Xavier Edwards sacrificed and Berti followed with a single past first baseman Lamonte Wade Jr.

Garrett allowed one hit in 6 1/3 innings, a single to Thairo Estrada on his first pitch of the day. He walked one and struck out eight for the second straight start,



Houston Astros third baseman Alex Bregman throws to first base for the out after fielding a ground ball by Oakland Athletics' JJ Bleday during the second inning of a baseball game in Houston. (AP)

matching his season high.

J.T. Chargois (1-0) got two outs for the win.

Phillies 12, Cubs 3

In Philadelphia, Aaron Nola (4-3) struck out 10 in seven sharp innings, Kyle Schwarber hit a grand slam and Philadelphia snapped a five-game losing streak.

Kody Clemens also went deep in Philadelphia's six-run first inning, and Bryce Harper singled, doubled, walked twice and had an RBI for the defending NL champs. The Phillies had scored a total of 11 runs in losing seven in a row to the Cubs before eclipsing that just in Saturday's outburst. Dansby Swanson and Christopher Morel homered for Chicago.

Singles by Bryson Stott and Nick Castellanos and Harper's walk loaded the bases with no outs against Jameson Taillon (0-3). Taillon threw 10 balls in his first 15 pitches. After an out, Schwarber launched his fifth career grand slam 435 feet into the second deck in right field.

Nationals 5, Tigers 2

In Washington, Patrick Corbin won consecutive starts for the first time since last summer and Lane Thomas had a go-ahead, two-run single in the fifth inning that stopped Washington's four-game losing streak.

Corbin (3-5) allowed two runs and six hits in six innings against the Tigers, the only big league team he had never faced. He struck out three, reaching 1,500 in his career when he fanned Jonathan Scoop in the sixth.

Carl Edwards Jr., Hunter Harvey and Kyle Finnegan finished with hitless relief, with Finnegan getting his ninth save in 11 chances to finish a game that took 2 hours, 3 minutes.

Jeimer Candelario homered and hit a run-scoring double for Washington, which fell behind when Spencer Torkelson hit a two-run homer in the first.

White Sox 5, Royals 1

In Chicago, Jake Burger hit a three-run double in the sixth inning, helping Lucas Giolito and Chicago beat Kansas City.

Yoán Moncada had two RBIs as Chicago won for the fourth time in five games. Andrew Benintendi and Luis Robert Jr. each scored two runs.

Giolito (3-3) permitted one run and six hits in six innings. The right-hander has a 2.66 ERA his last eight starts. Salvador Pérez hit his 10th homer in Kansas City's sixth loss in eight games. Pérez finished with three hits.

Royals right-hander Jordan Lyles (0-8) was charged with five runs, four earned, and four hits in five-plus innings.

Cardinals 6, Dodgers 5

In St. Louis, Nolan Gorman hit a tiebreaking, three-run homer (1-1) off Victor González in the eighth following an intentional walk to Paul Goldschmidt.

Giovany Gallegos relieved Ryan Helsley (2-2) in a two-run ninth and threw a called third strike past Mookie Betts to strand the potential tying run on second and get his fourth save.

St. Louis (20-27) has won 10 of 13 following an eight-game losing streak and moved into fourth place in the NL Central, percentage points ahead of Cincinnati (19-26). J.D. Martinez hit a tying, three-run homer for the Dodgers.

Mariners 7, Braves 3

In Atlanta, Logan Gilbert (2-2) gave up Matt Olson's two-run homer in the first inning, then retired 15 consecutive hitters.

Eugenio Suárez hit a two-run homer for the Mariners and J.P. Crawford had two hits, including a run-scoring single in a three-run fourth. Taylor Trammell hit an RBI single in the fourth against Michael Tonkin (3-2).

Twins 6, Angels 2

In Anaheim, Joey Gallo homered for the fourth time in seven games, his 11th this season.

Shohei Ohtani hit his 11th home run of the season for the Angels, a night before he takes a 5-1 record to the mound for the rubber game.

Louie Varland (2-0) gave up two runs and six hits in five innings.

MLB Results/Standings

WASHINGTON, May 21, (AP): Results and standings from the MLB games on Saturday.

Chicago W. Sox	5	Kansas City	1	Seattle	7	Atlanta	3
Washington	5	Detroit	2	Boston	4	San Diego	2
Baltimore	6	Toronto 10 in	5	Minnesota	6	LA Angels	2
Houston	3	Oakland	2	Miami	1	San Francisco	0
Tampa Bay	8	Milwaukee	4	Arizona	4	Pittsburgh	3
Texas	11	Colorado	5	Philadelphia	12	Chicago Cubs	3
NY Yankees	7	Cincinnati 10 in	4	St. Louis	19	LA Dodgers	5

American League				National League				
East Division				East Division				
W	L	Pct	GB	W	L	Pct	GB	
Tampa Bay	34	13	.723	—	Atlanta	28	17	.622
Baltimore	30	16	.652	3-1/2	Miami	24	22	.522
New York	28	20	.583	6-1/2	New York	23	23	.500
Boston	26	20	.565	7-1/2	Philadelphia	21	24	.467
Toronto	25	21	.543	8-1/2	Washington	19	27	.413
Central Division				Central Division				
W	L	Pct	GB	W	L	Pct	GB	
Minnesota	25	21	.543	—	Milwaukee	24	21	.533
Detroit	20	23	.465	3-1/2	Pittsburgh	24	21	.533
Cleveland	20	24	.455	4	Chicago	20	25	.444
Chicago	18	29	.383	7-1/2	St. Louis	20	27	.426
Kansas City	14	33	.298	11-1/2	Cincinnati	19	26	.422
West Division				West Division				
W	L	Pct	GB	W	L	Pct	GB	
Texas	28	17	.622	—	Los Angeles	29	18	.617
Houston	26	19	.578	2	Arizona	26	20	.565
Los Angeles	24	23	.511	5	San Francisco	21	24	.467
Seattle	22	23	.489	6	San Diego	20	26	.435
Oakland	10	37	.213	19	Colorado	19	27	.413

Change Name

I, VALID holder of passport no L6660508 do hereby change my name to WALEED SHEIKH for all purposes. I will henceforth be known in the name WALEED SHEIKH and I also undertake to carry out this name change in all my documents

Cameron hands Taylor first loss

DUBLIN, May 21, (AP): Katie Taylor got her homecoming. Chantelle Cameron got the win.

The Irish champion has helped elevate women's boxing to new heights but couldn't solve Cameron in a showdown of undisputed and undefeated champions on Saturday.

By a majority decision, Taylor suffered the first loss of her professional career.

Taylor, whose lightweight belts weren't on the line, fell to a 22-1 win-loss record after the judges scored the Dublin fight 96-94, 96-94 and 95-95 in front of a stunned capacity crowd at 3Arena.

"It's not how I wanted my homecoming to go," Taylor said in the ring. "It was a tough battle, a grueling 10 rounds like I expected it to be. I just came up short tonight."

Barca suffer rare loss to Sociedad

Camp Nou clamors for return of all-time favorite player Leo

BARCELONA, Spain, May 21, (AP): With the Spanish league title in hand, Barcelona's fans quickly moved on to what they want next: The return of their all-time favorite player.

"Messi! Messi! Messi!" resounded at Camp Nou - in minute 10 for Lionel Messi's old No. 10 shirt - during Saturday's game against Real Sociedad that ended with a rare 2-1 loss to the Basque visitor.

The loss did little to dampen the festive atmosphere after the final whistle when Sergio Busquets as team captain received the

also is playing on a lucrative contract that media reports put at a world-record \$200 million a year. Barcelona president Joan Laporta has contributed to the rising expectations of the club's supporters, even while insisting that the debt-ridden Spanish club cannot compete when it comes to wages.

Instead, he hopes the legacy of 35 titles, including four European Cups, Messi won with Barcelona will do the trick.



Barcelona's Raphinha leaps over Real Sociedad's goalkeeper Alex Remiro during a Spanish La Liga soccer match between Barcelona and Real Sociedad at Camp Nou stadium in Barcelona, Spain. (AP)

SOCCER

Spanish league trophy from federation president Luis Rubiales and presented it to the crowd with his teammates. It was Busquets' 32nd and last title before the midfielder leaves Barcelona this summer.

Last week, Barcelona clinched its first major title since Messi had to leave due to the club's wretched financial situation two years ago and join Paris Saint-Germain.

But with Messi set to leave Paris this summer, Barcelona's fans are hoping - perhaps naively considering the likely blockbuster offer he could be dangled from Saudi Arabia - that the superstar will want to come back to the club he joined when he was 13.

Messi has a commercial contract with Saudi Arabia to promote tourism. He made a recent trip to the energy-rich kingdom where his former Liga rival Cristiano Ron-

Another horse euthanized

Baffert back from ban, wins Preakness with National Treasure

BALTIMORE, May 21, (AP) — Bob Baffert choked back tears and his voice cracked while he tried to juggle the conflicting feelings of seeing one of his horses win the Preakness Stakes hours after another was euthanized on the same track.

"This business is twists and turns, ups and downs," the Hall of Fame trainer said. "To win this - losing that horse today really hurt. ... It's been a very emotional day."

National Treasure won the Preakness on Saturday in Baffert's return to the Triple Crown trail following a suspension, ending Kentucky Derby champion Mage's Triple Crown bid in the race Baffert has now captured more than any other trainer. But the joy was tempered by the agony of another 3-year-old colt, Havnameltdown, injuring his left front leg in an undercard race and being put down.

"When he got hurt, it's just the most sickening feeling a trainer can have," Baffert said. "It put a damper on the afternoon."

It also put the sport squarely back in a familiar spot, two weeks after seven horses died in a 10-day span at Churchill Downs leading up to the Derby.

National Treasure did not run in the Derby at Churchill Downs, where Baffert has been barred the past two years because of a suspension stemming from 2021 Kentucky Derby winner Medina Spirit's failed drug test that led to a disqualification in that race. Medina Spirit was Baffert's most recent Preakness horse, finishing third.

HORSE RACING

The 5-2 second choice Saturday, National Treasure came through, delivering Baffert a record-breaking eighth victory in the Preakness and his 17th in a Triple Crown race, also the most among trainers. National Treasure held off hard-charging Blazing Sevens down the stretch to win the 1 3/16-mile, \$1.65 million race by a head in 1:55.12.

"He fought the whole way," said jockey John Velazquez, who won the Preakness for the first time in his 13th try. "He put up a really good fight. ... That's what champions do."

National Treasure paid \$7.80 to win, \$4 to place and \$2.60 to show. Blazing Sevens paid \$5 to place and \$2.80 to show.

Mage finished third after going off as the 7-5 favorite, paying \$2.40 to show. Despite the smallest Preakness field since 1986, horses at the lead went much slower than in the Derby, which did not benefit Mage's running



La Rochelle players celebrate with the trophy after the Champions Cup rugby union final match between Leinster and La Rochelle at the Aviva Stadium in Dublin, Ireland. (AP)

La Rochelle edge Leinster to win European club rugby crown

La Rochelle pulled off one of the great European Champions Cup comebacks when it overhauled home-based Leinster and a 17-0 deficit to win their final 27-26 at Lansdowne Road.

The French side didn't lead until eight minutes to go, after Antoine Hastoy coolly converted Georges-Henri Colombe's try off a close-in ruck.

style of closing late and passing tired rivals down the stretch.

"Slow, very slow," Mage's trainer, Gustavo Delgado Sr., said.

Mage's defeat means there will not be a Triple Crown winner for a fifth consecutive year since Baffert's Jus-

Yellow cards reduced both sides to 14 men. La Rochelle was desperately defending its tryline in the 79th minute when Leinster's Michael Ala'alatoa charged into the head of Colombe in a ruck and was sent off while Colombe was carried off.

The French visitors cleared their line and moments later were celebrating their European crown in front of a stunned Leinster and its supporters.

La Rochelle also overcame Leinster from behind in the final last year for their first title, but not from as deep a hole as on Saturday.

"They said we couldn't do it, come to Leinster and win, but we did," La Rochelle lock Will Skelton said. "Leinster are a world-class team and we had to dig deep. At 17-0 down, we still had the belief." Leinster, including 14 Ireland

Grand Slam winners, was targeting a record-tying fifth European title and made a brilliant start. Hooker Dan Sheehan crossed twice - the first try just 40 seconds in - and wing Jimmy O'Brien touched down in a spellbinding first 12 minutes.

La Rochelle hit back when Jonathan Danty used his power to bump off Garry Ringrose to score. After half an hour, Leinster led 23-7 but

crucially lost captain James Ryan to a head injury.

Just before halftime, an improving La Rochelle sent center Uliupano Seuteni over. To trail by only nine points at halftime heartened the visitors.

La Rochelle coach Ronan O'Gara emphasized to his team at halftime how Leinster had lost its previous two finals. (AP)



John Velazquez (right), atop National Treasure and Irad Ortiz Jr., atop Blazing Sevens, compete down the final stretch during the 148th running of the Preakness Stakes horse race at Pimlico Race Course in Baltimore. (AP)



Brandon McNulty, (left), sprints to win the 15th stage of the Giro D'Italia, tour of Italy cycling race from Seregno to Bergamo, Italy. (AP)

Armiraill stays in Giro lead ahead

McNulty claims first Grand Tour stage win

BERGAMO, Italy, May 21, (AP) — American cyclist Brandon McNulty won the 15th stage of the Giro d'Italia on Sunday for his first victory in a Grand Tour while Bruno Armiraill kept hold of the leader's pink jersey as the race prepares for a dramatic and decisive final week.

McNulty, who rides for UAE Team Emirates, edged out Ben Healy and Marco Frigo at the end of the tough 195-kilometer (121-mile) route from Seregno to Bergamo.

All three had been part of a large breakaway that went early in the stage. Healy attacked on the fourth and final classified climb and McNulty caught up to him on the descent, followed by Frigo with 10 kilometers remaining.

Frigo was dropped again on the unclassified climb shortly before the finish but the Italian's superb descending skills saw him catch back up to the other two, with the finish line in sight, setting up the final sprint.

Geraint Thomas led a group of general classification riders across the line, almost seven minutes behind McNulty but 33 seconds ahead of Armiraill.

That saw Armiraill's advantage over Thomas cut to one minute, eight seconds. Primož Roglič was two seconds further back.

The race has its second and final rest day on Monday before heading to the Dolomites and a brutal final week.

CYCLING

Three of the last six stages have been given the maximum difficulty rating of five stars and the week kicks off with one of them on Tuesday. There is more than 5,000 meters of elevation along the 203-kilometer (126-mile) route from Sabbio Chiese to Monte Bondone, including a top-category climb to the finish.

The Giro ends in Rome next Sunday.

tify in 2018.

Baffert became the face of the sport after his American Pharoah ended a 37-year Triple Crown drought in 2015. Since Medina Spirit it was DQed from the Derby, though, Baffert has turned into a polarizing

figure. In addition to his Churchill Downs punishment, he was forced to miss the Preakness and Belmont last year because of a related suspension in Kentucky that Maryland and New York honored.

On Saturday, he was back at a major

race - and, thanks to National Treasure, back in the winner's circle.

"You can't do it without the group of owners I have that have stuck by me through all of this negative, all this bad stuff that's happened to me in the last few years," Baffert said. "Days

like this, it's not really vindication. It's just, I feel like we have a moment where we can enjoy it."

Even that wasn't simple, given the somber scene earlier in the day, when Havnameltdown stumbled and unseated jockey Luis Saez.

Tkachuk scores another OT as winner 'Panthers' extend lead

Florida improves to 6-0 in overtime in the postseason

RALEIGH, N.C., May 21, (AP) — Matthew Tkachuk finished off a second straight overtime win - this time needing only a few minutes instead of four extra periods - then pointed again toward the door along the boards that led to the locker room.

He skated over as Florida Panthers teammates joined him, then motioned to lead them off the ice.

It was time to celebrate the latest big moment in a growing list of them this postseason for a team that needed a late push just to make the playoffs, but now stands just two wins away from the Stanley Cup Final.

Tkachuk finished a feed from Sam Reinhart at the 1:51 mark of overtime to help the Panthers beat the Carolina Hurricanes 2-1 on Saturday night, taking a 2-0 series lead in the Eastern Conference final.

ICE HOCKEY

It marked an eighth straight road win in these playoffs and helped Florida improve to 6-0 in overtime in the postseason.

"We're a confident group no matter where we're playing," forward Sam Bennett said.

There certainly is no reason to feel otherwise, not as they close in on their first Stanley Cup Final since 1996 - also the last time they made it to the East final.

The Panthers rallied from a 3-1 first-round deficit to stun Boston after the Bruins' record-setting regular season, then blew past Toronto in a five-game second-round series. Now they've won the first two games on the road for the second straight series, this time against the team that had the league's second-best regular-season record.

The Panthers took the series opener in epic fashion, beating the Hurricanes on Tkachuk's goal with 12.7 seconds left in the fourth OT early Friday to end the sixth-longest game in NHL postseason history - along with the longest game in the history of each franchise.

The hours since had become what Panthers coach Paul Maurice called "a race to recover" with both teams paying a "huge cost."

This time, Tkachuk came through

on the power play much quicker as Florida pressed an advantage with Carolina's Jacob Slavin lost his stick. Bennett sent a pass to the left side for Reinhart, who zipped the puck across to Tkachuk for the easy finish against a sprawled-out Antti Raanta in what amounted to a 2-on-0 opportunity.

Then came his point to the exit, which he did after players started gathering to celebrate with him after Game 1. Only this time, it was a much shorter skate being on the same end of the ice.

"Let's get out of here, it's been a lot of hockey the last two games," Tkachuk said of the message, adding: "It's just great to end it early. Great pass to start by (Bennett) and a great pass by (Reinhart) to make it really, really easy for me, so it was awesome."

It marked Tkachuk's third overtime winner in the playoffs, which includes a Game 5 road win in the Boston upset.

Aleksander Barkov added a high-light-reel goal for Florida in the second period, while Sergei Bobrovsky again befuddled Carolina with 37 stops.

Jalen Chatfield scored Carolina's lone goal on a deflection in the opening minutes, while Raanta finished with 24

Canada lose to Switzerland

RIGA, Latvia, May 21, (AP) — Switzerland rallied from a goal behind to top Canada 3-2 in a clash of two undefeated teams at the ice hockey world championship.

Tyler Toffoli put Canada ahead midway through the second period on a power play but the Swiss answered with goals from Nico Hischier and Dario Simon in the frame.

Andres Ambuhl stretched the advantage to two in the final period, then Michael Carcone deflected in a slap shot by Brad Hunt for Canada to reduce the lead to one

with 3:38 to go.

Canada pulled goaltender Samuel Montembeault for an extra attacker but the Swiss held firm.

The United States shut out Denmark 3-0 in Tampere to stay perfect.

Alex Tuch scored one goal and added two assists to earn the U.S. a fifth victory from five games.

Cutter Gauthier broke the deadlock midway through the final period on a power play. Tuch doubled the advantage and Rocco Grimaldi finished it off with an empty net goal.

saves.

Carolina is in the Eastern Conference final for the second time during a five-year playoff run, but the Hurricanes have now lost 10 straight games in this round going back to 2009.

"We've been through this," Hurricanes coach Rod Brind'Amour said. "It's not new to us. We've been kicked in the teeth a lot these last few years

and we've always responded, so I'm pretty sure we will the next game."

They're running out of time to recover. Florida has home-ice advantage for the next two games, starting Monday with Game 3.

Barkov's goal came after he got loose and alone with Raanta after Florida had won a battle along the boards and got the puck to its captain.



Florida Panthers' Matthew Tkachuk (19) controls the puck behind the net as Carolina Hurricanes' Brett Pesce (22) closes in during the third period of Game 2 of the NHL hockey Stanley Cup Eastern Conference finals in Raleigh, N.C. (AP)



Kazakhstan's Elena Rybakina (right), poses for a picture with Ukraine's Anhelina Kalinina after winning the final match at the Italian Open tennis tournament in Rome, Italy. (AP)

Sports

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Barcelona's Sergio Busquets lifts the championship trophy on the pitch at the end of a Spanish La Liga soccer match between Barcelona and Real Sociedad at Camp Nou stadium in Barcelona, Spain. Barcelona clinched the Spanish league title last Sunday with four rounds still to be played. (AP) - See Page 14

Man City's treble bid up and running after winning English Premier League

Brighton qualify for Europe for 1st-ever time

LONDON, May 21, (AP): Manchester City's bid for a treble of major trophies is up and running.

The first was secured on as the team clinched a third successive English Premier League title - and a ninth top-flight crown in its 143-year history - thanks to another slip-up by second-placed Arsenal.

Arsenal losing at Nottingham Forest 1-0 capped an end-of-season meltdown for the once long-time leader and left City with an unassailable 7-point lead after the Citizens beat Chelsea 1-0 on Sunday.

City players watched the game at the club's training ground and celebrated loudly when the final whistle was blown at the City Ground - and on Arsenal's imploding title bid.

"Always give your best. Always believe. It pays off," tweeted Erling Haaland, City's star striker. "C'MON

SOCCER

CITY!"

Just don't expect the celebrations to last too long.

Pep Guardiola's squad has its sights on becoming just the second team - after Manchester United in 1999 - to capture the Premier League-FA Cup-Champions League treble, and still has two finals to play.

The FA Cup final against Man United is on June 3 at Wembley Stadium followed by a meeting with Inter Milan in the Champions League final in Istanbul on June 10.

City is enjoying a period of domestic dominance rarely seen in English soccer.

That's five league titles in six years - a feat last achieved in England by



Chelsea's Conor Gallagher (left) is challenged by Manchester City's Phil Foden during the English Premier League soccer match between Manchester City and Chelsea at the Etihad Stadium in Manchester, England. (AP)

United from 1996-2001 - and seven in a 12-season spell that began with Sergio Aguero's storied stoppage-time goal to win the league in 2012. Under Guardiola, City has raised the standards in the Premier League to such an extent that rivals need to reach at least 90 points just to challenge them.

It's the first time City has won three leagues in a row and comes while the Abu Dhabi-owned club is facing an unprecedented slew of charges from the Premier League for allegedly breaking financial rules from 2009-18 and a subsequent failure to co-operate with an investigation.

While City has finished like a train by winning 11 straight games, Arsenal - owning the youngest squad in the league under inexperienced coach Mikel Arteta - has buckled with a first top-flight title since 2004 in sight, losing three of its last five games. Arteta congratulated City and said

his team "didn't have enough" to compete with the defending champion.

Forest was safe from relegation after its win.

Evan Ferguson scored two goals as Brighton beat Southampton 3-1 in the Premier League to qualify for Europe for the first time in its history.

The win means sixth-place Brighton cannot finish lower than seventh this season and could still overtake Liverpool in fifth.

Ferguson struck in the 29th and 40th minutes to put Brighton in control against already-relegated Southampton at Amex Stadium.

Mohamed Elyounoussi pulled one back for the visitors in the 58th, but Pascal Gross made it 3-1 in the 69th.

Leeds is on the brink of relegation from the Premier League after a 3-1 loss at West Ham.

The Yorkshire club is two points adrift of 17th-place Everton going into the final game of the season.

TENNIS

which starts next weekend.

Rybakina was leading 6-4, 1-0, 15-0 when Kalinina called for a trainer and grasped her left leg as she teared up. She then decided she couldn't continue.

The final began at almost 11 p.m. on Saturday and Ry-

bakina lifted the trophy after midnight on Sunday.

"I'm really sorry that I couldn't play," Kalinina said during the awards ceremony as the crowd - which had waited under the rain for hours before the night session started - whistled.

3-0 deficit difficult, but not impossible: Lakers

Nuggets on brink of NBA Finals

LOS ANGELES, May 21, (AP): Nikola Jokic was far from his usual dominant self while mired in foul trouble, and Jamal Murray cooled off after his scorching first half. The Denver Nuggets' big early lead disappeared entirely in the fourth quarter of Game 3, and the Lakers' home crowd was in a frenzy.

The Nuggets weathered every setback and calmly, methodically took control with a poise worthy of champions.

With one more victory, they'll finally get the chance to play for their first rings.

Murray scored 37 points, Jokic added 24 points and eight assists and the Nuggets rolled to a 3-0 lead in the Western Conference finals with a 119-108 victory over Los Angeles on Saturday night.

Kentavious Caldwell-Pope scored 12 of his 17 points in the second half against his former team for the top-seeded Nuggets, who have never been this close to the NBA Finals in 47 years in the league. Denver is making its fifth straight playoff appearance, and the ultimate stage is now just one win away. Denver blew a 14-point lead in Game 3, but made a decisive 13-0 run in the fourth quarter to snap the Lakers' nine-game home winning streak since March 26, including seven straight victories since the regular sea-

BASKETBALL

son ended. The Nuggets excelled down the stretch with Murray and Jokic repeatedly running a two-man pick-and-roll game suggested by "Coach Jokic," according to coach Michael Malone.

"This group is capable of doing great things, and they believe," Malone said. "Belief is a very powerful thing." No team has rallied from a 3-0 playoff series deficit in NBA history. Game 4 is Monday night in Los Angeles.

"I can't speak for the guys right now because I don't know what's going through all their minds, but I still (believe)," said LeBron James, who had 23 points, 12 assists and seven rebounds. "So it's time to go right back home and start to refuel and start the treatment process and recovery process and get ready for Monday. My mindset is always locked in." Anthony Davis had 28 points and 18 rebounds for the seventh-seeded Lakers, who hadn't lost three straight games since early February. Los An-

Argentina edge Uzbekistan, US pip Ecuador at U20 WCup

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina, May 21, (AP): An injury-time goal gave the United States a 1-0 win against Ecuador in one of the opening matches of the Under-20 World Cup on Saturday. Hours later, host Argentina beat Asian champions Uzbekistan 2-1.

While the Argentinians go to the top of Group A on goal difference, team U.S. ended the first round of

SOCCER

the tournament in second place in Group B after Slovakia beat Fiji 4-0.

The American victory in San Juan came after 90 minutes of little inspiration from both teams. Left back Jonathan Gomez shot from the edge of the box one minute before the final whistle to beat goalkeeper Gilmar Napa.

Until Gomez's winner, the best opportunity was on the hour after an embarrassing mistake by Ecuador's Napa. His clearance hit his defender

Christian Garcia in the face. The ball fell to American striker Diego Luna, who shot wide despite the empty goal.

Ecuador, which includes teenage sensation striker Kendry Paez, did not produce a single shot on target.

The first goal of the tournament came from New Zealand - Norman Garbett netted the winner in the 80th minute to beat Guatemala in a Group A game.

Later, Argentina beat Uzbekistan in a match with three goals in the first half. Makhmudjon Makhmudjonov opened the scoring in the 23rd minute with a crossed left foot shot with little angle. Argentinian players just watched the ball go to the back of the net; they mistakenly believed the Uzbek was offside.

Argentina equalized four minutes later with another strange goal. A header by Alejo Veliz appeared to be bound for an easy save. But the touch of goalkeeper Otabek Boy-murodov was not enough to push the ball over the bar. He just watched as it gently passed the goal line.

ges' prolonged, desperate surge ever since the trade deadline has finally run out of steam against the powerhouse Nuggets, who have won five consecutive playoff games.



Denver Nuggets forward Bruce Brown (11) drives past Los Angeles Lakers forward Anthony Davis (3) in the first half of Game 3 of the NBA basketball Western Conference Final series in Los Angeles. (AP)

Jokic's streak of four consecutive triple-doubles ended in a fairly quiet game for the two-time MVP, who got his fourth foul in the third quarter. But Murray scored 17 points in a dynamic first quarter following his 23-point fourth quarter two nights ago, and he had 30 points by halftime of Game 3.

Bruce Brown scored 15 points and hit a key 3-pointer down the stretch for the Nuggets before Jokic all but iced it on a 3-pointer with 3:17 to play.

The Lakers' passionate fans turned out in force for the 17-time champion franchise's first conference finals games at home since 2010. Los Angeles tried desperately to get back in the series, with James playing 43 minutes after spraining his left ankle in Game 2 on top of his already sore right foot. But the Nuggets' fight to the coast didn't cool off Murray in the slightest: The Canadian guard poured in 17 points in the first quarter and had 26 midway through the second. Reeves racked up 15 points, three assists and three rebounds in the second quarter alone to keep LA in it.