

COP28 latest UAE invite to Israel

Netanyahu, Herzog yet to accept

JERUSALEM, May 23, (AP): Emirati leaders extended a long-sought invitation to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to attend the U.N climate conference, known as COP28, in November.

The United Arab Emirates' President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan and Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum also invited Israel's figurehead President Isaac Herzog and dozens of other leaders including Syrian President Bashar Assad to COP28, in Dubai.

The Israelis did not immediately accept the invitation, but Netanyahu thanked the Emiratis for the gesture.

The invitation falls short of the high-profile bilateral visit Netanyahu has sought. But a trip to the Gulf Arab country would nonetheless give an important boost to the Israeli leader who has established official ties with the UAE as part of the 2020 Abraham Accords, normalizing relations between the two countries.

Netanyahu, Israel's longest-serving leader, has sought to return to

the world stage. Since returning to office late last year, he has made official visits to Italy, Germany and Britain.

He had hoped to visit the UAE shortly after his right-wing government took office, but the plan was postponed after national security minister and ultranationalist Itamar Ben-Gvir last January visited the compound known to Jews as the Temple Mount in Jerusalem.

The UAE condemned Ben-Gvir's actions at the time. He visited the site again on Sunday, declaring Israel "in charge" and drawing renewed criticism from the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Turkey, Qatar, Jordan, Egypt and the United States.

Netanyahu's alliance with far-right figures like Ben-Gvir has drawn repeated criticism from close allies. He remains uninvited to visit U.S. President Joe Biden in Washington, which some interpret as a White House snub.

The administration has said he's likely to receive an invitation at some point.

Opinion

Minister of Commerce ... 'Knowledge has come to you'

By Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

IT is like hatching an egg but without any chick coming out of it. This is how we can describe the decision of the Minister of Commerce and Industry regarding licensing some activities even though they have no headquarters.

In many countries of the world, especially those seeking to attract investments and capital, the investor, not only the citizen but even the foreigner, does not need a headquarter for his or her establishment. Instead, the address of the activity is the same address of the attorney authorized to complete the procedure for issuing the license.

Therefore, the activities permitted by the ministerial decision are not sufficient. This is due to the fact that they do not lead to attracting investment. Instead, it is more like a license to practice the profession that is issued by the authorities concerned with the tallying of workers in the countries of the world.

For decades, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry's concern was to increase commodity subsidies for citizens. This happened sometimes by adding cheese, salmon fillet and tea. However, when it comes to thinking of how to get the country out of the bottle of monopoly and activate commercial activities, this matter is not on its agenda at all.

Nonetheless, if the Ministry of Commerce and Industry is under the influence of some opinions whose owners do not see more than their noses, then the Ministry of Finance did not take any step towards activating its role in promoting the diversification of national income. It instead contented itself with either fighting the increase in employee salaries, or drawing up a budget that is devoid of any step that would generate capital for the country.

In all countries of the world, when the B.O.T. system is used, the agreement is with the state, and not with officials whose only concern is jealousy and seeking to impede people's businesses, as is the case in Kuwait where the practices of the government and official institutions are characterized by much shortsightedness.

For example, the Public Authority for Industry resorted to increasing the fees of the land granted to industrialists, and imposing new conditions on them, bearing in mind that industry is one of the pillars of the renaissance of any country.

If there was a serious vision to push investors into this sector, it would have been similar to what the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Emirates, Bahrain, Qatar, and other countries did by giving this sector the utmost importance, in addition to revitalizing work in the food security sector.

In all international reports, Kuwait is seen as repelling investment, while in the Emirate of Dubai alone, about five billion dollars entered in the year 2021 in the form of investments owing to the flexible laws issued by the United Arab Emirates. The Emirate was thus able to overcome the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic.

On the other hand, what did Kuwait do? The ministries increased the documentary cycle. Any establishment that needs a loan or issuance of even work visas requires a statement from Kuwait Municipality and the Public Authority for Manpower, as well as a "certificate of specification", as if it builds facilities on the plot every week.

All this only leads to impeding people's business and restricting them, and further expelling both local and foreign investors, while other Gulf countries are preceding us by light years. All the efforts that we put in are adding up to zero.

All that remains to be said is that the state needs a change in its business, financial and economic mentality, and decisions in general. This can only be done through innovative work as several Gulf countries have done. For this, we say to the Minister of Commerce and Industry - "Knowledge has come to you" from other countries so what are you going to do?

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'Parliament majority decider'

Erdogan wins runoff endorsement



In this photo provided by the Ukrainian Presidential Press Office, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, (centre), poses for photo with soldiers after an awarding ceremony as he visits the Donetsk region, Ukraine, Tuesday, May 23, 2023. (AP)



In this photo released by Saudi Press Agency, (SPA), and made available May 23, Russian Interior Minister Vladimir Kolokoltsev, (left), meets with Saudi Interior Minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Saud in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, Monday, May 22, 2023. (AP)

Russian minister in Saudi

A top Russian official who faces sanctions in the West over Moscow's war on Ukraine visited Saudi Arabia and held talks with his counterpart in the kingdom early on Tuesday, state media reported.

Russian Interior Minister Vladimir Kolokoltsev's visit to Riyadh came just days after Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky addressed an Arab League summit held in Saudi Arabia's Red Sea port city of Jeddah on Friday. The visits underline how the kingdom and Gulf Arab states, traditionally the security clients of the United States, have been maintaining their relations with Moscow amid the Ukraine war.

The state-run Saudi Press Agency said Kolokoltsev met with Saudi Interior Minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Saud.

"During the session, they discussed ways to enhance security cooperation paths between the two countries' ministries of interior, in addition to discussing a number of issues of common interest," the report said, without elaborating.

Russian media did not immediately report on the visit.

Kolokoltsev, 62, has been sanctioned by the U.S. since 2018 as part of a slew of sanctions over Russia's activity in both Syria and Ukraine. The U.S. Treasury says that Australia, Canada, the European Union, Japan, New Zealand and the United Kingdom all separately have sanctioned Kolokoltsev as well. The U.S. also refused to grant him a visa to participate in a United Nations chiefs of police summit in 2022, something criticized by Moscow. (AP)

ANKARA, May 23, (AP): The third-placed contender in the Turkish presidential elections formally endorsed President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Monday for the second-round runoff vote to be held on May 28.

The nationalist presidential candidate Sinan Ogan, 55, has emerged as a potential kingmaker after neither Erdogan nor his main challenger, opposition leader Kemal Kilicdaroglu, secured the majority needed for a first-round victory on May 14.

"I declare that we will support Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the candidate of the People's Alliance, in the second round of the elections," Ogan said, referring to the Erdogan-led alliance that includes nationalist and Islamist parties.

"We believe that our decision will be the right decision for our country and nation," Ogan stated.

Ogan, a former academic who was backed by a far-right anti-migrant party, won 5.17% in the May 14 vote and could hold the key to victory in the runoff now that he's out of the race.

Erdogan received 49.5% of the votes in the first round - just short of the majority needed for an outright victory - compared to Kilicdaroglu's 44.9%.

Erdogan's ruling AK party and its nationalist and Islamist allies also retained a majority in the 600-seat parliament. That increases Erdogan's chances of reelection because voters are likely to vote for him to avoid a splintered government, analysts say.

Ogan cited Erdogan's parliamentary majority as a reason for his decision.

"It is important that newly elected president is under the same (leadership) as the parliament," Ogan said. "Kilicdaroglu's alliance on the other hand, could not display sufficient success against the People's Alliance which has been in power for 20 years, and could not establish a perspective that could convince us about the future."

His endorsement of Erdogan came days after he held a surprise meeting with the Turkish leader in Istanbul. No statement was made following the one-hour meeting on Friday.

Ogan insisted on Monday that he did not engage in any horse trading with the Turkish leader.

Ogan had attracted votes from people who disapproved of Erdogan's policies but didn't want to support Kilicdaroglu, who leads Turkey's center-left, pro-secular main opposition party.

Analysts say that despite Ogan's endorsement, it is not certain that all of his supporters would go to Erdogan. Some were likely to shift to Kilicdaroglu while others might choose not to vote in the runoff race.

Umit Ozdag, the leader of the anti-migrant Victory Party that had backed Ogan, appeared to dissociate himself from the decision to endorse Erdogan.



Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba, (left), is welcomed by his Moroccan counterpart Nasser Bourita, in Rabat, Morocco, May 22, 2023. (AP)



Palestinians inspect the ruins of the home of a Hamas militant that was demolished by Israeli troops in the West Bank village of Naalin, Tuesday, May 23, 2023. The home belonged to the family of Moataz Khawaja, 23, whom the Israeli army identified as the gunman who killed a man and wounded two others on one of Tel Aviv's busiest streets in March. (AP)

Israel demolishes home

The Israeli army said on Tuesday it demolished the home of a Palestinian involved in an attack in Tel Aviv that killed one and wounded two others in March.

Video footage of the attack shows a man the army says was Moataz Khawaja, 23, shooting three men from behind, including one in the head - in one of Tel Aviv's busiest streets - before being shot and killed by Israeli police. Hamas claimed him as a member of its

armed wing.

On Tuesday, the army destroyed Khawaja's home in the town of Naalin, northwest of Ramallah in the occupied West Bank. The army said people burned tires, threw stones and shot fireworks at Israeli forces who were razing the site.

Israel demolishes the homes of attackers in an attempt to deter others, a tactic critics say amounts to collective punishment. (AP)

Facility not immune: Israel

'Iran N-unit within reach'

JERUSALEM, May 23, (AP):

The Israeli government's national security adviser on Tuesday said a new nuclear facility being built by Iran would not be immune from attack, despite assessments by experts it will be beyond the reach of last-ditch U.S. bunker-busting bombs.

Tzachi Hanegbi made the comments in response to an Associated Press report that said the new facility appears to be as deep as 100 meters (328 feet) below ground.

Hanegbi, speaking at a security conference near Tel Aviv, said he was not surprised by the report, noting that Iran has other underground facilities. While he acknowledged the location would complicate any potential military strike on the facility, he said there are still solutions to the challenge.

"What is possible to say about this matter is that there is no place that can't be reached," he said.

He declined to say whether Israel had the ability to do this on its own.

"We hope we won't get to a situation where the solution to the story of a nuclear weapon in Iran is a kinetic solution, a solution involving an attack," he said, adding that Israel prefers to see the international standoff with Iran resolved through diplomatic means.

Israel considers Iran to be its greatest enemy and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has repeatedly said he will not allow Iran to develop a nuclear weapon. He has said international diplomacy should be accompanied by a serious military option and hinted that Israel would be prepared to strike Iran on its own if necessary.

Photos and videos of Iran's new facility from Planet Labs PBC show Iran has been digging tunnels near the Natanz nuclear site, which has come under repeated sabotage attacks over the years. Excavation mounds at the site suggest the facility could be between 80 meters (260 feet) and 100 meters (328 feet) under the ground, according to experts and AP's analysis.

Day by Day

Hitler once said: "A friend who has turned suddenly into an enemy has hated you all along, but he was skillful in his actions and a hypocrite." To such people we say: "The curtain has come down, you fools".

The Egyptians say: 'Everything has an end, but the end of the wicked is painful...'

... Yet tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar

Newswatch

KUWAIT CITY: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent Monday two cables to the Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman to congratulate them on the arrival of two Saudi astronauts Ali Al-Qarni and Rayyanah Barnawi at the International Space Station.

In his cables, His Highness the Amir lauded the new Saudi scientific achievement which is added to the Kingdom's numerous successes.

This accomplishment embodies the great progress the Kingdom has reached in the scientific, technical, and space fields and bolsters its status on the international stage at all levels, he said.

His Highness the Amir confirmed that this Saudi and Arab achievement is a source of pride.

His Highness Sheikh Nawaf wished more progress and prosperity for the Kingdom and its honorable people under the wise leadership of King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud. (KUNA)

WASHINGTON: The United States criticized Israel on Monday for allowing the return of settlers to an abandoned West Bank outpost.

In a brief press conference, US State department Spokesman Matthew Miller noted that the US is "deeply troubled by the Israeli government's recent order that allowed citizens to establish a permanent presence in the Homesh outpost in the northern West Bank, which, according to Israeli law, was illegally built on private Palestinian land."

The statement went on to say, "this order is inconsistent with both former Prime Minister Sharon's written commitment to the Bush administration in 2004 and, significantly, the current Israeli government's commitments to the Biden administration." (KUNA)

MADRID: Spain has opposed Israeli National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir's speech on Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, calling for respecting the sacred places.

In a statement issued on Monday, Spain's foreign ministry said it rejected the speech of Ben-Gvir who broke into Al-Aqsa Mosque, in a call for controlling over it, under the protection of the Israeli police.

The statement called on the parties to do their best in order to avoid tension at the Mosque's compound, maintain stability and support Jordan's efforts in this matter. (KUNA)

CAIRO: The Arab League on Monday called for a reevaluation of plans and measures related to the labor market, saying such a move is necessary in light of the meteoric changes around the region.

Rapid advancements in technology, coupled with the emergence of new job, behooves the entire region to adopt a new approach in dealing with the labor market, said Mohammad Abdulqader, the Cairo-based bloc's chief of Arab organizations and unions, said during pan-Arab talks over regional labor. (KUNA)

JERUSALEM: Israel's defense minister Monday said that Israel's new government has greatly increased the number of strikes on Iranian targets since taking office late last year.

Yoav Gallant did not provide an exact number of airstrikes. But the address, delivered at a security conference, marked rare public comments on Israeli military activity in Syria. (AP)

TEHRAN: At least 17 people were injured in an earthquake measuring 4.9 degrees on the Richter scale in Sarab City in Iran's northwestern East Azerbaijan Province late Monday, according to local reports.

Medical teams provided one-spot treatment for the injured, Iran's official news agency (IRNA) quoted East Azerbaijan Province' Crisis Department Chief Mohammad Honar as saying.

The tremor caused damage to some buildings in Sarab City's villages, the official added. (KUNA)

BRUSSELS: The President of the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), Dominique Pradali, Tuesday called for "concerted international efforts to protect Palestinian journalists" and put an end to the impunity of their Israeli aggressors.

"And we don't need to look very far to find disturbing evidence of the physical attacks on journalists in the West bank and Gaza and the continued detention without charge of journalists in Israel," she told the Congress of the Palestinian Journalists Syndicate in Ramallah today. (KUNA)

Prayer Timings

Fajr 03:21 Asr 15:20
 Sunrise... 04:52 Maghrib .. 18:38
 Zohr 11:45 Isha 20:06

Local

Expected weather for the next 24 hours:

By Day: Hot and relatively humid and partly cloudy with light variable wind to light to moderate southeasterly wind with speeds of 08-30 km/h with a chance for scattered rain.
By Night: Rather hot and partly

Weather

cloudy and relatively humid over coastal areas with light to moderate freshening at times southeasterly wind changing to northwesterly wind with speeds of 12-42 km/h with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	35	32
Kuwait Airport	42	29
Abdaly	41	28
Jahra	42	30
Salmiyah	33	29
Ahmadi	31	29
Nuwaisib	37	25
Wafra	42	25

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

Municipality's Al-Manfouhi sent for retirement

130,100 found in violation of residency law; Indians top expats

KUWAIT CITY, May 23: The number of individuals who are in violation of the Residency Law reached 130,100 last week, reports Al-Anba daily quoting a reliable source.

The source said the latest statistics of the Ministry of Interior showed that the number of expatriates under Article 18 visa (private sector employees) reached 1,408,030; while those under Article 20 (domestic workers) reached 783,372 and those under Article 22 (family or dependent visa) reached 512,306.

The source added that the Indian community is still the largest in the country, followed by the Egyptian community and then the Filipino community.

Manfouhi retires: The Council of Minis-

ters has referred Director General of Kuwait Municipality Eng Ahmad Al-Manfouhi for retirement, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Al-Manfouhi's was supposed to end in 2024, but the council took a decision in its recently concluded meeting regarding the retirement of officials in the Ministry of Defense, Kuwait Municipality, Municipal Council and the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters.

Meanwhile, the council approved the appointment of Eng Maysa Bushehri as Deputy Director General of the Municipality.

Sources said Bushehri served as acting Deputy Director General for The Projects Sector, in addition to her work as Director of the Safety Department in the Municipality branch in the Capital Governorate.



Electoral headquarters.. are still the favorite place for candidates to communicate directly with voters.

KUNA photo

Other Voices

The crime of 'flattening' citizen's way of thinking

By Ahmad alsarraf

For quite some time now, there has been a strong and continuous "Brotherhood and Salafist" movement in all directions aimed at flattening the citizens' intellectualism and the way they think. It seems that such tendency is backed by the government and superpowers. Those attempts aim to occupy the nation with trivial matters, jurisprudential conflicts, legal disputes, trivial issues and different prescription opinions causing the individuals to be part of disputes on unimportant and out of date arguments.



alsarraf

Trade monitors prices out of fear for the pocket of the citizen and resident; the municipality and the Public Authority for Food and Nutrition monitors food merchants, cold storage facilities, restaurants and hotels, out of fear for the stomachs of citizens and residents; the "fire department" monitors the correctness of the implementation of safety requirements by various facilities, for fear of a fire; the Ministry of Health monitors the validity and safety of medicines out of fear for public health and so on and on as the same happens with other institutions due to various risks.

But no party cares about what is more important than all of that, which is the soundness of the mind of the citizen and the resident, and what their children receive of a very modest level of education, or what they hear and watch of sermons, which have a greater influence on their mind and psyche, through various means of communication, and from mouthpieces. The state has previously contributed to creating and publicizing, disseminating ideas, and opening the doors of schools for boys and even girls in front of them!

How does the government keep silent about these preachers spreading their lies, poison and sabotage, such as when they say, for example, that European countries have allowed the opening of brothels for sex with animals? Do these people deserve the "honor" of educating and raising our children?

And how does the government allow someone who calls himself a "doctor" and a food expert, whose testimony is multiplied, to give nutritional advice to an ignorant and broad audience of people? And how do the "media" remain silent about the appearance of a veiled girl, with glaring and sexy makeup, and her puffy lips, while she is lecturing on the subject of "the nine punishments" for not praying?

Israel, Zionism, colonialism and global arrogance do not need to invade us or conspire against us. Those among us, including preachers, clerics, experts in jurisprudence, food and make-up, are capable of destroying the minds of young people more than what all the intelligence services of countries hostile to us do.

How can we be lenient or pass lightly on everything that comes from advocates who suddenly became famous on social media, and have followers, imitators and supporters, and their minds do not go beyond the threshold of the door of the place where they deliver their lectures?

Does challenging the foundation of the establishment of the state, expiation of an essential part of its constitution, and allowing this infringement mean silence about any other infringement on any article in the constitution, by describing it as infidel, and requesting non-compliance with it, thus endangering the entire security of the state?!

We have tried the thinking and jurisprudence of these people for a thousand years, and that did not help us get out of the cave of backwardness, so why not try something else?

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'Supplies only for needy'

'No donations from ration food'

KUWAIT CITY, May 23: The Ministry of Social Affairs' Department of Charitable Societies and Foundations issued a circular to the boards of directors of all well-known associations to prohibit them from receiving donations in the form of subsidized food items, based on an official letter that the Ministry of Social Affairs recently received from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry in this regard, reports Aljarida daily.

According to informed sources, the associations that violate the circular will be subject to legal accountability, and the necessary measures will be taken by the ministry.

Receiving donations that include food supplies is an explicit violation of the executive regulations of law No. 117/2013 that amended some provisions of decree law No. 10/1979 concerning the supervision of goods and services.

The aim of this step is to preserve the commodity stock of these materials that the state supports in huge sums annually, especially since they are provided to relieve some of the financial suffering of those who deserve it, instead of donating them to charitable organizations.

The sources affirmed that the ministry will continue to "screen" all well-known charitable donations to determine the extent of their effectiveness and the services they provide to the community, in addition to the extent of their commitment to the controls and requirements regulating charitable work, and achieving the goals for which they were publicized.

They revealed the issuance of decisions to withdraw the publicity of a number of justifications in the near future, either at the request of their publicists due to their lack of time in managing their affairs, or due to their violation of the regulations and requirements of advertising, including closing their bank account for a long time and not carrying out any activities on the ground for many years, in addition to not providing the ministry with the estimated budget,

Food poisoning denied

KUWAIT CITY, May 23: The Ministry of Health has vehemently denied the allegation that some people suffered from food poisoning after eating chicken from restaurants, reports Al-Rai daily.

The ministry made the clarification after the audio clip of the alleged food poisoning went viral on social media, indicating the issue emerged in May 2022 and it also denied the allegation at the time. It then advised the public to refrain from spreading false information.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Social Affairs has launched new services on the Sahl application - issuance of "To Whom It May Concern" certificates for obtaining social assistance and accessing shareholder numbers in cooperative societies, reports Al-Anba daily.

The ministry confirmed that it intends to add all services on the platform to ease procedures and expedite the completion of transactions.

financial reports for the past years, or bank statements.

The sources stressed that the ministry will take a decision to withdraw the publicity of any justification that insists on violating the regulations, the laws regulating charitable work in the country, and the decisions issued by the Council of Ministers in this regard, or in case it is ineffective and has no role on the ground, unless the conditions are amended and violations are avoided, and they are keen to fully highlight their societal role.

Call to choose reform seekers for top posts

Independent judiciary vital: ex-MP

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh
Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, May 23: Former MP and First Constituency candidate Saleh Ashour has stressed the need to reform the legislative, executive and judicial authorities.

He pointed out that reforming the judiciary should be done through the amendment of the Constitutional Court Law and method of appointing judges, in addition to enhancing the autonomy of the authority.

He said the legislative authority is reformed by amending the National Assembly Law and Election Law No. 35/1962, while the reformation of the executive authority is done by appointing a prime minister and ministers in accordance with the parliamentary election results. He believes this procedure guarantees cooperation and harmony between the legislative and executive authorities.

He added the top priority is for the Sabah Family members to lessen disputes among themselves and such disputes should not affect the political arena. He urged the Sabah Family to appoint pro-reform personalities to leadership positions, and convey a clear message to anyone who violates the laws and threatens the citizens' interests that he will be penalized as per the law. He concluded that members of the family must serve as a model to the whole world in terms of commitment to the law and the Constitution.

Former Minister of Public Works, former MP and Third Constituency candidate Jenan Bu Shehri affirmed that the violations in the distribution of State properties in favor of certain individuals and companies are recorded in the reports of the State Audit Bureau (SAB) as per the directives of the National Assembly and Council of Ministers. She disclosed these reports include recommendations to address the issue, but

they have remained in the drawers. She asserted the unfair distribution of State properties has had a negative impact on youths who want to start their own businesses, prompting them to cancel such plans.

Former MP and Second Constituency candidate Ahmed Al-Hamad stressed the need to fix the political environment after the exchange of accusations and doubts between political opponents. He added the society needs reconstruction of the concept of loyalty to the homeland. He also emphasized the importance of restoring citizens' trust in public institutions and lawmakers, while the decision-makers must adhere to the Constitution.

Flexible work hours: The Council of Ministers is currently looking into the possibility of permanently implementing a new flexible working hours mechanism in State institutions to solve the traffic crisis, starting from August - before the new academic year, reports Al-Qabas daily quoting a reliable source.

The source explained that the new mechanism will be applied in all State agencies, indicating the starting time will be set from 7:00 am to 8:30 am from Sunday to Thursday. He said each entity will choose the appropriate time to start their flexible working hours; such that, employees will not go to work at the same time.

Citing an example, the source stated that public sector employees usually work for seven hours a day or 35 hours per week; so if they start at 7:00 am, their work will end at 2:00 pm; while those who start at 8:00 am shall leave at 3:00 pm.

The source affirmed that the council is keen on implementing well-studied mechanisms to prevent traffic congestion without disrupting the flow of work in State institutions in the interest of citizens.

He revealed the concerned authorities are currently coordinating their efforts, including the Civil Service Commission and the ministries of Interior and Education, to evaluate the new mechanism and address loopholes, if any.



Sheikh Dr. Abdullah Meshal Al-Sabah presents a memento to Air Marshal Martin Sampson.

KUNA photo

Kuwait, UK Army in talks

Undersecretary of the Ministry of Defense Sheikh Dr. Abdullah Meshal Al-Sabah discussed on Monday, with the British UK Defense Senior Advisor to the Middle East and North Africa Air Marshal Martin Sampson, aspects of cooperation and joint coordination between the two countries.

In a statement, Kuwait's Defense Ministry said that discussion took place

when Sheikh Dr. Abdullah received the visiting British official and his accompanying delegation.

The statement noted that the meeting witnessed honoring a number of Kuwaiti army officers, National Guard, and graduates of the British Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, for their tremendous efforts during their scholarship and study period. (KUNA)

HQ stays favorite

Diwanias play role in parliament polls

By Muntaha Al-Fadhli/Abdullah Al-Enezi

KUWAIT CITY, May 23, (KUNA): Diwanias, a sort of socially based town halls, are very famous in Kuwait for bringing people together. During elections, they play an important role in shaping public opinions and even influencing voters.

In interviews with Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), several experts stressed that Diwanias would once again play a pivotal role in the election especially the upcoming 2023 National Assembly elections scheduled on June 6, via encouraging the democratic process in the country and also boosting the importance of political awareness.

Diwanias help shape public opinion and it has an impact on the voting process, said professor of psychology at Kuwait University (KU) Dr. Kamal Al-Farraj.

Political discourse at Diwanias help educate the masses on the vitality of partaking in the political and democratic process that help shape the future of the country, he argued, indicating that issues pertaining to society, the economy, and other important aspects of life were usually discussed during Diwanias gatherings.

He noted that Diwanias also provided a place for people to network, share opinions, and collaborate on a multitude of matters.

Providing his outlook, professor of public relations and media at Kuwait University (KU) Dr. Hussein Ibrahim claimed that sometimes Diwanias have a stronger media voice than media outlets themselves.

Diwanias help move the proverbial democratic wheel in Kuwait, steering individuals - through dialogue and arguments - towards certain candidates and ideals, he added.

He argued that Diwanias could also be digitized in a sense that candidates could hold virtual Diwanias gatherings on any Social Media platforms online to directly connect with people and get their opinions through.

Also commenting on the importance of the Diwanias in society, professor of social studies and services at KU Dr. Yaqoub Al-Kandari said that such venues could plant the initial political seeds of an individuals and groups.

He also said that Diwanias would be sometimes referred to as "miniature parliaments" due to the vast political opinions and discussions on how to deal with social and economic problems facing Kuwait.

While Diwanias in the past were gathering places to the well-known figures in society prior to the discovery of oil, nowadays any normal citizen could establish his Diwanias and all were welcomed to attend, he added.

Diwanias in Kuwait, since the 1920s that were venues dedicated to gatherings amongst people to discuss life in general and also find solutions to problems facing society as a whole, he pointed out.

He noted that currently, Diwanias played a part in monitoring MPs and letting them know what the people were really thinking about them and their efforts at parliament.

Speaking thoroughly on the history of Diwanias, historian Dr. Yaqoub Al-Ghunaim revealed that actually Diwanias existed in Kuwait for some 300 years.

The modern version of the Diwanias as we know today began around 1921 with the establishment of the Shura (consultation) Council, he indicated, adding that Diwanias continued to develop as the political scene in grew with between 1961-63 after independence and the first National Assembly elections.

Despite the active role of social media that provides services in promoting election campaigns, headquarters still appeal to the attention of voters of all ages and are their favorite places as a meeting spot for direct communication with candidates.

While some candidates in the 2023 Kuwaiti National Assembly elections announced that they would not set up campaigns at headquarters and go with social media, others still prefer direct communication with voters to present their programs and goals.

MoH withdraws licenses

KUWAIT CITY, May 23: As part of its responsibilities to supervise and regulate private health institutions; the Ministry of Health has confirmed the closure and withdrawal of the licenses of five private health centers, 40 private clinics and 20 private pharmacies for committing violations, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The ministry took this step as per the recommendation of specialized inspection committees that uncovered the violations and the results of investigations conducted by the Medical Liability Authority.

According to the ministry, the abovementioned pharmacies were proven to have violated law number 28 of 1996 on regulating the pharmacological profession and its amendment - law number 30 of 2016.. It has been discovered that some of these pharmacies are managed by other people, not the owners or holders of a license to operate pharmacies.

The closed health centers and clinics violated Medical and Allied Professions Law number 70 of 2020, as well as the decisions on regulating the private medical sector and health licensing.

diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

'Negative political, social behaviors shorten person's life'

"THERE are negative political and social behaviors that shorten a person's life, psychologically, intellectually, physically, and even spiritually, because they destructively consume all his mental and physical powers and potentials, and undermine his innate dignity, and here we mention the following," Dr. Khaled Ayed Al-Jenfawi wrote for Al-Seyassah daily.

"Inciting political discourse is the provocative discourse used by those seeking political domination over others, which is characterized by incitement to strip the different human characteristics, especially every narcissistic political discourse in which he incites violence in society for personal, political, or ideological reasons at the expense of social stability.

"This will inevitably lead to an increase in the rate of psychological disorders and stress among other members of society, which may lead to higher rates of blood pressure and heart diseases, depression, hostility, irritability, and chronic stress, which will lead to shortening the lives of the victims who live in an environment in which inciting political discourse is spread.

"Exaggerated courtesy is an umbrella from which flattery and ingratitude to people of money and ideological, political and social influence hangs, with the aim of getting close to them, especially with the intention of obtaining money, gifts, and illegal privileges.

"This leads to a decline in the moral level of those who practice these behaviors that kill the living human conscience.

"Tribal, sectarian, and factional fanaticism are but negative pursuit of racial biases and incitement to tribal, sectarian, or factional polarization in a national society characterized by an identity and a national culture that includes all spectrum of a pluralistic society leads to high rates of alienation, disintegration, delinquency, and social violence.

"Speed of anger and irritability are the fastest way to shorten a person's life in today's world and to this his willful indulgence in rage and negative emotion, which inevitably leads to high blood pressure (the silent killer)."

Also:

"On Tuesday, May 16, 2023, the media and social media dealt with the news of the signing by the Acting Director General of the Public Authority for Manpower, Mr. Marzouq Al-Otaibi, of a joint memorandum of understanding between the Public Authority for Manpower and the Ministry of Social Affairs aimed at Kuwaitization of supervisory and leadership positions in the cooperative sector, columnist Dr Mohammad Al-Duwaihis wrote for Al-Shahed daily

"This memorandum comes within the framework of the directives of the First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Interior and Acting Minister of Defense Sheikh Talal Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah to activate the policy of Kuwaitization of jobs in line with the government's directives and to increase the rates of employment of Kuwaitis in the private sector.

"If we want to review the impact and importance of signing this memorandum on the ground, we find that the total number of supervisory positions (a general manager and two deputy general managers) in the cooperative sector ranges from 210 to 220 jobs, assuming that the number of cooperative societies is between 70-73.

"Likewise, the number of department heads' jobs in the cooperative sector ranges are between 210-290 supervisory jobs, assuming that the number of department heads' jobs in each association is 3-4, and most of these jobs

are assumed to be occupied by Kuwaitis currently, according to Resolution No. 16 of 2016, which requires the Kuwaitization of supervisory positions in cooperative associations.

"In short, this news suggests that it will open many opportunities for Kuwaitis to work in the cooperative sector, and this is far from reality.

"The Ministry of Social Affairs issued Resolution No. 68/2023, Article 50 of which stipulates that the applicant for the supervisory position should not be retired personnel for any reason, and thus all retired Kuwaitis are deprived from working in the cooperative sector.

"In general, we can seek an excuse for the ministry if the aim of not hiring Kuwaiti retirees is to give an opportunity and priority to recent Kuwaiti graduates who wish to work in the cooperatives sector, but that the Kuwaiti retirees be expelled only because they are retired, this is a wrong approach that could empty the cooperative sector of some Kuwaiti expertise in this field and open the cooperative field for expatriate workers to increase their presence in this vital sector.

"The national duty requires that all jobs in cooperative societies be for Kuwaitis, whether they are retired or not, and the matter is not limited to bright jobs in this vital sector.

"On this occasion, I hope that those responsible for demographics will review the study prepared by the demographics team formed under the chairmanship of His Excellency former Minister Ahmed Al-Kulaib on 8/23/2020 and the numerous and valuable recommendations proposed by the team in its report in the security, educational, economic, social, humanitarian and organizational fields."

"Only a few days separate us from the National Assembly election, which is considered a democratic wedding that Kuwait and its people started celebrating 60 years ago," columnist Ziben Al-Bazal wrote for Al-Anba daily.

"Without a doubt, it was a pivotal stage in the political history of Kuwait, as it brought about many changes. Civil life and the new modern State emerged through it, especially since the drafting of the Constitution coincided with the independence, and Kuwait's membership in many international, Arab and Islamic organizations. This was followed by preparations for the first democratic election of the legislature.

"The constituent body was the nucleus of parliamentary work and democratic life, through which the constituencies were distributed, legislative elections were called, and the government was formed after the announcement of results. This system is being implemented up to the present day.

"It is natural that many events took place throughout the years, resulting in the adoption of several projects and laws. Today, we see the results in many aspects of life, such as urban planning, health and education. This is an indication of the importance of the legislature, which gave people the right to run for election and to vote. This is the main tool used in assessing outputs.

"If the choice is correct and based on awareness and realization, a strong legislature will come out for us. It meets the people's demands and needs. But,

if the choice is random and absurd, while its concepts are limited to narrow interests such as family, tribal and sectarian, then it will be a modest legislature that could be an obstacle to development. It will not realize our aspirations.

"Therefore, we must vote and ignore discordant voices that portray the situation as upside down. They expect a low turnout. Nevertheless, we must also think before making a decision. We must choose the appropriate

person as our representative. Everyone must know that the vote is for Kuwait, not for certain people. We must choose strong and honest candidates. We are the protectors of our homeland, our present and our future."

"The recent Arab Summit in Jeddah, chaired by Crown Prince and Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia His Royal Highness Prince Muhammad bin Salman Al Saud, was different from the previous summits," columnist Mofarah Al-Anzi wrote for Al-Anba.

"Rather, the summit is considered new in terms of its nature, as it dealt with political and military diseases in the Arab world. It focused on unifying the Arab and Islamic ranks in order to face regional and global challenges, start implementing programs toward development and prosperity, and achieve food security.

"It has been confirmed that peace is linked to prosperity, while war in all its degrees is linked to differences, hence, the treatment begins. There can be no harmony between war and prosperity except by reaching the zero state of political and military problems.

"As for the issue of reunification, it is no longer in a trivial stage, as it has advanced until it reached a very important stage. Perhaps, this is due to the world reaching a multi-polar stage, which means replacing the old political pattern in the Arab world with the 'fifth political generation' pattern.

"Arab leaders must have unified policies consistent with the new pattern of international politics. They must unify their political stances in order to be an influential force in the new global political system, which deals only with united political forces. Such forces will later play a vital role in international policy decisions.

"Perhaps, the presence of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky is the best evidence of international respect for Arabs, and that they have an active role in intervening in international political issues. This will reflect positively on efforts to protect internal security from the usual external interference."

"Kuwait is experiencing a democratic wedding these days, as the people are about choose their legislative representatives based on stances and the act of giving. We have to choose well who represents us in the National Assembly. They must be trustworthy, prioritize the interests of Kuwait and its people, strong in defending constitutional gains and national constants, inclined towards what is right and just, and have the ability to make laws and fight against corruption," columnist Dali Al-Khamsan wrote for Al-Anba daily.

"On Democratic Day, choose your principles and your future. Give your vote to those who deserve it, with firmness, clarity, and steadfastness, and leave those who work for their own interests. Most candidates are like books — some deceive us with the cover and others surprise us with the content.

"The Kuwaiti society has been living in democracy and consultation between the ruler and the ruled since ancient times. It is neither affected nor worried about the plethora of stumbling blocks to the democratic process, which teaches the society about everything new and distinguishes it from others.

"We wish for the success of the Democratic Day and the Kuwaiti people in choosing the best candidates to serve the country and protect the well-being of its people who deserve a lot."

— Compiled by Ahmed Al-Shazli



Dr Swaika with Minister of Education Dr Al-Adwani.

Indian envoy calls on Dr Al-Adwani

The Indian ambassador to Kuwait HE Dr Adarsh Swaika called on the Minister of Education Dr Hamad Abdulwahab Hamad Al-Adwani, today.

Discussions focused on enhancing bilateral cooperation in the field of higher education and issues related to Indian professionals in Kuwait.

'Accused attacked sister over breakfast'

Securitymen arrest father's killer

KUWAIT CITY, May 23: An unidentified individual was arrested for murdering his father inside the family house in Firdous area, reports Aljarida daily.

According to security sources, the Criminal Security sector, represented by the General Department of Criminal Investigation's Research and Investigation Department in Farwaniya Governorate, was able to arrest an individual after preparing an elaborate ambush for him on the Sixth Ring Road with the help of one of his friends.

The accused confessed to the use of narcotic drugs. In his confessions, which had surprised the detectives and the deputy public prosecutor, he explained that when he woke up on the day of the crime, he asked his sister to prepare breakfast for him. Not liking the breakfast, he attacked his sister, which caused a severe head injury. His father then intervened to free his sister from his hands, which prompted him to clash with him. His father was also severely injured in the head after he hit him with an ashtray.

He then escaped to a livestock pen in Kabb area and took his firearm — a Kalashnikov with 90 rounds — with the intention of killing all members of his family, starting with his sister.

However, when he arrived at the house, his father confronted him. He shot his father in the chest, and the second bullet hit a window of the house which

broke. After that, the gun malfunctioned, prompting him to flee the scene.

After the murderer escaped, officers began tracking all his movements until they found one of his friends who helped them. He told them he would call him and meet him on the Sixth Ring Road to hand him a sum of money. The friend called the killer and they met on the Sixth Ring Road and that was when the detectives arrested him. Inside his vehicle, they found the weapon used in the crime. He was referred to the Public Prosecution.

Mol warns: The Ministry of Interior has warned against responding to messages from unknown social media accounts and telephone numbers, as some gangs call through international or local numbers or social networking sites impersonating certain individuals to request for bank or identification data to swindle others, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The ministry urged the public to refrain from responding to such messages and to report them immediately through the WhatsApp number of the Anti-Cybercrime Department (97283939) to avoid falling victim to fraudsters. It also advised the public neither give their bank account number or password to anyone, nor photograph the bank card or password and then send the photos to other people.

Attempt foiled to smuggle out large quantities of subsidized foodstuffs

Mechanism for employing citizens in co-ops to be okayed

KUWAIT CITY, May 23: The Kuwaiti authorities have foiled an attempt to smuggle 550 cartons of government subsidized milk and other foodstuffs. The incident highlights the ongoing efforts to combat illicit trade and protect the integrity of the local supply chain, reports Al-Rai daily

Abdullah Al-Hajri, Director of the Sulaibiya and Vegetable Customs Administration, told the daily that, from January 1, 2022 to May 6, 2023, tons of food supplies were seized, including 8,800 cartons of milk, 1,173 bags of sugar, 224 boxes of infant formula, 5,036 boxes of oil, and 4,490 bags of bread and rice, 1,492 bags of lentils, 486 cartons of tomato paste, 5,100 bags of flour, 11,882 bags of pasta, and 3,675 boxes of ghee which the suspects were attempting to smuggle out of the country.

He stated that these seizures are part of a series of customs seizures that took place within about 16 months, pointing out that customs seizure reports were recorded and handed over to the Supply Department at the Ministry of Commerce to take the necessary action in this regard.

He stressed that the customs personnel stand on the lookout for the smugglers of supply materials at all customs outlets, explaining that they have strict instructions to check the departing goods and vehicles to prevent the smuggling of these subsidized foodstuffs.

Al-Hajri added that the customs personnel, in cooperation with the ministries of Commerce and the Interior, carry out preemptive checks on shipping companies, which resulted in the detection of some of those involved in smuggling supplies by hiding them in personal belongings when shipped.

This is in addition to the Ministry of Commerce tightening control over workers at the ration distribution centers at the cooperative societies, as well as through the automatic link between the distribution centers and the ministry.

From January 1, 2022 to May 6, 2023 the authorities have seized 8,800 cans of powdered milk, 1,173 bags of sugar, 224 boxes of infant formula, 5,036 cans of oil, 4,490 bread bags, 1,492 bags of lentils, 486 cartons of tomato paste, 5,100 bags of flour, 11,882 bags of pasta and 3,675 boxes of local ghee.

According to reports, the confiscated powdered milk tins were intended to be smuggled out of Kuwait in violation of import regulations. The authorities, vigilant in their duties, intercepted the shipment at a port of entry, preventing the illegal entry of the goods.

Kuwaiti authorities remain committed to combating smuggling activities and maintaining the integrity of the local market. Such acts undermine the efforts of the government to provide essential supplies to its citizens and can have adverse effects on the economy and public welfare.

Employment in co-ops: The mechanism for employing citizens in cooperative societies will be approved within this week in accordance with the ministerial decision on appointing citizens in supervisory positions, reports Al-Anba daily quoting a reliable source from the Ministry of Social Affairs.

The source confirmed that the mechanism is in line with the protocol signed by the ministry, Union of Cooperative Societies and Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) last week.

The source said the Quadripartite Committee concerned with employment is expected to hold its meeting this week as per the protocol, indicating the launching of the employment platform is within the jurisdiction of PAM.

He added the conditions for appointment to supervisory positions are as follows: should be a Kuwaiti, and hold appropriate academic certificates obtained from a public or private university inside or outside the country or institutes accredited by the Ministry of Higher Education.



Subsidized foodstuff that has been seized by the authorities.

Customs to auction seized cigarettes

KUWAIT CITY, May 23: The General Administration of Customs said it will sell 40,099 cartons of cigarettes during a public auction saying most of these cigarettes were seized by customs inspectors from people who tried to smuggle them out of the country, reports Al-Anba daily.

The Al-Anba daily said the customs

will also auction 202 parcels containing various goods, next Wednesday (May 23) at the Bait Al-Mal in Sulaibiya.

In a press release, the customs administration said it has the right to stop the sale, postpone it, or hold it at another date and time in the event of not obtaining the appropriate price or for any reasons it deems contrary to its interest.





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'MI' places Kuwaitis second after Swiss as happiest people in world

Low unemployment rates main reason for Kuwaitis: Hanke



KUNA photo
Dr Ashkanani briefs on the exhibition collections on the 60th anniversary of Kuwait's membership to the United Nations.

Kuwaiti official encourages taking part in more cultural events in int'l forums

NEW YORK, May 23, (KUNA): Assistant Secretary general for the Arts Sector in the National Council for Culture, Arts and Literature Musaad Al-Zamil affirms the importance of increasing Kuwaiti cultural participation in international forums especially the ones organized by the UN.

This came in a statement by Al-Zamil to KUNA, on the sidelines of the celebration, recently, organized by Kuwait's permanent delegation at the UN in the General Secretariat HQ in NYC, on 60th anniversary of Kuwait's membership at the UN.

Al-Zamil said that he was honored to lead the Kuwaiti delegation, as assistant secretary for the arts sector in National Council for Culture, Arts and Literature (NCCAL) in this historic and important event, at the invitation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Al-Zamil added that a specific scenario has been created for the celebration held by the Kuwaiti delegation to the United Nations, headed by Kuwait's permanent representative at the United Nations, Ambassador Tareq Al-Banai, that includes an art exhibition of private possessions and paintings of pioneering artists in expressive art in Kuwait.

Professor of Anthropology and Archeology in the Department of Sociology and Social Work at the College of Social Sciences, Dr. Hassan Ashkanani shared his valuable possessions of pictures, books and stamps, especially the ones related to Kuwait's membership in the United Nations, noted Al-Zamil.

The exhibition included many publications of the cultural sector, including books, Al-Arabi magazine, and all the publications of the NCCAL, as well as a documentary film and a concert led by a group of academic musicians from the Higher Institute of Musical Arts and a show about Kuwaiti folk heritage, he explained.

The ceremony had a great success and concluded with a song about Kuwait and the Arab Gulf states, stated Al-Zamil.

KUWAIT CITY, May 23: Economist Steve Hanke of the Johns Hopkins University says Kuwaitis are the happiest Arab people and the second happiest people in the world, after Switzerland on a list of 157 countries as shown by the Misery Index, reports Al-Rai daily.

The Hanke annual Misery Index sums up unemployment, inflation and bank lending rates minus the change in the real per capita GDP.

In his annual index, Hanke attributed the main reason for the happiness of Kuwaitis to low unemployment rates, which is the same factor for the happiness of the Swiss.

According to the index, Kuwait, despite the country's political differences, achieved a strong performance in all fields in 2022. Based on Hanke's calculations, the negatives were minimal, while the good indicators were strong (annual real GDP growth reached 4.5 percent).

Thanks to the strong economic performance, Switzerland, Kuwait, Ireland, Japan, Malaysia, Taiwan, Niger, Thailand, Togo and Malta occupied the top ten positions as the happiest countries in the world in 2022.

In contrast, Zimbabwe, Venezuela, Syria, Lebanon, Sudan, Argentina, Yemen, Ukraine, Cuba, Turkey, Sri Lanka, Haiti, Angola, Tonga and Ghana were the 15 most miserable countries in the world.

The idea of the Misery Index was originated by the well-known economist Arthur Okun, who served as Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers during the Johnson administration and developed the original Misery Index for the United States. The Okun index is equal to the sum of inflation and unemployment rates.

The index was later modified by Harvard University professor Robert Barrow who modified the misery index by also including the 30-year government bond yield and the output gap to real GDP.

Then Steve Hanke also modified Barrow's version of the misery index by replacing the output gap with the real GDP per capita growth rate and replacing the 30-year government bond yield with the lending rate. Hanke argues that the higher the interest rates, the higher the cost of credit, and with it the more miserable the borrowers.

HH the Amir condoles Italian president over flood victims

KUWAIT CITY, May 23, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent Tuesday a cable to Italian President Sergio Mattarella, expressing condolences on the victims of floods that swamped north of Italy and left casualties.

In the cable, His Highness the Amir wished for the swift recovery of those injured in the floods and hoped for the safety and welfare of the leadership and people of Italy.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable to President

Sergio Mattarella, expressing condolences on the victims of floods that swamped north of Italy and left casualties.

In the cable, His Highness the Crown Prince wished for the swift recovery of those injured in the floods and hoped for the safety and welfare of the leadership and people of Italy.

Also, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent a cable to President Sergio Mattarella, expressing condolences on the victims of floods that swamped north of Italy and left casualties.



KUNA photo
Kuwaiti Deputy FM Ambassador Al-Otaibi with Niger's Waqf Authority Chief Dr Al-Ghabed.

Kuwait's Deputy FM meets Niger's Waqf Authority Chief Dr Al-Ghabed

Kuwaiti Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi met on Tuesday with visiting former Nigerian Prime Minister, ex-chief of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and Current Board Chairman of the High Authority for Waqf in Niger, Dr. Hamed Al-Ghabed.

During the meeting, the Nigerian official delivered a letter to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah from President of Niger Mohammad Bazoum regarding friendly relations between Kuwait and Niger and ways of promoting them in all fields. (KUNA)

MoC approves excellent job 'bonus'

KD 180 screen allowance okayed for 'pandemic time' Gulf teachers

KUWAIT CITY, May 23: The Civil Service Commission has approved a screen allowance of 180 dinars for each teacher from the GCC countries – those who worked during the distance learning period at the height of the corona crisis -- working in public education schools similar to their Kuwaiti counterparts who are eligible for this allowance, reports Al-Rai daily quoting an educational source.

The source stated that the administrative sector in the Ministry of Education had submitted a list of the names to the CSC and is awaiting approval.

Meanwhile, the educational areas have completed the task of listing the names of teachers who are shortlisted to be replaced and their services will be terminated before May 31.

The source said that the financial sector in the ministry will pay teachers' dues and salaries until next September and not at the end of the year as has been rumored by some sources.

In the meantime, the Ministry of Communications has approved the excellent job performance bonus of 2,272 employees for the year 2022, reports Al-Rai daily.

The total amount of the bonus is estimated at KD1 million and it will be deposited into the accounts of eligible employees in the coming days – upon approval of the performance assessments.

Acting Undersecretary Eng Ahmed Al-Majren has approved the list of beneficiaries which, for the first time in the history of the ministry, excluded the undersecretary and assistant undersecretaries due to retirement or interim status.

Sources disclosed the bonus amount is based on the job grade and title, in addition to the Civil Service Commission regulations, as follows: KD1,500 for the department director and office manager; KD 1,250 for the observer; KD 1,000 for the department head and office manager; KD 850 for the division head; KD 800 for Kuwaitis occupying first to fourth degree jobs; KD 600 for Kuwaitis with the fifth to eighth degree jobs; KD 300 for Kuwaitis occupying auxiliary and assistant technical positions; KD 300 for non-Kuwaitis receiving lump sum salary; and KD 200 for non-Kuwaitis under the piecemeal category.

Meanwhile, the Civil Service Commission (CSC) has announced the launching of social allowance services on the unified government online platform (Sahl), reports Al-Qabas daily.

The CSC posted on its official Twitter account that these new services are as follows: request to stop social allowance for children, request to stop social allowance for the wife, request to amend the health

'Kuwait Airways' adds Manaqeesh to fleet – official

KUWAIT CITY, May 23: The Kuwait Airways announced that it had received the eighth Airbus A320neo aircraft, the Manaqeesh, which comes as part of a deal that includes nine aircraft of the same type, reports Al-Rai daily.

Ali Al-Dukhan, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Kuwait Airways, said the plane, which arrived from the Airbus factory in the French city of Toulouse, is among the desired goals pursued by the KAC as part of its strategic plan to expand its airline network around the world.

Al-Dukhan added that the presence of the A320neo in the Kuwait Airways fleet enhances its position as a regional and global leader, stressing the keenness to continuously follow up on customer requirements to provide the best and latest services.

He explained that with the arrival of the "Manaqeesh", the Kuwait Airways fleet now includes 32 aircraft, including three Airbus A330-200s, seven Airbus A200-320se, 10 Boeing 777-300ERs, and 8 Airbus, Airbus A320neo and four Airbus A330-800.

He pointed out that Kuwait Airways has agreed with Airbus to receive six Airbus A321neo aircraft with a capacity of 169 seats and three A321neo-LR aircraft with a capacity of 169 seats in the coming years, since they are characterized by high technical specifications and modern technology.

Al-Dukhan stated that the Airbus A321neo aircraft contains additional advantages that achieve the company's goals in terms of profitability and sustainability, in addition to "significant savings" in operating costs.

status and allowance for children, request for children allowance and request to pay social allowance for the wife. It affirmed that these services are in addition to the existing ones like issuing notifications; request for personal, job, financial and leave balance data; inquiring about a transaction; inquiring about those registered in the central employment system and viewing eight types of certificates.

It added that the total number of beneficiaries of its online services has reached 360,236.

Bid to extend examining smart meter offers

KUWAIT CITY, May 23: Informed sources in the Ministry of Electricity and Water revealed that the ministry has addressed the Central Agency for Tenders, to extend the period of looking into offers for the second tender for smart meters, which includes "700 thousand meters" for an additional month which is expected to be completed on June 16 this year, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The sources said the ministry had received the offers from the agency on April 19, but the complexity of the technical items related to the tender requires giving the ministry

sufficient time to study the 9 offers, after the agency excluded two offers before sending the documents to the ministry.

The sources pointed out that the total number of smart meters that have been installed in the country since the launch of the plan in October 2021 has reached 125,200 until today, and all the meters that are installed in the new areas, including Al-Mutla'a and West Abdullah Al-Mubarak, are smart meters, as well as those that are installed based on requests to strengthen the current.

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Largest international provider of accreditation in country: Ambassador Mawani

Accreditation Canada makes vital contributions to Kuwait healthcare sector

KUWAIT CITY, May 23: The Canadian Ambassador to Kuwait HE Aliya Mawani hosted members of the Accreditation Canada (AC) at her residence to celebrate the long partnership in the field of healthcare between Kuwait and Canada and highlighted the commitment of both countries to quality care and patient safety.

Speaking on the sidelines of the event she said, "Today, AC remains the largest international provider of accreditation in the country, working with leading health care providers. It is great to see the AC, making such important contributions to the health sector in Kuwait and continues to be the preferred provider for many prestigious hospitals and medical facilities."

Partnership

"These are important milestones in the long-standing health sector partnership between Canada and Kuwait. It is wonderful to see Accreditation Canada, as one of the global leaders in this field, making such important contributions to the health sector in Kuwait and continue to be the provider of choice for many prestigious hospitals and medical facilities," said the Canadian envoy.

Initiatives in Kuwait, she said, have also included a long-standing collaboration with the Ministry of Health to build Kuwait's National Accreditation Program for Public Hospitals.

She added, this continued trust in Canadian accreditation, is evidence of "our strong mutual commitment to quality care and patient safety by applying the highest practices and standards of Canadian healthcare in Kuwait."

Katerina Tarasova, Executive Director of International Accreditation said, "We are honoured to celebrate the accomplishments of our clients in Kuwait who have demonstrated an exemplary commitment to quality and safety in healthcare. By working together and using international standards of excellence, we are putting patients and their families first."

Tarasova said her visit to Kuwait comes within the framework of their celebration of the achievements of our customers, who have shown an exemplary commitment to quality and safety in health care over 20 years since the beginning of the Canadian International Cooperation with hospitals and medical centers in the government and private sector health facilities.

She added that this cooperation is considered the longest that the Founda-

tion has conducted with a country in the world, pointing out that they work with about 40 countries, and that this visit is "an opportunity to gather our clients in Kuwait in the government and private sectors with members of the delegation."

She indicated that the institution works closely and cooperates directly with many hospitals in Kuwait in order to complete the international accreditation process.

In response to a question about the cooperation of AC with government hospitals, Tarasova said, "The institution has been working and cooperating with the Ministry of Health from 2008 to 2018, and this is also considered a long-term cooperation. Our work with the ministry began with the development of government hospitals to set quality standards."

She added, "Despite the completion of the project, we are still in contact with the Ministry in its hospitals and medical centers," explaining that "the Foundation has trained about 40 medical and nursing cadres in the government sector on how to achieve quality, security and safety standards, and develop their knowledge and expertise."

She pointed out that "the Foundation's cooperation program with the Kuwaiti Ministry of Health to develop government hospitals included 14 government hospitals, and the Kuwaiti government's goal was to obtain Canadian accreditation for all its hospitals."

"Despite the challenges posed by the Corona pandemic in various countries of the world," she added, "this program continued to implement quality standards in Kuwait, praising the competence of the Kuwaiti medical personnel participating in the program."

Workshop

Continued expansion of quality initiatives in Kuwait is anticipated as an increasing number of clinics are seeking accreditation. A workshop to introduce the Qmentum program was held today, (May 22, 2023) and will support these entities in preparing for a quality journey.

Accreditation Canada's Qmentum accreditation program helps providers meet global standards, putting mechanisms in place that lead to safe and effective care.

Qmentum accreditation can be applied at the national, system or provider level - helping you measure and improve quality using common standards and language to increase efficiency, communication and coordination.

'Coordination between 2 countries is permanent & continuous'

Palestinian Amb. praises Kuwait's support in int'l forums

KUWAIT CITY, May 23: The Palestinian Ambassador to Kuwait Rami Tahboub praised the strength and durability of the Palestinian-Kuwaiti relations, describing it as distinguished, reports Al-Anba daily.

He affirmed that Kuwait enjoys the confidence, respect and appreciation of the Palestinian leadership, led by President Mahmoud Abbas, and that it is always present in the conscience of the Palestinian people.

The ambassador said, "We appreciate Kuwait's support for Palestine in all international forums. We are proud of these pioneering relations between the two brotherly states."

In his speech during a press conference held at the embassy headquarters on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the Nakba, Ambassador Tahboub said, "As to what is required of Kuwait in the next stage, there is nothing required of Kuwait, as it does not wait for us to ask, but always takes the initiative to stand by the Palestinian cause and support it with all possible ways."

Coordination between the two countries is permanent and continuous. Our confidence in the Kuwaiti foreign policy is very great. Kuwait plays an important role in the regional and international arenas. We are always keen to inform the Kuwaiti side of everything related to the Palestinian issue and everything that happens in Palestine or about any Israeli violations against our people."



Amb. Tahboub

Facilities

Regarding the Kuwaitis who visited Palestine and the facilities provided to them by the embassy, Tahboub explained that 500 Kuwaitis, in addition to official and private Kuwaiti institutions, visited Palestine during the past five years after they submitted requests in this regard to the Civil Affairs Unit for the necessary permits to enter Palestine.

When asked about the Palestinian teachers contracted by Kuwait's Ministry of Education, he said, "The total number of Palestinian teachers recruited since 2017 to date has reached 1,250. A new batch of 70 teachers will arrive within days. This confirms Kuwait's confidence in the Palestinian teachers, and we are proud of it. We are very proud of our teachers who have proven their worth, sincerity and loyalty to their work since 2017 to this day."

Tahboub explained, "There are some properties owned by Kuwaitis in Palestine and registered under their names officially in all Palestinian departments. Strict instructions were issued by President Abbas to preserve the properties of Kuwaitis and not to dispose of them in any way. If there is anyone who wishes to go to Palestine in order to receive his real estate and properties, we are ready to make the necessary arrangements to facilitate his entry into Palestine to receive their property."

Since the opening of the Palestinian embassy in Kuwait, the number of files in our possession is 54 files. This means 54 families have property in Palestine. A number of owners of these properties have disposed of their property."

Regarding the changes in the last 75 years after the Nakba, Tahboub said, "The Palestinian Nakba is continuous from 1948 to the present day. It is a crime that is still happening every day. The Israeli occupation is trying to empty all of Palestine of its people and wants to keep us in a state of permanent Nakba."

Issue

He went on to say, "The issue of Palestine is a central issue for all Arabs and Muslims. The Arab peace initiative has become a basic document of the Security Council and the United Nations, and a reference for the peace process or the political process in the Middle East. It is a basis for resolving the Palestinian-Israeli conflict from our point of view, in addition to peace references and various UN Security Council resolutions regarding the Palestinian cause."

Jerusalem and Al-Aqsa Mosque are a red line for us as Palestinians first and also as Arabs and Muslims. Protecting Al-Aqsa Mosque, protecting Jerusalem in general, and protecting Islamic and Christian sanctities from violations is a duty for all of us."

The ambassador thanked the Kuwait Red Crescent Society for restoring more than 20 shops in one of the most important markets in the Old City of Jerusalem, which led to the return of life to the Old City.

Regarding the Palestinian-Palestinian reconciliation, Tahboub indicated that there is a permanent dialogue among the Palestinian factions, expressing his hope that this reconciliation will come soon and the Palestinian people will unite with its various factions.

Kuwait attends OIC talks on trade aspect of human rights

OIC strongly condemns Israeli crime in Nablus

RIYADH, May 23, (KUNA): Kuwait's consul general in Saudi Arabia's Red Sea city of Jeddah Mohammad Al-Mutairi led his country's delegation during talks on Monday involving Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) member states, focusing on the link between trade and human rights.

Protecting human rights in the realm of trade and commercial activities is of the "utmost importance," the Kuwaiti diplomat, who also serves as his country's permanent delegate to the Islamic bloc, said during the talks, emphasizing the necessity of more cooperation on the matter.

The talks underlined the aim of ensuring that global trade rules and agreements promote rather than undermine the principles of human rights, he added.

Meanwhile, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) strongly condemned the "heinous crime" committed by the Israeli occupation forces in Nablus today, which led to the killing of three Palestinians and wounded several others.

In a statement, OIC stated that this crime is an extension of several other daily crimes and attacks committed by the Israeli forces against Palestinians in a blatant "violation" of international humanitarian law, calling for an investigation.

It also holds the Israeli government fully responsible for the ongoing escalation and reiterated its demand for the international community to intervene to end the continuous Israeli aggression and provide international protection for the Palestinians.

Assistant FM renews Kuwait's firm stance

'Kuwait continues supporting Palestinian issue'

KUWAIT CITY, May 23, (KUNA): Assistant Foreign Minister for Arab World Affairs Ambassador Ahmad Al-Bakr has reiterated Kuwait's historical stance, on both official and popular levels, that supports the Palestinian cause and Palestinian rights, and rejects the Israeli occupation practices.

In a speech commemorating the 75th Anniversary of Nakba Day organized by the Palestinian Embassy in Kuwait, in cooperation with Kuwait Cartoon Society, Al-Bakr said Kuwait was a springboard for the Palestinian struggle and continues to be a voice defending the fair cause at all arenas.

He renewed Kuwait's firm stance on backing the Palestinian cause in



KUNA photo
Assistant Foreign Minister for Arab World Affairs, Ambassador Ahmad Al-Bakr

the face of the Israeli occupation, and standing side by side with Palestinian people and their choices.

He went to say that Kuwait further supports all efforts aiming to reach a fair and comprehensive solution to ensure the end of the occupation and the refugees' return as well as the establishment of an independent Palestinian state on 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Meanwhile, Palestinian Ambassador to Kuwait Rami Tahboub lauded Kuwait's stance toward the Palestinian cause and Palestinians.

He also extolled Kuwait's economic and financial support to Palestinian people, saying, "Kuwait's backing to Palestine at international arenas is the most important pillar of political support to Palestinians".

'Ties based on two vital pillars'

Amb. Al-Hain praises ties among Kuwait, WHO

GENEVA, May 23, (KUNA): Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the UN and other international organizations in Geneva, Ambassador Nasser Al-Hain hailed the distinguished ties between Kuwait and the World Health Organization (WHO).

This came in remarks to KUNA Monday on the sidelines of the World Health Assembly.

Al-Hain also noted that this year's meeting holds great importance as it coincides with WHO's Diamond Jubilee (75th anniversary) and the 60th anniversary of Kuwait's membership at the UN.

Furthermore, Al-Hain noted that these two occasions are a reminder of



KUNA photo
Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the UN and other international organizations in Geneva, Ambassador Nasser Al-Hain.

the distinguished relations between Kuwait and the organization, as well

as other international organizations.

He explained that the cooperation between Kuwait and the World Health Organization is based on two pillars, the first deals with health affairs in the country, as it is reinforced by a partnership between the two sides, while the second one is related to cooperation in regional and international files.

Al-Hain noted Kuwait's keenness to support the draft resolution presented before the World Health Assembly regarding the health situation in the Arab lands occupied by Israel, including East Jerusalem and the Syrian Golan, due to what the Palestinians are going through at the hands of the Israeli occupation authorities.



Canadian envoy speaking at the event.



Photos by Mahmoud Jaded
Dignitaries pose for a photo with Ambassador Mawani and Katerina Tarasova.

TGS presents Dr Sahar Ghannam

This Thursday, The Guest Show (TGS) presents Dr Sahar Ghannam, a renowned Egyptian dermatologist and aesthetic medicine specialist based in Kuwait.

Dr Sahar Ghannam is a consultant in dermatology, venerology, cosmetic dermatology and laser. She has served innumerable patients in Kuwait since 1997 and in the greater Gulf region since 2010. Dr Ghannam is the first Arab doctor to be the President of the International Society for Dermatologic

and Aesthetic Surgery of the World (ISDS World) and the International Peeling Society (IPS). An active member of several societies, she serves on different medical boards, teaches and writes.

In this episode of the Guest Show, she speaks to Chaitali B. Roy about her journey in medicine, about breaking glass ceilings, the obsession of women with cosmetic procedures and the challenges faced by women as they climb up the professional ladder.

THE GUEST SHOW
CHAITALI B ROY
Radio Kuwait International English Station

Guest: **Dr. Sahar Ghannam**
Consultant Dermatologist & Aesthetic Medicine
Director: **Anees Backer**
Episode 124
25/05/2023 @ 10am & 10pm
93.3fm and 963am

The Guest Show poster.

Chevron **JOINT OPERATIONS WAFRA**

SAUDI ARABIAN CHEVRON INC. (SAC) - KUWAIT GULF OIL COMPANY

Joint Operations (Saudi Arabian Chevron Inc. / Kuwait Gulf Oil Company), announces the under-mentioned Public Tenders for procurement of materials.

Kuwaiti and Saudi Merchants, registered with either Company wishing to participate in any of the under-mentioned Tenders are invited to collect the Tender documents from Purchasing Section, Purchasing & Logistic Division, Administration Building, Ground Floor, Joint Operations, Wafra, during the official working hours from **24 MAY 2023** up to **11 JUN 2023** for a non-refundable fee mentioned against each tender.

Tender Fees to be deposited in the National bank of Kuwait (NBK) Account No. 1001132057. Saudi Suppliers can collect the tender documents from Saudi Arabian Chevron office in Al-Khobar Telephone No.: (013) 8645104 - Fax No.: (013) 8985436

The closing date for the following Tender will be on **Monday, 19 JUN 2023 @ 09:00 A.M.**

S.NO.	TENDER NO.	MATERIALS	FEES (IN KD)
1	2865816	VAPOR RECOVERY UNITS	250
2	2865818	CONTROL VALVES	5
3	2869529	RADAR, PRESSURE, AND TEMPERATURE LEVEL MEASUREMENT TRANSMITTERS	5

Notes:

Gate Passes are required for Suppliers entering JO-Wafra Administrative Offices to collect the tender document and gate pass processing time is 48 hours. Please fill request for gate pass along with legible copies of Authorization letter, Civil ID, Car Registration, Supplier Registration (KGO or SAC) to e-mail mydg@chevron.com and cbms@chevron.com at least 48 hours prior to arrival.

For additional information, you may contact :

Telephone No.: **23983639** - Ext. : **2502 - 3477**

oil down

Price of Kuwaiti oil went down 75 cents to settle at USD 76.60 per barrel on Monday, compared with USD 77.35 pb on Friday, said Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) Tuesday.

The prices of the Brent crude and the West Texas Intermediate at the global market both went up by 41 and 44 cents each to reach USD 75.99 pb and USD 71.99 pb. (KUNA)

OPEC Secretary General Haitham Al-Ghais said late Monday that technological innovation would play a critical role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Al-Ghais made the remark in a speech he delivered during the 30th Annual Middle East Petroleum and Gas conference (MPGC), held on May 22-23, 2023, Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE).

"This is why our Member Countries invest heavily in hydrogen projects, carbon capture utilization and storage facilities, and the circular carbon economy," he said.

President of the UAE Sheikh Mohammad bin Zayed Al Nahyan announced at the beginning of the year that

'technological innovation's role in cutting gas emissions critical'

2023 would be the "Year of Sustainability".

"This reflects this country's longstanding commitment to sustainable practices and international cooperation to address the challenges of our times," he added. The culmination of the "Year of Sustainability" will be Dubai hosting of the COP28, which represents a moment of tremendous pride for OPEC, the OPEC chief noted.

Meanwhile, Al-Ghais emphasized, "Despite the urgent need for investment, we have heard disheartening calls from some quarters to divest from hydrocarbons".

He went on saying that the OPEC has been clear in highlighting the very real and dangerous consequences of divestment or underinvestment in the oil industry.

"The reality is that oil and gas will continue to be an integral part of the energy mix for the foreseeable future," he pointed out.

Al-Ghais, said that the energy transition must be fair and inclusive, where no one would be left behind.

The Secretary General made these remarks in his address to OPEC's 23rd Coordination Meeting on Climate Change held via videoconference in preparation for the upcoming meeting of COP28.

The Secretary General stressed, in a pre-recorded video message, that "we are particularly proud to have an OPEC Member Country at the helm of the highly important COP meeting. (KUNA)

Market Movements

23-05-2023

	Change	Closing pts		Change	Closing pts
EGYPT	-	EGX 30	+0.14	16,787.71	
UAE	-	DFM	-0.45	3,533.23	
JAPAN	-	Nikkei	-0.42	30,957.77	
PAKISTAN	-	KSE 100	-0.21	41,116.63	
PHILIPPINES	-	PSEi	-0.26	6,603.56	
SAUDI	-	Tadawul	-0.47	11,275.77	

Business

The Conversation

Govt hit the ceiling back in January

Why America has a debt ceiling: 5 questions answered

By Steven Pressman

The New School

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



Republicans and Democrats are again playing a game of chicken over the U.S. debt ceiling - with the nation's financial stability at stake.

Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen recently said that June 1, 2023, is a "hard deadline" for raising the debt limit, currently set at US\$31.38 trillion, to avoid an unprecedented default. The government hit the ceiling back in January and has been using "extraordinary measures" since then to keep paying its bills.

Last-minute negotiations between the White House and Republicans have been mostly fruitless as conservatives in the House push for big spending cuts and policy changes, while President Joe Biden has insisted on lifting the ceiling with no strings attached. They are expected to continue to meet in the coming days.

Economist Steven Pressman explains what the debt ceiling is and why we have it - and why it may be time to abolish it.

Like the rest of us, governments must borrow when they spend more money than they receive. They do so by issuing bonds, which are IOUs that promise to repay the money in the future and make regular interest payments. Government debt is the total sum of all this borrowed money.

The debt ceiling, which Congress established a century ago, is the maximum amount the government can borrow. It's a limit on the national debt.

The U.S. government debt of \$31.38 trillion is about 22% more than the value of all goods and services that will be produced in the U.S. economy this year.

Around one-quarter of this money the government actually owes itself. The Social Security Administration has accumulated a surplus and invests the extra money, currently \$2.8 trillion, in government bonds. And the Federal Reserve holds \$5.5 trillion in U.S. Treasuries.

The rest is public debt. As of October 2022, foreign countries, companies and individuals owned \$7.2 trillion of U.S. government debt. Japan and China are the largest holders, with around \$1 trillion each. The rest is owed to U.S. citizens and businesses, as well as state and local governments.

Before 1917, Congress would authorize the government to borrow a fixed sum of money for a specified term. When loans were repaid, the government could not borrow again without asking Congress for approval.

The Second Liberty Bond Act of 1917, which created the debt ceiling, changed this. It allowed a

continual rollover of debt without congressional approval.

Congress enacted this measure to let then-President Woodrow Wilson spend the money he deemed necessary to fight World War I without waiting for often-absent lawmakers to act. Congress, however, did not want to write the president a blank check, so it limited borrowing to \$11.5 billion and required legislation for any increase.

The debt ceiling has been increased dozens of times since then and suspended on several occasions. The last change occurred in December 2021, when it was raised to \$31.38 trillion.

Whenever the U.S. nears its debt limit, the Treasury secretary can use "extraordinary measures" to conserve cash, which she indicated began on Jan. 19. One such measure is temporarily not funding retirement programs for government employees. The expectation will be that once the ceiling is raised, the government would make up the difference. But this will buy only a small amount of time.

If the debt ceiling isn't raised before the Treasury Department exhausts its options, decisions will have to be made about who gets paid with daily tax revenues. Further borrowing will not be possible. Government employees or contractors may not be paid in full. Loans to small businesses or college students may stop.

When the government can't pay all its bills, it is technically in default. Policymakers, economists and Wall Street are concerned about a calamitous financial and economic crisis. Many fear that a government default would have dire economic consequences - soaring interest rates, financial markets in panic and maybe an economic depression.

Under normal circumstances, once markets start panicking, Congress and the president usually act. This is what happened in 2013 when Republicans sought to use the debt ceiling to defund the Affordable Care Act.

But we no longer live in normal political times. The major political parties are more polarized than ever, and the concessions McCarthy gave right-wing Republicans may make it impossible to get a deal on the debt ceiling.

One possible solution is a legal loophole allowing the U.S. Treasury to mint platinum coins of any denomination. If the U.S. Treasury were to mint a \$1 trillion coin and deposit it into its bank account at the Federal Reserve, the money could be used to pay for government programs or repay government bondholders. This could even be justified by appealing to Section 4 of the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution: "The validity of the public debt of the United States ... shall not be questioned."

A compromise on those top-line spending levels would enable McCarthy to deliver for conservatives, while not being so severe that it would chase off the Democratic votes that would be needed in the divided Congress to pass any bill.

No debt ceiling deal, but Biden and McCarthy call WH talks 'productive'

Crucial moment for the two leaders

WASHINGTON, May 23, (AP): President Joe Biden and House Speaker Kevin McCarthy both said they had a productive debt ceiling discussion late Monday at the White House, but there was no agreement as negotiators strained to raise the nation's borrowing limit in time to avert a potentially chaotic federal default.

It's a crucial moment for the Democratic president and the Republican speaker, just 10 days before a looming deadline to raise the debt limit.

As soon as June 1, Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said in a letter to Congress, "it is highly likely" the government will be unable to pay all the nation's bills. Such an unprecedented default would be financially damaging for many Americans and others around the world relying on U.S. stability, sending shockwaves through the global economy.

Each side praised the other's seriousness, but basic differences remained. They are at odds over how to trim annual budget deficits. Republicans are determined to cut spending while Biden's team offered to hold spending levels flat. Biden wants to increase some taxes on the wealthiest Americans and some big companies, but McCarthy said early on that that is out of the question.

In a brief post-meeting statement, Biden called the session productive but merely added that he, McCarthy and their lead negotiators "will continue to discuss the path forward." Upbeat, McCarthy said their teams would work "through the night."

Biden said all agreed that "default is not really on the table."

Though there is no agreement on basic issues, the contours of a deal seem within reach. A budget deal would unlock a separate vote to lift the debt ceiling, now \$31 trillion, to allow more borrowing.

Negotiations are focused on finding compromise over a 2024 budget year cap that would be key to resolving the standoff. Republicans insisted next year's spending be less than it is now, but the White House instead offered to hold spending flat at current 2023 numbers.

Republicans initially sought to roll back next year's spending to 2022 levels, and impose 1% caps on spending growth for 10 years, though a later proposal narrowed that to about six years. The White House wants a two-year budget deal, keeping 2024 spending flat. They proposed a 1% cap on spending growth for 2025, according to a person familiar with the talks and granted anonymity to discuss them.

A compromise on those top-line spending levels would enable McCarthy to deliver for conservatives, while not being so severe that it would chase off the Democratic votes that would be needed in the divided Congress to pass any bill.

Why Biden is wary of using the 14th Amendment to address the debt limit crisis

WASHINGTON, May 23, (AP): If the fight with Congress over raising the government's debt limit is such a dire threat, why doesn't President Joe Biden just raise the borrowing ceiling himself? It's theoretically possible, but he's all but ruled it out for now.

The administration has been searching for possible ways to allow the U.S. to keep borrowing if Congress can't come to an agreement. One potential option Biden and his advisers have been looking at: Would he have the power to go around lawmakers by relying on the Constitution's 14th Amendment in a last-ditch move to avert default?

Maybe. But the main problem now, as Biden sees it, is the short time frame from now until the U.S. could default on its debts. It is almost certain to get tangled up in the courts, which would likely push the country beyond June 1, which is when the Treasury Department says the U.S. could be unable to pay its bills.

"We have not come up with a unilateral action that could succeed in a matter of two weeks or three weeks," Biden told reporters during a news conference in Hiroshima, Japan, on Sunday as he concluded the Group of Seven summit. "That's the issue."

Biden has viewed the 14th Amendment route as a problematic, untested

Asian stocks fall

Wall St slips as debt worries hang

NEW YORK, May 23, (AP): Wall Street is slipping Tuesday as the U.S. government creeps closer to the edge of a potentially disastrous default on its debt.

The S&P 500 was 0.6% lower in its first trading after President Joe Biden and House Speaker Kevin McCarthy closed a meeting late Monday that they called productive but ultimately ended with no deal.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average was down 56 points, or 0.2%, at 33,225, as of 1:03 p.m. Eastern time, while the Nasdaq composite was 0.7% lower.

Washington is facing a deadline as early as June 1, when the U.S. government could run out of cash to pay its bills unless Congress allows it to borrow more. Economists and investors widely believe a default would send shockwaves through the global economy and financial markets.

The stock market has remained resilient despite the concerns, largely because this scenario has played out many times before with Congress ultimately agreeing to a deal. The alternative simply seems too dire for anyone to allow.

But a worry on Wall Street is that Washington may not feel urgency to act until financial markets shake hard enough to show the stakes for politicians.

Some areas are showing more concerns, particularly in the bond market where some Treasury bills are supposed to get repaid around the date of a possible default. Prices for those bonds have fallen, in part because of the debt-ceiling worries, which in turn has pushed up their yields.

The worries about the debt ceiling are coming on top of concerns that the slowing economy may already be heading for a recession. A preliminary report released Tuesday morning suggested the economy remains split, with manufacturing remaining under pressure while growth for travel and other service businesses is strengthening.

"The US economic expansion gathered further momentum in May, but an increasing dichotomy is evident," said Chris Williamson, chief business economist at S&P Global Market Intelligence.

On Wall Street, electric vehicle maker Lordstown Motors fell 5.9% to 28 cents after it announced a reverse stock split in order to boost its share price. Investors will get one new share for every 15 they currently hold. Its stock has remained below \$1 since mid-March.

On the winning side of Wall Street was Lowe's, which rose 1.7% after reporting stronger profit and revenue for the latest quarter than analysts expected. But it also cut its financial forecasts for the year partly because of lower-than-expected sales to do-it-



A currency trader works near the screens showing the Korea Composite Stock Price Index (KOSPI), and the foreign exchange rate between U.S. dollar and South Korean won, (top right), at the foreign exchange dealing room of the KEB Hana Bank headquarters in Seoul, South Korea, Tuesday, May 23, 2023. Asian stock markets were mixed Tuesday after more talks in Washington on government debt ended with no deal to avoid a potentially jarring default. (AP)

yourself customers.

Last week, rival Home Depot projected its first decline in annual revenue since 2009 in the aftermath of the housing market crash and financial crisis.

Retailers are among the last companies to report their results for the first three months of the year, and most companies have been beating expectations. Retailers in particular have gotten lots of attention because resilient spending by U.S. households has been one of the main positives keeping the economy out of a recession.

Manufacturing and other areas of the economy are struggling under the weight of much higher interest rates meant to get inflation under control.

High interest rates have also meant stress for the U.S. banking system. Three high-profile bank failures since March have rattled the system, and Wall Street has been on the hunt for the next bank that could suffer a debilitating drop in confidence by its customers.

Some of the heaviest scrutiny has been on PacWest Bancorp, but it's rallying for a second day after announcing the sale of a \$2.6 billion portfolio of real-estate construction loans. It's up another 13.4% after jumping 19.5% Monday.

Other banks also rallied, including a 5.7% jump for Zions Bancorp. and a 4.9% climb for Comerica.

Also helping to limit losses for Wall Street were energy stocks, which climbed with the price of crude oil. Exxon Mobil gained 2.7%, and Chevron rose 3.2%. In the bond market, the 10-year Treasury yield ticked up to 3.73% from 3.72% late Monday. It helps set rates for mortgages and other important loans.

The two-year yield, which moves more on expectations for the Fed, rose

to 4.37% from 4.32%.

Most stock markets abroad fell, including a 1.3% drop for Hong Kong and a 1.5% slide for Shanghai.

Asia

Asian stock markets were mixed Tuesday after more talks in Washington on government debt ended with no deal to avoid a potentially jarring default.

Shanghai, Tokyo and Hong Kong sank. Oil prices rose.

The Shanghai Composite Index lost 1.4% to 3,251.72 and the Nikkei 225 in Tokyo shed 0.4% to 30,957.77. The Hang Seng in Hong Kong retreated 1.3% to 19,419.55.

The Kospi in Seoul advanced 0.4% to 2,567.55 and Sydney's S&P-ASX 200 was less than 0.1% lower at 61,963.68. India's Sensex opened up 0.4% at 62,207.50. New Zealand and Bangkok declined while Singapore and Jakarta advanced.

Worries about a potential U.S. debt default have added to investor unease about the health of the global economy following interest rate hikes to cool inflation and high-profile bank failures in the United States and Switzerland.

Oil

In energy markets, benchmark U.S. crude gained 11 cents to \$72.16 per barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. The contract rose 44 cents on Monday to \$71.99. Brent crude, the price basis for international oil trading, advanced 8 cents to \$76.07 per barrel in London. It added 41 cents the previous session to \$75.99.

Currencies

The dollar declined to 138.43 yen from Monday's 138.56 yen. The euro retreated to \$1.0809 from \$1.0819.

Car seats and baby formula are regulated. Is social media next?

WASHINGTON, May 23, (AP): The U.S. Surgeon General is warning there is not enough evidence to show that social media is safe for children and teens - and is calling on tech companies, parents and caregivers to take "immediate action to protect kids now."

With young people's social media use "near universal" but its true impact on mental health not fully understood, Dr. Vivek Murthy is asking tech companies to share data and increase transparency with researchers and the public and prioritize users' health and safety when designing their products.

"I recognize technology companies have taken steps to try to make their platforms healthier and safer, but it's simply not enough," Murthy told The Associated Press in an interview. "You can just look at the age require-

ments, where platforms have said 13 is the age at which people can start using their platforms. Yet 40% of kids eight through 12 are on social media. How does that happen if you're actually enforcing your policies?"

To comply with federal regulation, social media companies already ban kids under 13 from signing up to their platforms - but children have been shown to easily get around the bans, both with and without their parents' consent.

Other measures social platforms have taken to address concerns about children's mental health are also easily circumvented. For instance, TikTok recently introduced a default 60-minute time limit for users under 18. But once the limit is reached, minors can simply enter a passcode to keep watching. It's not that the companies are unaware of the harms their platforms are causing.

WASHINGTON, May 23, (AP): If the fight with Congress over raising the government's debt limit is such a dire threat, why doesn't President Joe Biden just raise the borrowing ceiling himself? It's theoretically possible, but he's all but ruled it out for now.

The administration has been searching for possible ways to allow the U.S. to keep borrowing if Congress can't come to an agreement. One potential option Biden and his advisers have been looking at: Would he have the power to go around lawmakers by relying on the Constitution's 14th Amendment in a last-ditch move to avert default?

legal theory to ensure the country can meet its financial obligations. Treasury says if Congress fails to act before the June 1 date, it could kick the country into a painful recession.

Still, with the White House and Republican legislators at loggerheads over whether Congress should simply allow the government to incur more debt so the country can pay its bills - as Biden wants - or insist on pairing it with deep spending cuts, as demanded by the GOP, it's no surprise that the president might be looking at emergency alternatives.

Biden over the weekend signaled the 14th Amendment option isn't completely off the table for the future.

"It's up to lawmakers," Biden said in Hiroshima. "But my hope and intention is: When we resolve this problem, I'd find a rationale to take it to the courts to see whether or not the 14th Amendment is, in fact, something that would be able to stop it."

WHAT DOES THE 14th AMENDMENT SAY?

The amendment, ratified in the aftermath of the Civil War, is better known for its provisions addressing citizenship and equal protection under the law. It has been used by the Supreme Court to mandate racial integration in schools in Brown v. Board of Education and same-sex marriage recognition in Obergefell v. Hodges.

BUSINESS

Climate protesters dragged from Shell shareholder meeting

Climate change protesters were dragged away as they tried to storm the stage at Shell's shareholder meeting Tuesday, while activist investors added pressure with a resolution demanding the global oil and gas giant beef up its emissions strategy.

Shell Chairman Andrew Mackenzie could not start the meeting for more than an hour as dozens of protesters stood up, chanting and singing "Shut down Shell" and "Go to hell, Shell." Several who tried to run onto the stage were stopped and

carried out of the room by security guards at a London's ExCel conference center.

The activists, including members of Greenpeace and Extinction Rebellion, say Shell and other fossil fuel firms are making record profits at the cost of the environment.

Shell reported a record \$39.9 billion profit for 2022. Fossil fuel companies have posted bumper earnings as global oil and natural gas prices soared after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, driving up inflation and helping create a cost-of-living crisis.

That sparked public anger in the U.K., where millions of households and businesses have struggled to cope with soaring energy bills.

"Shell is continuing to drill new oil and gas fields here in the U.K. and around the world in some of the most biodiverse regions in the Philippines and in the Niger Delta," said Carina Maniutus, 27, a protester from the group Fossil Free London.

"So we're here to say, 'Business as usual cannot continue and we're going to shut you down,'" Maniutus said. (AP)



Protesters who tried to storm the stage are taken out of the Excel centre in east London during oil giant Shell's annual general meeting in London, Tuesday, May 23, 2023. Climate change protesters disrupted Shell's shareholder Tuesday while activist investors sought to pressure executives with a resolution demanding the energy giant beef up its climate change strategy. (AP)

Almost half of consumers in the Mideast prefer chat apps and SMS over email for brand communications

ZURICH, May 23, (PR Newswire): Mitto, a leading provider of global omnichannel communications solutions, today announced the results of a survey that explored the communication preferences of consumers based in the Middle East. The survey found that chat apps and SMS were the most requested form of communication when interacting with a brand. This was especially true in industries where real-time updates are critical, including food delivery services and rideshares, where 41% of consumers reported these methods as their top communication choice. This highlights the immense value of brands engaging on multiple channels and offering omnichannel communications to ensure customers have flexibility and variety when interacting with businesses.

Bad CX is a Dealbreaker for Middle Eastern Consumers Mitto's survey of 1,000 consumers based in Qatar, Saudi Arabia and UAE aged 18+ found that positive customer experience (CX) and support were a priority for most consumers in the Middle East; more than 58% have experienced poor interactions with a brand in the past year. Most of these subpar experiences occurred via email, with 21% of respondents saying this was the channel most commonly used for negative conversations. These bad customer experiences reflect poorly on the brand, as almost two-thirds

(61%) of Middle Eastern consumers reported that they would lose trust in a business following these instances.

Nearly one-quarter of respondents (21%) said they would stop purchasing from a business after just one negative experience, indicating a strong link between good CX and revenue. Following 2-3 poor interactions, that number increases to 36% who reported they would then look to a competitor.

"Positive CX is a cornerstone of a successful business and our survey highlighted the need for more quality experiences in the Middle East. If brands do not understand their consumers' unique communication preferences or what they prioritize during support interactions, the businesses run the risk of losing current and future customers," said Andrea Giacomini, CEO of Mitto. "We know that personalization and flexibility are key when interacting with consumers in the Middle East. It is critical that brands adapt their communication channels to match the preferences of their target consumers before they lose them to a competitor."

Lack of Channel Diversity Can Drive Away Customers Consumers today expect to have a variety of options when it comes to interacting with brands and almost two-thirds (63%) believe it is essential for brands to communicate on multiple channels,

Mideast and North Africa online video advert revenue to more than double in '27

LONDON, May 23, (PR Newswire): The online video advertising market in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region will more than double to reach \$2.3bn in 2027 according to the latest research from Omdia.

"MENA is generating worldwide interest in the online advertising market thanks to the immense growth potential linked to the UAE and Saudi Arabia. With more than half of online video advertising revenues expected from TikTok, Meta and YouTube, online video players must integrate social video into their video strategies. It is important to note that this growth is the free video space and will not be to

the detriment of the online video subscription market which is on track to reach \$1.5bn in 2027 representing 54% growth."

Subscription video on demand (SVOD) subscriptions reached 11.1 million at the end of 2022, and more than 2 million new subscriptions expected this year.

The leading player is Arabic video on demand service, Shahid VIP, with 2.7 million subscriptions. In a close second place is STARZPLAY Arabia with 2.1 million subscriptions and NETFLIX is in third place with less than 2 million subscriptions.

Shahid holds the largest catalogue

of Arabic content in the region offering popular original shows such as Al Thaman and Siletto and coverage of the Saudi Pro League. There are also plans to launch more than 20 new free ad-supported television (FAST) channels.

STARZPLAY Arabia saw its numbers increase to 2.1 million subscriptions driven by subscribers to its premium football and cricket content thanks to telco partnership deals.

Netflix has continued to invest in original content in the Middle East, however, the scale and scope of its content is limited. The success of Dubai Binge should lead to more investments in high-quality, Middle

East-focused, unscripted content in the region. The streaming service has also amended its pricing strategy between the Gulf and North African countries to make it more accessible to low-income countries in the region.

Omdia forecasts that SVOD and telco partnerships will play a significant role in the growth of the online video services in the MENA region.

ABOUT OMDIA Omdia, part of Informa Tech, is a technology research and advisory group. Our deep knowledge of tech markets combined with our actionable insights empower organizations to make smart growth decisions.

Five users sue state

Montana is banning TikTok, but can it enforce the law and fend off lawsuits?

NEW YORK, May 23, (AP): TikTok is challenging Montana's first-of-its-kind law that makes it illegal for people to use the social media app in the state. It's the second lawsuit since the ban was adopted.

Montana Republican Gov. Greg Gianforte signed the law Wednesday expecting a legal fight. The law, scheduled to take effect Jan. 1, 2024, also faces questions over whether it can be enforced.

Five TikTok users sued the state last week saying the law is unconstitutional. TikTok made similar arguments in its lawsuit Monday in federal court in Missoula.

Montana's rules are more far-reaching than restrictions on TikTok in place elsewhere, which include bans on government-issued devices in nearly half the states and within the U.S. federal government.

There are 200,000 TikTok users in Montana and 6,000 businesses that use the video-sharing platform, according to company spokesperson Jamal Brown.

Here's what you need to know:
Why is Montana banning TikTok?
Proponents of the law in Montana claim the Chinese government could harvest U.S. user data from TikTok and use the platform to push pro-Beijing misinformation or messages to the public.

That mirrors arguments made by a bipartisan group of lawmakers in the U.S. Senate, as well as the heads of the FBI and the CIA, all of whom have said TikTok could pose a national security threat because its Beijing-based parent company ByteDance operates under Chinese law.

Critics have pointed to China's 2017 national intelligence law that compels companies to cooperate with the country's governments for state intelligence work. Another Chinese law, implemented in 2014, has similar mandates.

TikTok says it has never been asked to hand over its data, and it wouldn't do so if asked.

What does TikTok argue in the legal challenge?

The lawsuit filed Monday by TikTok, which is owned by Chinese tech company ByteDance, says the new law violates the Constitution's right to free speech. It says the law is based on unfounded speculation that the Chinese government could access users' data. "The state cites nothing to support these allegations," the company's attorneys wrote. "The state's bare speculation ignores the reality that (TikTok) has not shared, and would not share, U.S. user data with the Chinese government."

Emily Flower, spokesperson for the Montana Department of Justice, said the legal challenges were expected. She said the Chinese Communist Party was using TikTok as a tool to spy on Americans by "collecting personal information, keystrokes, and even the locations of its users."

The case could serve as a testing ground for the TikTok-free America many national lawmakers have envisioned.

How does Montana plan to ban TikTok?

The law will prohibit downloads of TikTok in the state and fine any "entity" — an app store or TikTok — \$10,000 per day for each time someone accesses, downloads or is offered the ability

to access TikTok.

That means Apple and Google, which operate app stores on Apple and Android devices, would be liable for violations. Penalties would not apply to users.

The statewide ban would be void if the social media platform is sold to a company that is not based in a country designated as a foreign adversary.

Montana Attorney General Austin Knudsen has pointed to technology used to restrict online sports gambling apps as a way to curtail TikTok from operating in the state. Those violations can be reported by anyone. And once the state verifies a breach has taken place, it sends a cease-and-desist letter to the company involved, said Tyler Nerison, a spokesperson for Knudsen's office.

So, could the TikTok ban work?
Cybersecurity experts say that, other than avoiding the fine, there's nothing incentivizing the companies involved to comply and it will be extremely difficult — if not impossible — to adequately enforce the law.

The U.S. doesn't have anything equivalent to the type of control countries like China have on what their citizens access on the web. Compounding that, internet service providers are out of the picture.

Before the Montana law passed, lawmakers rewrote portions of the bill to let them off the hook after a lobbyist for AT&T said during a February hearing the legislation was "not workable" to put into effect.

Could tech companies block it?

A representative for TechNet, the trade group that counts the two tech giants as its members, said app stores don't have the ability to "geofence" apps in different states and it would be impossible to prevent TikTok from being downloaded in Montana. The group has said the responsibility should be on an app to determine where it can operate, not an app store.

Telecom analyst Roger Entner, of Recon Analytics, says he believes the app stores could have the capability to enforce the law, but it would be cumbersome to implement and full of loopholes. Apple and Google's address-linked billing could be bypassed with prepaid cards and IP geolocation easily masked by using a VPN service, which can alter IP addresses and allows users to evade content restrictions, said mobile security expert Will Strafach, the founder of Guardian, which makes a privacy protection app for Apple devices.

Oded Vanunu, head of products vulnerability research at the cybersecurity firm Check Point, agreed it would be difficult for app stores to isolate a single state from downloading an app. He suggested it would be more feasible for TikTok to comply since it controls the software and can "adjust the settings based on the geographical location or IP addresses" of users.

Could TikTok block itself?

When users allow TikTok to collect their location information, it can track a person to at least 3 square kilometers (1.16 square miles) from their actual location. If that feature is disabled, TikTok can still collect approximate location information — such as the region, city or zip code in which a user may be located — based on device or network information, like an IP address.

NWTN, CMEC Mideast to forge 'partnership' to advance UAE's green hydrogen roadmap

Plan aims at a net zero target

Plans afoot for AZULIK AIUla, a new eco-luxury resort

RCU grows its portfolio of hospitality offerings

DUBAI, UAE, May 23, (PRNewswire): NWTN Inc. (Nasdaq: NWTN), an eco-conscious technology company specializing in sustainable mobility solutions ("NWTN"), and CMEC Middle East Fze ("CMEC ME"), a subsidiary of China Machinery Engineering Corporation, a renowned global engineering company, are thrilled to announce plans for a strategic partnership, which has been memorized in a non-binding memorandum of understanding on May 18, 2023.

This preliminary alliance marks a pivotal moment for both organizations as they join forces to contribute to the UAE's Hydrogen Leadership Roadmap and the country's ambitious 2050 National Net Zero target.

This proposed partnership seeks to capitalize on the combined expertise, resources, and networks of NWTN and CMEC ME, aiming to enhance market presence, foster innovation, and deliver exceptional value to customers. NWTN is revolutionizing the transportation sector with its sustainable electric car solutions. Additionally, NWTN is investing in green hydrogen technology, striving to facilitate the transition to clean energy through energy storage solutions for a more sustainable future.

CMEC ME brings a wealth of experience, particularly in the renewable energy sector. NWTN believes that CMEC ME's engineering expertise and technological resources from China will play a vital role in introducing advantageous Chinese technical solutions to support the realization of green hydrogen projects, fostering knowledge exchange and innovation.

Key highlights and objectives of the preliminary cooperation include:

Collaboration on Green Hydrogen Projects:

Introduction of Chinese Technical Solutions:

Investment and Strategic Resources: Feasibility Study Report:

Project-Specific Agreement:

The proposed partnership with

ALULA, Saudi Arabia, May 23, (PR Newswire): The Royal Commission for AIUla (RCU) will develop a new resort within the Journey Through Time (JTT) masterplan, designed in harmony with the natural environment and aligned with the Sustainability Charter for AIUla, Saudi Green Initiative, and Vision 2030.

The AZULIK AIUla Resort is a stunning eco-luxury property in the Nabatean Horizon District of the JTT masterplan, tucked into canyons near the AlMutadil Equestrian Village development and Wadi AlFann, an ancient valley that will soon be home to large-scale artworks in the landscape.

Slated to launch in 2027, the resort will feature 76 luxury villas of six different varieties, spa, VIP club, welcome lounges, all-day dining, and a SFER IK museum. With flowing designs inspired by the natural ecosystem and surrounding sandstone cliffs, the resort's undulating exteriors will utilize natural materials and fibres woven into several layers.

AZULIK AIUla Resort will promote connection with AIUla's heritage and the area's ecology and biodiversity. For example, the development will protect and incorporate nearby ancient rock art inscriptions, and utilise a natural system of existing waterways to feed irrigation and safeguard against floods. No private vehicle traffic will be allowed on-property; instead an all-electric mobility system will be provided, along with horse and camel routes, and hiking trails for guests to enjoy the surroundings.

CMEC ME represents a significant step towards achieving the shared vision of both companies for innovation, growth, and customer-centricity. By combining their strengths and resources, NWTN and CMEC ME are confident that they can create exceptional value for customers and seize emerging market opportunities in a way that benefits all stakeholders.

ABOUT NWTN
NWTN is a pioneering green en-

Operated by Mexican luxury brand AZULIK and designed by Roth Architecture, the resort will offer elegant accommodations for guests and provide socioeconomic benefits for the AIUla community. Once fully operational, AZULIK AIUla Resort will create more than 300 new jobs. Along with local materials and contractors sought for construction, most operational supplies will be sought from AIUla and wider KSA to further boost regional economic growth.

John Northen, RCU Vice President of Hotels and Resorts, said, "AZULIK AIUla is centered on the concept of sustainability and connection with the natural and human heritage surrounding this magnificent property. Along with its proximity to the AlMutadil Equestrian Village and Wadi AlFann, both under development, this resort is one of several assets contributing to AIUla's growth as a leading destination in line with our Journey Through Time master plan."

AZULIK Founder and CEO, Roth, said, "As a Tribe, we feel honoured to bring AZULIK's vision to AIUla. It is with gratitude and profound respect that we embark a journey into AIUla's vibrant heritage and culture. Rooted in its unique natural landscape, we begin a project that is both close to our heart and our brand values. These are our first steps together and I'm confident we will walk a beautiful and exciting path."

Note for editors:

It is always AIUla/ not AI-Ula
About the Royal Commission for AIUla

The Royal Commission for AIUla (RCU) was established by royal decree in July 2017 to preserve and develop AIUla, a region of outstanding natural and cultural significance in north-west Saudi Arabia. RCU's long-term plan outlines a responsible, sustainable, and sensitive approach to urban and economic development that preserves the area's natural and historic heritage while establishing AIUla as a desirable location to live, work, and visit. This encompasses a broad range of initiatives across archaeology, tourism, culture, education, and the arts, reflecting a commitment to meeting the economic diversification, local community empowerment, and heritage preservation priorities of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 programme.

About Roth Architecture
Established by Roth, AZULIK's founder and CEO, Roth Architecture is an internationally awarded firm that identifies with a way of designing, modelling, projecting, and building where nature and its preservation are a priority. As a creative team it aims to find original and eco-centric solutions to everyday life's needs; the studio reflects on architecture and its functionality to offer possibilities that incorporate the coexistence of the natural and the architectural.

It takes as a starting point the dynamics of the inhabitants in the space and enhances their experience by creating immersive atmospheres that combine the presence of natural elements with architectural structures built with the lowest environmental impact.

Florida sued over law blocking Chinese citizens, others from buying property

TALLAHASSEE, Fla., May 23, (AP): A group of Chinese citizens living and working in Florida sued the state Monday over a new law that bans Chinese nationals from purchasing property in large swaths of the state.

The law applies to properties within 10 miles (16 kilometers) of military installations and other "critical infrastructure" and also affects citizens of Cuba, Venezuela, Syria, Iran, Russia, and North Korea. But Chinese citizens and those selling property to them face the harshest penalties. The prohibition also applies to agricultural land.

The American Civil Liberties Union says the law will have a substantial chilling effect on sales to Chinese and Asian people who can legally buy property.

The suit says the law unfairly equates Chinese people with the actions of their government and there is no evidence of national security risk from Chinese citizens buying Florida property.

The law "will codify and expand housing discrimination against people of Asian descent in violation of the Constitution and the Fair Housing Act," the ACLU said in a news release announcing the suit. "It will also cast an

undue burden of suspicion on anyone seeking to buy property whose name sounds remotely Asian, Russian, Iranian, Cuban, Venezuelan, or Syrian."

U.S.-China ties are strained amid growing tensions over security and trade. In nearly a dozen statehouses and Congress, a decades-old worry about foreign land ownership has spiked since a Chinese spy balloon traversed the skies from Alaska to South Carolina last month.

Republican Gov. https://apnews.com/hub/ron-desantis, who is expected to launch a presidential campaign this week, signed the bill May 8. His of-

fice didn't immediately respond to an email seeking comment.

The law is set to take effect July 1. It will be a felony for Chinese people to buy property in restricted areas or for any person or real estate company to knowingly sell to restricted people. For the other targeted nations, the penalty is a misdemeanor for buyers and sellers.

It applies to military installations as well as infrastructure like airports and seaports, water and wastewater treatment plants, natural gas and oil processing facilities, power plants, spaceports, and telecommunications central switching offices.

Lebanese prosecutor summons central bank chief following Interpol warrant

Lebanon's public prosecutor Monday summoned the country's embattled central bank governor for questioning following an international arrest warrant issued against him in France over corruption charges, judicial officials said.

Riad Salameh is to answer the summons later this week, although no specific date was given.

France, Germany and Luxembourg are investigating Salameh

and his associates over myriad alleged financial crimes, including illicit enrichment and laundering of \$330 million. A French investigative judge on May 16 issued an international arrest warrant, or Interpol red notice, for the 72-year-old Salameh after he failed to show up in Paris for questioning.

Officials in Beirut said that Public Prosecutor Ghassan Oueidat will formally ask France to hand over the governor's case files

to decide on future measures against Salameh.

Asked whether it is possible to hand the former governor over to France, the officials - who spoke on condition of anonymity - said Lebanon does not hand its citizens to foreign countries and the case will be overseen in Lebanon. They added that once Oueidat receives the case files from France, he will decide whether Salameh should face justice in Lebanon or

elsewhere.

In 2020, the Lebanese prosecutor received two Interpol red notices for tycoon Carlos Ghosn, who faced financial misconduct charges in Japan. Ghosn remains in Lebanon.

Salameh has repeatedly denied all corruption allegations, saying he made his wealth from his years working as an investment banker at Merrill Lynch, inherited properties, and investments. (AP)



In this Nov. 11, 2019 file photo, Riad Salameh, Lebanon's Central Bank Governor, smiles during a press conference in Beirut. (AP)

The Conversation

Artificial intelligence and systems are already big business, grossing over US \$38 billion in 2021

AI changing how Americans find jobs, get promoted, succeed at work

By Catherine Rymsha
UMass Lowell

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

Whether we realize it or not, advancements in artificial intelligence are increasingly influencing the paths of our careers.

Advancements in human capital management systems, more strategic and data-driven human resource and talent management practices, and increased attention to bias are all factors that are changing how people are hired, developed, promoted and fired.

I teach and work in talent management and leadership development. I've used these programs and practices in the real world and continue to learn and research how these practices are changing. Artificial intelligence and systems are already big business, grossing over US\$38 billion in 2021. Without a doubt, AI-driven software has the potential to advance quickly and change how companies make strategic decisions about their employees.

Here's what that acceleration may mean to you.

Imagine you apply for a job in the very near future. You upload your carefully written résumé through the company website, noting that the platform looks eerily similar to other platforms you've used to apply for other jobs. After your résumé is saved, you provide demographic information and complete countless fields with the same data from your résumé. You then hit "submit" and hope for a follow-up email from a person.

Your data now lives within this company's human capital management system. Even if they collect them, very few companies are looking at résumés anymore; they're looking at the info you type into those tiny boxes to help make comparisons between you, dozens or hundreds of other applicants, and the job require-

ments. Even if your résumé demonstrates that you are the most qualified applicant, it alone is unlikely to catch the eye of the recruiter, because the recruiter's attention is elsewhere.

Let's say you get the call, you ace the interview and the job is yours. Your information hits another stage within the company's database, or HCM: active employee. Your performance ratings and other data about your employment will now be tied to your profile, adding more data for the HCM and human resources to monitor and assess.

Enhancements in AI, technology and HCMs enable HR to look at employee data on deeper levels. The insights gleaned help identify talented employees who could fill key leadership roles when people quit and guide decisions about who should be promoted. The data can also identify favoritism and bias in hiring and promotion.

As you continue in your role, data on your performance is tracked and analyzed. This may include your performance ratings, supervisor's feedback, professional development activity - or lack thereof. Having this large amount of data about you and others over time now helps HR think about how employees can better support the growth of the organization.

For example, HR may use data to identify how likely specific employees are to quit and evaluate the impact of that loss.

Platforms that many people already use every day aggregate productivity data from sign-in to signoff. Widely available Microsoft tools including Teams, Outlook and SharePoint can help provide insight to managers via their workplace analytics tool. The Microsoft productivity score tracks overall usage within the platform.

Even the metrics and behaviors defining "good" or "bad" performance may change, relying less on the perception of the manager. As data grows, even the work of professionals like consultants, doctors and marketers will be quantita-

tively and objectively measured. A 2022 New York Times investigation found that these systems, designed to improve worker productivity and accountability, had the effect of damaging morale and instilling fear.

It's clear that American employees should begin to think about how our data is being used, what story that data is telling, and how it may dictate our futures.

Not every company has an HCM or is advanced in using talent data to make decisions. But many companies are becoming savvy and some are incredibly advanced. At a recent Microsoft Viva summit I attended, chief human resources officers from companies like PayPal and Rio Tinto outlined ways they are using these advancements.

Some researchers claim that AI could promote equity by removing implicit bias from hiring and promoting, but many more see a danger that AI built by humans will just repack old issues in a new box. Amazon learned this lesson the hard way back in 2018 when a résumé-sorting AI it built had to be abandoned when it favored men for programming roles.

What's more, the increase of data collection and analysis can leave employees unclear on where they stand while the organization is very clear. It's best if you understand how AI is changing the workplace and demand transparency from your employer. These are data points that employees should consider asking about during their next review:

- Do you see me as a high-potential employee?
- How does my performance compare with others'?
- Do you see me as a successor to your role or others'?

Just as you need to master traditional aspects of workplace culture, politics and relationships, you should learn to navigate these platforms, understand how you are being assessed, and take ownership of your career in a new and more data-driven way. (AP)

ZainTech expands digital transformation services with the acquisition of Adfolks

Another step in Zain Group's '4Sight' strategy in becoming a multi-core digital ICT entity

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates, May 23: ZainTech, the one-stop digital solutions powerhouse of Zain Group, announces the acquisition of Adfolks, a UAE-based cloud-native engineering firm that provides a comprehensive range of cloud transformation services.

This acquisition aligns with ZainTech's strategic plan to expand its technology services and offer holistic solutions to its growing customer base and represents another step in Zain Group's '4Sight' strategy, transforming from a mobile operator to a multi-core digital ICT entity.

Adfolks was founded, by serial entrepreneur Arun Mohan, in 2016 with a vision to help clients leverage cloud and cloud-native technologies to solve business challenges. The company provides exclusive services that automate technological processes, accelerating time to value and returns on investment.

Adfolks has a proven track record for creating growth through transformative technology and agile delivery methods and is recognized for its expertise in Modern Infrastructure, Application Modernization, Security, Data & ML, and Automation.

As a Microsoft Azure Cloud Gold Managed Partner (runner-up for partner of the year in 2021 and 2022), AWS Select Partner, and GCP Consulting Partner, Adfolks brings its team of expert engineers, customer success managers, and agile project delivery specialists to the ZainTech family.

This acquisition will further expand ZainTech's technology services portfolio, including innovative, scalable, and secure cloud-native applications and other technology solutions for its clients across the region.

Andrew Hanna, CEO of ZainTech commented, "Combining Adfolks' expertise and talent with ZainTech's and Zain's B2B teams' resources and capabilities will enable us to drive even more value for our clients in the dynamic and constantly evolving technology landscape by streamlining their digital transformation journey, making it simpler and more seamless than ever before."

Arun Mohan, CEO of Adfolks, said, "I am excited about this next chapter for Adfolks with ZainTech. The combined strength will be a value not only to our respective business objectives but most importantly to our clients



Adfolks acquisition material

Many grossly underestimate recovery times

Most organizations 'expect' ransomware attack within yr

WILMINGTON, Del., & BALTIMORE, May 23, (AP): BullWall, global leaders in ransomware containment, and researchers with Cybersecurity Insiders, today published the Cybersecurity Insiders 2023 Ransomware Report. Based on a survey of 435 cybersecurity professionals, the findings identified gaps, misunderstandings and obstacles in organizational security posture, attack prevention and ransomware remediation.

79 percent of cybersecurity professionals surveyed believe their organization is likely to be targeted by a malware/ransomware attack in the next 12 months. Source: Cybersecurity Insiders 2023 Ransomware Report

Cybersecurity Insiders CEO and Founder Holger Schulze will join Steve Hahn, BullWall EVP at 11:00am ET on June 15, 2023, to review the

findings and share recommendations during the webinar.

Among the 2023 Ransomware Report's key findings:

"This research was very interesting for us," said Holger Schulze. "We've been researching the state of ransomware for years, but a new trend is now starting to emerge. Organizations are becoming almost resigned to the eventuality of a ransomware attack, and are starting to indicate that the golden standards of prevention are not enough. These findings emphasize the importance of shifting from a purely preventative approach, such as relying on EDR, to a more layered, comprehensive strategy that includes rapid containment of ongoing attacks. By implementing solutions that can quickly shut down active attacks, organizations can limit the damage inflicted and reduce recovery time, better protect-

ing their valuable data, operations and reputation."

"The Cybersecurity Insiders team is providing invaluable insight that's clearly needed now more than ever," added Steve Hahn. "Ransomware is capable of infecting over 45,000 files per minute per infected device, and last year there were over 217 million attacks in the U.S. alone according to experts. A last line of defense when ransomware gets in - and it almost always does - is absent in most organizations, and urgently needed in all."

The findings follow BullWall's May, 2023 expansion into North America following dramatic success in Europe. Its fully automated, patented last line of defense against ransomware is used in many European mission-critical enterprises across industries such as healthcare, education and government.

who will benefit from the combined expertise and innovation of Adfolks and ZainTech."

The acquisition of AdFolks follows ZainTech's recent acquisition of BIOS Middle East, a leading provider of Managed Private Cloud Services in

the region, both entities strengthening ZainTech's portfolio of hybrid, cloud-native and multi-cloud managed services.

Since its establishment in October 2021, ZainTech's progressive momentum in servicing governments and

enterprises across the region, has seen it enter multiple strategic partnerships with Microsoft, AWS, ATOS and Oracle to name a few, fulfilling its mission of offering a comprehensive suite of digital solutions and transformation services under one roof.

UK economy to avoid recession but inflation still a worry, IMF says

LONDON, May 23, (AP): The British economy will avoid falling into recession this year, according to upgraded growth forecasts Tuesday from the International Monetary Fund.

In its latest assessment of the U.K. economy, the Washington-based fund said domestic demand had proven more resilient than anticipated in the face of the surge in energy costs.

The IMF now thinks the British

economy will grow by 0.4% this year, up from its previous prediction of a 0.3% decline. The forecast aligns with that from the Bank of England, which also upgraded its economic outlook this month.

However, the IMF said inflation is likely to remain stubbornly high over the coming years and only return to the Bank of England's target of 2% in mid-2025, six months longer than it

predicted earlier this year.

Like other central banks, the Bank of England has been raising interest rates aggressively over the past 18 months or so after inflation spiked sharply, first because of bottlenecks caused by the coronavirus pandemic and then Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which sent energy and food prices surging.

Figures on Wednesday are expected to show inflation in Britain falling

back below 10% for the first time since August, largely because the sharp spike in prices caused by the invasion of Ukraine will fall out of the annual comparison.

The IMF also praised the British government for reestablishing credibility following the "stress episode" of last September's big tax cuts of the short-lived government of former Prime Minister Liz Truss.

NerdWallet

Define and refine what you want

Kimberly Palmer: How to 'set' and vet money goals midyear

If you set money goals for 2023 back in January, now can be a smart time to check in on your progress. And if you didn't, it's not too late to create goals for the next six months and beyond.

"If you don't have your goals, everyone is so busy with life that a year will whiz by and you'll have forgotten to start," says Dan Casey, owner of Bridgeriver Advisors, a financial firm in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan.

With many people's money goals hampered by the dual headwinds of inflation and economic uncertainty, it's easy to get discouraged if you haven't made as much progress as you'd hoped. Financial experts offer these five strategies for using the midyear point as a way to get back on track, or to embrace a slightly altered course.

Rebecca Eve Selkove, New York City-based accredited financial counselor and owner of the financial counseling firm RebeccaEve.com, urges people to first define what they want their money to accomplish, noting that those goals can shift over time. That discussion can lead to unexpected discoveries, such as realizing what you actually want is not just to pay off debt but to work fewer hours or change jobs.

"Just articulating the goal with that specificity can be enough to start looking at the numbers more deeply," she says.

Define the action steps

Once you've refined or established your goals, Selkove says, it's time to come up with a specific plan to achieve them. If you know you need a certain down payment to buy the home you want, then you can create a budget and start setting aside money each month in a high-yield online savings account, for example.

Valerie Rivera, certified financial planner and founder of First-Gen Wealth, a virtual financial planning firm in Chicago, suggests setting a timeline, too. "We make a spending worksheet because a lot of people don't know where their money goes. That gives you accountability," she says.

Opening a separate savings account for each specific goal can also help, says Keith Spencer, CFP and owner of Spencer Financial

Planning in Spokane, Washington. "Whether it's saving for a home improvement, vacation or wanting to pay off the mortgage sooner, I find it helpful to set up a dedicated account for that so it's more tangible," he says, adding that clients can more easily watch the money saved grow over time and track progress.

In addition to the midyear check-in, Casey suggests making quarterly or even monthly check-ins for yourself. "We get overwhelmed thinking about the whole year, so create micro-timelines instead," he suggests. You could set a mini-goal for what you want to have saved by the end of the month or quarter, for example.

Then, you can make adjustments to catch up to your bigger goal if you fall behind or find you have the flexibility to increase your savings rate. "You can even automate the savings so it's out of sight, out of mind," he adds.

Follow up with an accountability buddy

Sharing your goals with a friend, coach or financial professional who can help keep you on track can be a natural way to find some extra motivation, Rivera says. "It needs to be someone you would feel a little uncomfortable with if you had to cancel or not give them an update," she says. A partner can also serve as an accountability buddy, especially if you are working on goals together.

Jonathan Kiehl, CFP and founder of Evenkiehl Financial Planning in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, urges clients to make accountability check-ins as enjoyable as possible so it's an activity they look forward to. "That could mean going to a favorite coffee shop or dinner date, as long as it provides an atmosphere where you can review spending plans," he says.

Rivera suggests looking back on how you've gotten closer to achieving your goals while also acknowledging why progress might have been slower than you envisioned. "Maybe there were other obligations or other unexpected things that came up," she says. Higher prices for many consumer goods, including groceries, have strained many people's budgets, making it harder to save, for example.



In this June 15, 2018 photo, twenty dollar bills are counted in North Andover, Mass. As the middle of the year approaches, it's a smart time to check in on the money goals you set back in January and make any necessary adjustments. (AP)

talabat launches Road Safety Seminar

talabat the region leading tech company, has launched its Fourth Road Safety Seminar in collaboration with The Traffic Department on May 21 at Holiday In Salmiya as it ramps up its road safety strategy in 2023 to ensure the well-being of its growing fleet of riders.

The Seminar complements the efforts by the Kuwaiti government to foster a road safety culture and reduce accidents on its roads through additional intensive training, as well as positive reinforcement by awarding riders for their exemplary adherence to traffic laws.

The collaboration between talabat and The Traffic Department aims to raise awareness about the collective responsibility all road users have to ensure their safety and that of others.

Abdullah Al-Mansour, Head of COMMS, PA & CR talabat Kuwait: "Road safety is a carousel aspect for us all. It's a culture of awareness on our roads, and respect for every road user, whether it be a pedestrian, a cyclist, a car, and a motorbike. By dedicating a special day for road safety, we aim to lead by example and raise awareness

amongst the public in general and riders in specific, to drive safely and avoid dangerous acts like speeding and overtaking other cars. We are also rewarding riders who adhere to traffic rules to encourage positive behavior.

Adding to that: "With an exponential rise of motorbikes on the road, it is important to remember that driving responsibly is a duty that falls on every road user and we believe that it is through collaboration between the public and private sector, as well as the community, that we will achieve the best results."



Photos from the event.



KIPCO's Group CEO, Sheikha Dana Naser Al Sabah, addressing the audience



From left: Moustapha Chami, Sheikha Dana Naser Al Sabah, Joe Kawkabani and Samer Khanachet



KIPCO gala dinner

'Company is bigger and more diversified'

KIPCO Group recognizes best employees at its Annual Gala Dinner

KUWAIT CITY, May 23: KIPCO – Kuwait Projects Company (Holding) – recognized the 'Employees of the Year' in its core operating companies, at the company's Annual Gala Dinner. The event, hosted by KIPCO's Group CEO, Sheikha Dana Naser Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah, brought together 300 CEOs and executives representing more than 30 subsidiaries and affiliates in Kuwait and abroad.

In her speech, Sheikha Dana Naser Al Sabah welcomed the guests and said: "Today, KIPCO is bigger and more diversified, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of you for the efforts you have made to make this happen. I am looking forward to us embarking on a new journey together, a journey that is both exciting and challenging at the same time."

She added: "KIPCO has always been bold and decisive in every move taken, and we will make sure that this remains true.

With boldness and decisiveness, we will move forward and seek opportunities wherever and whenever they are available."

The event saw the recognition of employees from Burgan Bank, Gulf Insurance Group, United Real

Estate, Kamco Invest and Alternative Energy. KIPCO also recognized the efforts of its Group Chief Investment Officer, Joe Kawkabani, and its Deputy CFO, Moustapha Chami, for their efforts related to the recent merger. This transformative transaction has helped reshape the company in line with the vision of the Board of Directors, under the stewardship of the Group CEO.



KFH branch

Secured Safe Deposit boxes

KFH 'offers' six important products for travel season

KUWAIT CITY, May 23: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) offers several products and services that fit holidays and travel season. The Bank is continuously offering distinguished benefits and innovative services that meet the different lifestyles of its customers to enjoy the best banking experience.

Banking Cards:

KFH offers a variety of credit, debit, and prepaid cards that offer customers convenience and limit their reliance on cash for extra security. KFH cards are smart cards with spending redemptions and rewards that allow cardholders to enjoy a list of outstanding benefits, discounts, and access to VIP lounges in addition to many other privileges.

The most recent main credit cards launched by KFH are Master Card World Elite which is issued in cooperation with "Oasis Club", Visa Infinite metal veneer, Visa Signature and "Al-Tayseer" Diamond card. In addition, the Bank launched the Foreign Currency Visa Prepaid Card that enables customers to easily charge and pay in different currencies during travel and online shopping, while helping customers to manage their payments and pay directly in foreign currency without charging the exchange fees, which gives travelers a smart and safer way to carry their travel money. The card is available in 5 main currencies: US Dollar, Pound Sterling, Euro, UAE Dirham and Saudi Riyal.

Safe Deposit Boxes:

KFH provides its customers with the peace of mind through its Safe Deposit boxes that are monitored and secured on permanent basis with three main sizes: small, medium, and large (rent prices vary depending on the box size). Customers may rent the boxes for long/short terms to safeguard their personal belongings and valuables all the time, especially during travel.

Buying Foreign Currencies:

KFH exchanges currencies to and from customers as per their needs for about 26 global currencies including the most traded currencies worldwide at affordable prices.

International Toll-Free Calls:

KFH's international toll-free service is covered outside Kuwait in 7 countries (USA, Canada, UK, France, Germany, Turkey, and Spain) without any additional fees. This service gives customers the peace of mind as the Bank remains close 24/7, where each international call from customers has the priority of response by KFH's call center agents.

To use this service and reach KFH's "Aloo Baitak" Call Center 1803333, customers can call the following toll-free numbers: USA & Canada (18008188608), UK (08000148898), France (080508-6620), Germany (08001817080), Spain (900905440), Turkey (908503902170).

This is a free service offered to customers calling from mobiles or countries' land lines only and does not apply on roaming service.

Opening a Banking Account in Turkey:

Segments of KFH customers are able to open a banking account in "KFH-Turkey" in Kuwait and enjoy a full range of services such as free online banking transfers from KFH-Kuwait to "KFH-Turkey" beneficiary accounts without SWIFT fees, no minimum account fees, in addition to managing invoices and any other payments in Turkey easily through KFH online banking services.

Financing Cars across Borders:

KFH offers exclusively to its customer in Kuwait a service to (Pay in Kuwait and Receive Car abroad) which meets the needs of different customer segments, wherein they are able to pick the car of their choice in Kuwait and receive it directly in 4 countries (Egypt, Jordan, USA and Turkey) in cooperation with authorized suppliers and with convenient terms and financing benefits, providing customers meet the credit rules and regulations. Choosing the vehicle and paying the instalments through KFH in Kuwait, makes this service one of the best financing solutions in the auto field. KFH is moving forward to enhance customers' banking experience by designing high-quality banking services and solutions that meet the needs and aspirations of its customers.

Burgan continues to support young talents at AUK's Career Growth Fair

Career opportunities offered

KUWAIT CITY, May 23: Burgan Bank announced that it recently participated as a platinum sponsor in the Career Growth Fair organized by the American University of Kuwait (AUK). The Bank's sponsorship of this event is part of its ongoing efforts to support young talents, contribute to employment creation in the banking sector, and stimulate healthy economic growth.

As part of the Bank's participation, representatives of Burgan's Human Resources Department were on hand at the fair to answer all the questions and inquiries of student job seekers to enable a smooth transition into the workforce after graduation. The representatives also sought to spread financial literacy and banking awareness amongst students and visitors alike, as part of the Bank's ongoing support of the Let's Be Aware (Diraya) campaign.

Commenting on the Bank's sponsorship and participation in the fair, Mr. Abdulwahab Abdulraheem, Acting Unit Head – Talent Acquisition at Burgan Bank, said: "We are proud to be leaders in the human capital development field in Kuwait. Therefore, our sponsorship of the AUK Career Growth Fair is a testament to our strategy of actively investing in, supporting, and targeting national talents. Through our participation, we seek to affirm our dedication to empowering aspiring young professionals and developing human capital by highlighting our globally recognized work culture, especially after becoming the first Bank in Kuwait to achieve the Great Place to Work® coveted certification."

Qualified

Mr. Abdulraheem added that Burgan Bank's team highlighted various career opportunities offered to young individuals and set up one-on-one interviews with potential candidates to select the most qualified talents representing the next generation of bankers. He noted that this initiative falls in line with the Bank's commitment to bolstering its capabilities by encouraging graduates to venture into the financial and banking sectors, which are vital to the Kuwaiti and world economies.

Burgan Bank continuously seeks to sponsor and participate in various events and initiatives that help create more local job opportunities, which, in turn, contribute to the sustainability of development and growth in the banking sector and other vital sectors of the economy. This falls in line with the Bank's strategic direction to invest in acquisition and development of national talents and serve the community under its "Driven by you" vision.

It serves to note that In 2023, Burgan Bank was selected as one of the 20 Best Workplaces in Kuwait and officially certified as a Great Place to Work®, becoming the first



Dr. Rawda Awwad, AUK President, honoring the Burgan Talent Acquisition Team for their participation

Bank adopts int'l standards to protect facilities

ABK holds training for security staff

KUWAIT CITY, May 23: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) recently organized a training course for members of its security department in its head office and across all branches in cooperation with a local leading security institute and company.

Commenting on the training, Abdullatif AlFailakawi, Assistant General Manager of Facilities Management at ABK, said, "I am pleased with the great participation and enthusiasm demonstrated by the Bank's security team. This training is of vital importance as it has a main focus on the protection of branches, employees, and customers from any potential dangers that they may be exposed to."

He added that the training course, which was held in ABK's head office, aimed to develop the capabilities of the Bank's security staff members as well as educate them on the latest developments in the sector. Throughout the training, participants were introduced to the methods of building an integrated and clear security strategy which contributes to raising efficiency, readiness, and capabilities of the entire security team.

AlFailakawi affirmed, "ABK ensures to constantly update and upgrade its security plans. The Bank is keen to train its employees on the most prominent developments in

the sector in participation with several entities in the public and private sectors and adopts the highest international standards approved in this field to protect our facilities, employees and customers."

Awarded

Throughout the course, participating staff members had the opportunity to learn from the institute and company's extensive experience in security training where they were awarded certificates for completing the training. He emphasized the importance of security staff remaining vigilant and cautious during their working day to ensure the protection of people at the Bank and its assets.

The training aligns with ABK's social responsibility efforts to provide training opportunities for its employees. Throughout the course of one week, the course witnessed great interaction from participants who were exposed to discussions and various activities. These included methods to prevent burglaries and fires as well as learning about first aid and how to



AlFailakawi

bank in Kuwait to earn that distinct honor. Being ranked amongst the most exemplary workplaces from

around the globe is a testament to Burgan's dedication to the development of its human capital, as well

as its supportive, inclusive and empowerment-focused employee culture.

over 150 docs on strike at NYC hospital

About 160 resident physicians went on strike Monday over what they called low pay at New York City's Elmhurst Hospital Center, a public hospital once known as the epicenter of the coronavirus pandemic in 2020. The doctors-in-training at the Queens hospital, who are employed by the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai Hospital in Manhattan, are the first doctors to go on strike in the city since 1990, according to their labor

union, the Committee of Interns and Residents local of the Service Employees International Union. Mount Sinai "refuses to pay us the same as our coworkers doing the exact same job at Mount Sinai Hospital in Manhattan," Dr. Joya Dupre, a second-year internal medicine resident at Elmhurst, said in a union statement. "It feels, fundamentally, like Mount Sinai is saying that this community does not matter. Like we as Elmhurst

residents do not matter, as largely immigrant, union doctors." Mount Sinai released a statement Monday saying it was "working towards an equitable and reasonable resolution that is in the best interest for both our residents at Elmhurst as well as for the Mount Sinai Health System." It also said it was working with Elmhurst on contingency plans to ensure patient care is not affected by the strike. (AP)

cigarettes belong in museums: Philip Morris CEO

Jacek Olczak, Chief Executive Officer of Philip Morris International Inc. (PMI) (NYSE: PM), delivered remarks at the UnHerd Club in London, calling on governments globally to accelerate the end of cigarettes. In his remarks to global media, politicians, and policymakers, Olczak shared that "cigarettes belong in museums" but that current policies to reduce smoking prevalence are not working fast enough

and may be prolonging smoking. Drawing upon a new hypothetical model based on World Health Organization data, estimates, and methods, as well as other third party data, Olczak explained that even if smoke-free products were assumed to be only 80 percent less risky than cigarettes, if people who currently smoke were to switch to them completely, then over their lifetime there's a potential for a tenfold

reduction in smoking-attributable deaths compared with historical tobacco control measures alone. He highlighted the absurd paradox that smoke-free products are banned in some countries while cigarettes-despite their far greater risk of harm-can still be sold. While this model has limitations and is built on assumptions, the public health cost of ignoring the potential of smoke-free products could be immense.

Tool sparks enthusiasm

ChatGPT flunks American College of Gastroenterology exams: Feinstein

MANHASSET, N.Y., May 23: While the popular artificial intelligence (AI) ChatGPT is seen as a potential educational tool, it won't be getting its medical specialty certification anytime soon. To test its abilities and accuracy, investigators at The Feinstein Institutes for Medical Research asked the consumer-facing ChatGPT (Chat Generative Pre-trained Transformer, OpenAI) to take the 2021 and 2022 multiple-choice self-assessment tests for the American College of Gastroenterology. ChatGPT failed to make the grade, scoring 65.1 percent and 62.4 percent compared to the required 70 percent to pass the exams. Full details of the study were published today in the American Journal of Gastroenterology.

ChatGPT is a 175-billion-parameter natural language processing model that generates human-like text in response to user prompts. The tool is a large language model (LLM) trained to predict word sequences based on context. ChatGPT has been tested before, even passing the United States Medical Licensing Exam. In this study, the Feinstein Institutes' researchers wanted to challenge ChatGPT's (versions 3 and 4) ability to pass the ACG assessment, which is supposed to gauge how one would fare on the actual American Board of Internal Medicine (ABIM) Gastroenterology board examination.

"Recently, there has been a lot of attention on ChatGPT and the use of AI across various industries. When it comes to medical education, there is a lack of research around this potential groundbreaking tool," said Arvind Trindade, MD, associate professor at the Feinstein Institutes' Institute of Health System Science and senior author on the paper. "Based on our research, ChatGPT should not be used for medical education in gastroenterology at this time and has a ways to go before it should be implemented into the health care field."

Copied

Each ACG test consists of 300 multiple-choice questions with real-time feedback. Each question and answer was copied and pasted directly into the ChatGPT versions 3 and 4. Overall, ChatGPT answered 455 questions (145 questions were excluded because of an image requirement). Chat GPT-3 answered 296 of 455 questions correctly (65.1 percent) across the two exams, and Chat GPT-4 answered 284 questions correctly (62.4 percent).

"ChatGPT has sparked enthusiasm, but with that enthusiasm comes skepticism around the accuracy and validity of AI's current role in health care and education," Andrew C. Yacht, MD, senior vice president, academic affairs and chief academic officer at Northwell Health. "Dr. Trindade's fascinating study is a reminder that, at least for now, nothing beats hitting time-tested resources like books, journals and traditional studying to pass those all-important medical exams."

ChatGPT does not have any intrinsic understanding of a topic or issue. Potential explanations for ChatGPT's failing grade could be the lack of access to paid subscription medical journals or ChatGPT's sourcing of questionable outdated or non-medical sources, with more research needed before it is used reliably.

The Feinstein Institutes for Medical Research is the home of the research institutes of Northwell Health, the largest health care provider and private employer in New York State. Encompassing 50 research labs, 3,000 clinical research studies and 5,000 researchers and staff, the Feinstein Institutes raises the standard of medical innovation through its five institutes of behavioral science, bioelectronic medicine, cancer, health system science, and molecular medicine. We make breakthroughs in genetics, oncology, brain research, mental health, autoimmunity, and are the global scientific leader in bioelectronic medicine—a new field of science that has the potential to revolutionize medicine.

BOSTON, May 23: Allonnia, the bio-ingenueity company dedicated to extracting value where others see waste, has announced the launch of Allonnia 1,4 D-Stroy™, a bioremediation solution capable of degrading 99% of 1,4-dioxane, which has been called a forever chemical, in contaminated groundwater. For chemical manufacturers, industrial facilities, landfills, or superfund sites, 1,4 D-Stroy utilizes the power of nature - highly specialized microbes - to provide a sustainable, low-cost and low-maintenance solution that feeds on 1,4-dioxane and breaks it down into water and carbon dioxide as the only byproducts. Allonnia discovered this naturally occurring microbe and optimized it for simple deployment across a variety of environments.

The chemical 1,4-dioxane has been widely used for industrial chemical processes since the 1950s, and the US Environmental Protection Agency lists it as one of the most prevalent emerging contaminants and a likely human carcinogen. While there are no federal regulations governing 1,4-dioxane levels in drinking water, wastewater or other water sources, 18 states have established some degree of regulation or recommended guidelines. Regulatory pressures are also growing on a global scale, with the European Chemicals Agency adding 1,4-dioxane to its Candidate List of Hazardous Chemicals in 2021.

"The world has long been aware of the environmental and health risks associated with pervasive chemicals like 1,4-dioxane, and yet the public and private sector continue to face challenges in finding efficient, cost-effective, and scalable solutions," said Kent Sorenson, Chief Technology Officer at Allonnia. "With today's launch of 1,4 D-Stroy, we can now provide industrial manufacturers, state and federal municipalities, and remediation contractors with a natural solution for removing one of the most prevalent emerging contaminants from drinking water that millions of people count on every day."

Viable

Bioremediation has been touted as a potential solution for groundwater contamination for decades, but until recently the proposed solutions lacked the performance and efficiency to be viable commercially. Allonnia explored and tested a variety of candidate organisms from the literature and genomic databases to find the most effective one for commercial scale deployment. The naturally-occurring organism in 1,4 D-Stroy has proven in field tests to degrade 99% of 1,4-dioxane in contaminated groundwater.

Compared to other commercial filtration systems or chemical removal platforms in the market, 1,4 D-Stroy requires no capital investment and is delivered onsite via a portable, 18-liter, stainless steel dispersion vessel. The returnable system is designed to

1,4-dioxane likely human carcinogen: EPA

Allonnia unveils D-Stroy capable of degrading 99% of 'forever chemical' from groundwater

Agent to help detect residual cancer tissue

FDA grants priority review to Lumicell's optical imaging agent for breast cancer

NEWTON, Mass, May 23: Lumicell, Inc., a privately held company focused on innovative fluorescence-guided imaging technologies for cancer surgery, has announced the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has accepted and granted priority review for the New Drug Application (NDA) for the Lumisight™ Optical Imaging Agent and accepted the Premarket Approval (PMA) application for the Lumicell™ Direct Visualization System (DVS). The Lumicell DVS is an investigational system designed for use in patients with breast cancer to assist in the detection of residual cancerous tissue within the lumpectomy cavity following removal of the primary specimen during breast conserving surgery. The Lumicell DVS is intended for use with the investigational optical imaging agent Lumisight (pegulianine) for fluorescence imaging of the lumpectomy cavity.

"The FDA acceptances of both the NDA and PMA submissions for our Lumisight Optical Imaging Agent and Lumicell Direct Visualization System bring us one step closer to advancing care for women with breast cancer," said Kevin Hershberger, president and chief executive officer of Lumicell. "Priority Review designation is further recognition of the potential of our system to significantly improve the effectiveness of breast cancer treatment. We look forward to the FDA's review of our applications, and the potential to offer surgeons the first visualization system to enable a more complete cancer resection during the initial lumpec-

dose precise amounts of the microbes to the contaminated water, where they engage with 1,4-dioxane, ingest it, and render it harmless. Initial pilot programs have taken place in Orange County, California, where Allonnia and engineering firm Stantec eliminated more than 90% of 1,4-dioxane from two contaminated wells in the span of 11 weeks.

"As we see more government attention placed on environmental remediation solutions and techniques, Allonnia is doubling down on our commitment to creating sustainable solutions for 1,4-dioxane bioremediation that can be deployed at scale," said

Chuck Price, Chief Commercial Officer, Allonnia. "Regulators and government officials can now consider solutions like this when passing environmental legislation or evaluating 1,4-dioxane limits, and private companies can reduce potential liabilities from contaminated water via a simple-to-use, natural solution."

1,4 D-Stroy is the second commercial product Allonnia offers targeting forever chemicals. Surface Active Foam Fractionation (SAFF®) is a sustainably engineered PFAS remediation tool that uses a combination of aeration and vacuum to 'foam out'

99% of target PFAS molecules in water. Allonnia offers SAFF through an exclusive North American distribution agreement with OPEC Systems, and its US subsidiary EPOC Enviro. Allonnia is a bio-ingenueity company dedicated to extracting value where others see waste. We believe elegant solutions to the world's biggest problems will be found in the world's smallest organisms. We're pioneering novel approaches and imaginative combinations in biotechnology and engineering to solve waste challenges in nature, using nature.

tional system designed for use in patients with breast cancer to assist in the detection of residual malignant tissue within the lumpectomy cavity following removal of the primary specimen during breast conserving surgery. The investigational Lumicell Direct Visualization System (DVS) is intended for use with the investigational Lumisight Optical Imaging Agent and features a hand-held imaging probe that is designed to go inside the breast cavity and a patient-calibrated cancer detection software to assist in the detection of residual cancer, thereby enabling a more complete cancer resection. Lumicell's proprietary, pan-oncologic optical imaging agent Lumisight is also being explored across a wide variety of solid tumor indications.

The Lumicell DVS and Lumisight are limited by Federal (or United States) law to investigational use only. The Lumicell DVS and Lumisight are not commercially available.

Lumicell is a privately held company focused on improving surgical outcomes and reducing healthcare costs by utilizing its innovative fluorescence-guided surgical technologies to enable a more complete resection of cancer that may have otherwise been left behind.

The company's first product in development is the Lumicell Direct Visualization System, designed to illuminate residual breast cancer tissue within the breast cavity following removal of the primary specimen during the initial lumpectomy procedure.

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'SmartLess' podcast goes on tour with Arnett, Bateman and Hayes

Television

NEW YORK, May 23, (AP) — When Jason Bateman, Will Arnett and Sean Hayes get together, they can instantly tell if something's wrong: If insults don't immediately fly, there's a problem.

"I think it is our love language," says Arnett, the "Arrested Development" star and voice of Batman in the "Lego Movie" franchise. "I'm kind of joking, but there's a little truth to that. If we're not making fun of you, we don't love you."

Fans of the trio's banter will get much more this week after a documentary film team captured them on tour taking their popular podcast "SmartLess" to stages in Boston, New York, Chicago, Los Angeles and more.

The six-part docuseries "SmartLess: On the Road" offers a very intimate look at the three friends as they travel, hang out and prepare for the live shows. It premieres Tuesday on Max.

"It was really just about living with one another," says Bateman, star of "Arrested Development" and "Ozarks." "And it's a fairly cringe assumption for us to make that it would make for entertainment."

While their guests include Conan O'Brien, Will Ferrell, Matt Damon, Jimmy Kimmel, Kevin Hart, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and David Letterman, the bulk of the series is a look at how Arnett, Bateman and Hayes manage to dunk on each other and yet maintain a sibling love.

"The three of us are incredibly close. I would dare say we are best friends. And with that comes a deep knowledge of where the rails are. I think we all know if we ever really wanted to hurt each other, we know where to go. But that's not really in our makeup," says Bateman.

Cameras capture the trio exercising together, visiting the Lincoln Memorial, exploring the connection between pooping and showering, whipping apple cores at each other and talking with their guests. Before they go onstage, they pop Tylenol, Gas-X and candy.

Directed by Sam Jones, the series is presented in black and white, with an upbeat piano soundtrack. The original idea was to have the live shows in color and the behind-the-scenes footage in black and white, but that was too jarring. The final result is, as Hayes puts it: "Classy for the classless clowns in it."

In the hotel gym in Boston, as Bateman steadily runs on a treadmill, Arnett uses his husky voice to offer narration: "No one knows his secret, that underneath the artificial flesh and bone, he is machine. Nothing but machine." Later, Bateman jokes on Arnett's use of the sauna: "I'd like to sweat, but I don't want to exert to cause it. Let me just sit in a hot room."

Mystery

On the podcast "SmartLess," which premiered in July 2020, one of the hosts reveals the mystery guest to the other two and the guys kept that same format on tour. The podcast consistently ranks in the Top 5 Comedy Shows and Top 10 on overall shows on iTunes.

The episodes show the trio wondering how much they should acknowledge the audience or what they need to do to make it visually exciting. A rocky second show in Boston with a physicist as the guest teaches them that fans really want A-list celebs.

"I love the figuring it out in real time. I love the thrill of that, the fear

of that," says Hayes, the "Will & Grace" star who just earned his second Tony Award nomination. "Each one of us all had a strong opinion at some point, and we're all adult enough to listen to that. That was fun for me."

Final approval on their podcast goes to the special guest, but with the documentary, they reserved the right for final cut. They said that made it more liberating since they didn't have to pre-censor anything they did.

"We knew that everything was safe to say because ultimately we'd be able to see it assembled," says Bateman. "So we were able to just be really free and see what would float to the top."

Getting used to the cameras - even though they're all showbusiness veterans - took some time. "I didn't think I'd ever be able to accept them in the room, and I did. They kind of just went away," says Hayes.

Fans will get very intimate with the men, including learning that Bateman wears a size 12 shoe and that they have a habit of making reservations under the false name, Mr. D Umguay. But a conversation on the way to Chicago is quite revealing as they explore the roots of their insecurities and upbringings.

Frequently, the friends spend time on food - ordering room service, talking about meals, worried about bloating and ripping on each other's orders. After making one extensive room service order, Bateman asks the kitchen: "You don't have any chest paddles down there, do you?"

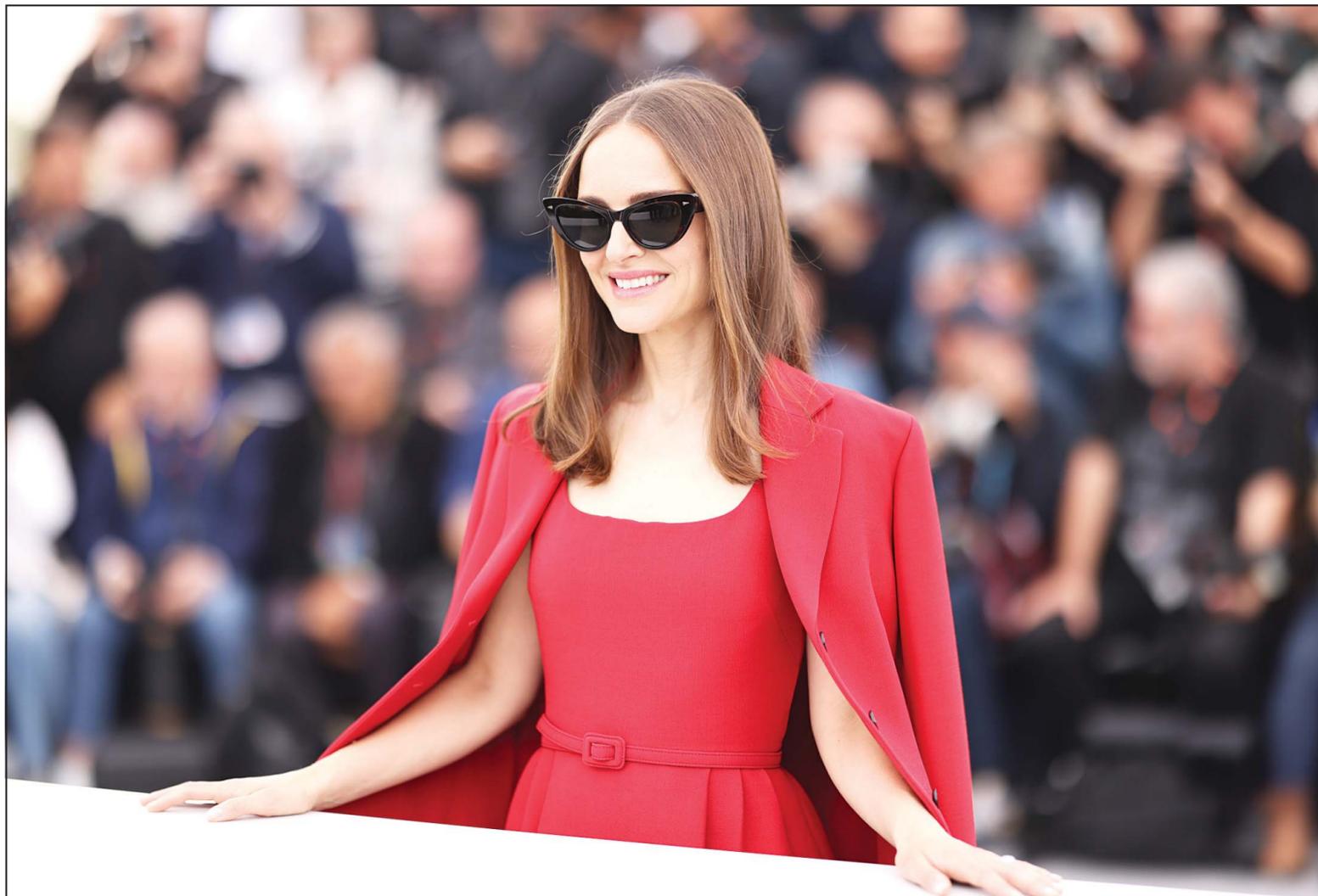
"The jabbing is the love," says Hayes. "Till the day I die, I'll consider Jason and Will my brothers. And if there's even a word that means closer than that, that's what I feel they are."

Variety

Features

ARABIC TIMES

WEDNESDAY, MAY 24, 2023



Natalie Portman poses for photographers at the photo call for the film 'May December' at the 76th international film festival, Cannes, southern France, Sunday, May 21. (AP)

Film

Portman's film uses lies to tell the truth

A disquieting drama in 'May December'

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla: Def Leppard drummer Rick Allen says he was blindsided during an attack on him outside a South Florida hotel following a concert earlier this year.

"I heard a couple of steps and then I just saw this (flash) and the next thing I knew was I was on the ground," Allen, 59, told ABC's "Good Morning America" in an interview broadcast Monday. "I landed on my backside - hit my head on the pavement."

Def Leppard was in Fort Lauderdale to perform at the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel and Casino when he was attacked March 13 while taking a smoke break outside a hotel.

Police arrested **Max Hartley**, a 19-year-old from Avon, Ohio, who has pleaded not guilty to two counts of battery and four counts of criminal mischief, according to court records. Police said they have not determined a motive.

"I don't think he knew who I was, but he must have seen that I wasn't a threat because, you know, I've only got one arm," said Allen, who lost his left arm in a car accident in 1984.

According to the police report, Hartley was hiding behind a pillar outside the hotel and then ran at Allen, knocking him to the ground. He also attacked a woman who tried to help Allen, but she wasn't seriously injured.

Hartley then ran to another hotel and started breaking car windows until he was stopped by witnesses and police arrived, police said.

Hartley's lawyer, **Kevin Gardiner**, said in an email that he can't comment on a pending case.

Allen's head struck the ground during the attack, and he and his wife, **Lauren Monroe**, told "Good Morning America" that they've been focusing on his recovery.

"My heart just completely sank into me. I know the journey of trauma. Everything stopped in our house and focused on him," Monroe said.

The couple created the Raven Drum Foundation to help survivors of trauma, especially veterans and first responders, in 2001.

Allen and his bandmates performed Friday at a small venue in their hometown of **Sheffield, England**, on Friday before kicking off their European tour. (AP)



CANNES, France, May 23, (AP) — In Todd Haynes' tonally shape-shifting "May December," the first announcement of the movie's playful intentions comes with a theatrical zoom in, a few lushly melodramatic piano notes and the frightful announcement that there no more hot dogs in the fridge.

That moment - which Haynes says signals "that there's something coy happening in the language of the film" - is just a taste of what's to come in "May December," a delicious and disquieting drama laced with comedy and camp that Haynes premiered over the weekend at the Cannes Film Festival.

Natalie Portman stars as an actor researching an upcoming film that's to dramatize a scandal from 20 years earlier. She comes to Savannah, Georgia, to spend time with Gracie Atherton-Yoo (Julianne Moore), who years earlier become tabloid fodder for a sexual relationship with a seventh grader. Now, she's seemingly happily married to him, Joe Yoo (Charles Melton), with kids of their own and suburban barbecues to host.

The film, scripted by Samy Burch, takes a light but deliberate touch in navigating through thorny themes of performance and identity. As Portman's character grows increasingly like Gracie, ethical borders begin to tumble away.

"It was tonally such an amazing script and so rigorous," Haynes said in an interview alongside Portman. "It kept shifting the way you felt about or trusted one character versus another. That whole process as it maneuvered through the course of the script was such a compelling experience. And I just thought: Wow, how could you translate into visually?"

"May December," which Netflix acquired Tuesday for a reported \$11 million with plans to release later this year, is the first time Haynes (who has regularly worked with Moore) has made a movie with the 41-year-old Portman. For her, "May December" was a chance to not only work with a director she's long admired but explore some of her own fascinations.

"It poses a lot of the questions I'm most obsessed

by about performance, about the purpose of art, about innocence," says Portman, also a producer on the film.

"When you explore all those layers - playing someone who's playing someone, making a movie of a movie in a movie - there's so many layers of artifice, and what truth we can get out of artifice - which is the kind of alchemy of what we do," adds Portman. "We're using lies to tell the truth, and it's magic."

"May December" has some unofficial roots in reality. Gracie isn't very different in certain ways from Mary Kay Letourneau, a Washington State schoolteacher who went to prison after a relationship with a boy in her sixth grade class.

Questions of identity and artifice have run through Haynes' filmography, including the sumptuous '50s romance "Carol," the Douglas Sirk-inspired melodrama "Far from Heaven" and his most recent film, the documentary "The Velvet Underground." In Portman, he found an actor who shared a similar approach to film.

Filmmaking

"A lot of narrative filmmaking and fiction-making has an internal desire to redeem oneself through the process, to sort of affirm one's own aims. That's the thing that I'm not particularly interested in as a director," says Haynes. "And I'm drawn to actors who feel similarly, who are actually interested in creating a distance between maybe their own values and ideas and those portrayed in the character."

He praised Portman's eagerness to engage with "and lean into the most disquieting aspects of the character."

Portman has famously played some real-life figures, like Jacqueline Kennedy ("Jackie"), which required copious amounts of research. But in "May December," she plays an actor far more reckless than herself. Yet even in a performance that could have easily slid into satire, Portman deftly inhabits her.

"Most artists who tell stories want to hold up their ethical standpoint in the light. It can be vampiric to

take human emotion and human story and capitalize on it and tell a story," Portman says. "But hopefully the energy that you come to it with is empathy and the curiosity to explore someone's human behavior and someone's inner self. That it's an act of empathy and not an act of bloodsucking."

There were long conversations with Haynes and Moore as they prepared to make "May December" in a 30-day shooting spring. But, unlike her character, Portman's preparation for the part was mostly already done.

"Well," Portman says smiling, "I've spent my whole life researching how to be an actress."

Also:

CANNES, France: **Ethan Hawke** and his "Strange Way of Life" co-stars showed off their itchy trigger fingers on the second day of the Cannes Film Festival.

Hawke, who stars with **Pedro Pascal** in "Strange Way of Life," a Western from **Pedro Almodóvar**, used their hands as pretend guns while photographers snapped away Wednesday.

Elsewhere, **Johnny Depp** continued his return to the festival circuit with a press conference where he declared he had "no further need for Hollywood." His "Jeanne du Barry" director and co-star, **Maïwenn**, posed for photos at a site with the French Riviera as the backdrop.

The site was an early stop for Hawke and his co-stars, and for actor **John C. Reilly**, who is leading the jury in the festival's Un Certain Regard section. Also last Wednesday, director **Steve McQueen** premiered his four-hour documentary "Occupied City," a joint project with his wife that juxtaposes modern scenes in **Amsterdam** with details about Nazi atrocities that happened there.

By nightfall, the attention had turned to a film in competition at the festival, "Monster," from **Hirokazu Kore-eda**, where glamorous looks from stars like Hawke, **Gemma Chan**, model **Sara Sampaio** and EGOT-winner **Viola Davis** abounded.

VENICE, Italy: The curator of this year's Venice Architecture Biennale denounced Italy's denial of visas to three Ghanaian men who worked with her on the main exhibition giving voice to Africans and the African diaspora.

Lesley Lokko, a Scottish-Ghanaian who is the first African to curate the architectural Biennale,



Allen



Monroe

told a press conference that the Italian embassy in **Ghana** cited "reasonable doubts" about the applicants' intentions to leave Italy when the visa expires.

However, she said, the embassy gave no explanation for its decision.

"For almost the first time in my life, words fail me," she said.

The Biennale features a preponderance of participants from Africa or the African diaspora under the title "The Laboratory of the Future," exploring the themes of decolonization and decarbonization.

Lokko said it was not the first time she had been confronted with refused entry by Western countries.

"It has happened to my family. It has happened to my friends. It has happened to collaborators. I think everyone in the global south understands this story only too well," she said.

While the refusal was grabbing headlines, she added, "This is not a new story. It's an old and familiar tale." (AP)

People & Places

Film

Major Cannes draw

Liv Ullmann, major royalty, looks back

CANNES, France, May 23, (AP): Very few are capable of capturing people's attention at the Cannes Film Festival like Liv Ullmann.

At 84, Ullmann is unabashed cinema royalty, and directors have flocked to greet her at this year's festival. Pedro Almodóvar sought her out at a luncheon. Todd Haynes endeavored to get word to her that his latest film, "May December," is inspired by "Persona," the 1966 film that began her decade with Ingmar Bergman.

After meeting Ullmann, "The Zone of Interest" director Jonathan Glazer pressed his hand against his chest to catch his breath.

Ullmann has been coming to Cannes longer than she can remember. She's pretty sure there's a hotel suite somewhere named after her. But after being here in just about every capacity - with "Cries and Whispers" in 1973, her own "Faithless" in 2000, president of the jury in 2001 - she was in Cannes for a different reason. Dheeraj Akolkar's documentary series, "Liv Ullmann: A Road Less Travelled," played in the Cannes Classics section.



Ullmann

"I've never been here when someone else has made a movie about me or my life," says Ullmann. "That makes it so different and maybe a little shameful, somehow. Because I'm an actress and a director."

In an interview, the Norwegian actor, who lives in Boston, reflected on the passing of time and her halcyon decade with Bergman, one of cinema's great collaborations. Ullmann starred in 10 of Bergman's films, including "Scenes From a Marriage" and "Saraband," and she directed two of his screenplays. "A Road Less Travelled" streams on Viaplay beginning June 22nd.

AP: Having been such a central part of arthouse heyday when filmmakers like Bergman, Godard and Truffaut were such a part of culture, do you ever lament that today's most daring movies seem to reside less in the spotlight?

Ullmann: They make incredible movies now. You know, I saw Cate Blanchett last year. What an actress. Art, it's made today. But so many other films are also reflection of this time. And I mean, everything that won Oscars this year, I didn't even understand them all. It doesn't mean that there's something wrong with them or there's anything wrong with me.

I sometimes miss that there aren't more of the movies we used to call classical. That's about aging, too, maybe. What I'm most nervous for is that all these serials that are everywhere is removing us so far from what film really was. The art of the lighting, the art of the cinematographer, the art of the director - that kind of language. I like where I came from.

AP: How clearly do you remember meeting Bergman?

Ullmann: Bibi Andersson, who was my best friend and we had done some movies together, I visited her in Sweden. We were walking on the street, and that's where Ingmar came and spoke with her. He knew who I was because I had filmed a lot. He said, "Oh, well, I'd like you to be in one of my films." And so maybe that's why I also experienced everything (in film) more personally because it happened like that, Ingmar and me.

AP: He was immediately struck by you in that meeting, but what was your first impression of him?

Ullmann: Oh, I was so impressed. I'm shy and then I was really shy. I never spoke. When he said he wanted me in one of his movies, I was shocked. Luckily, I didn't have any lines in the movie. It's strange he did that with me because I was 25. I was young. I see the movie as about him having reached middle age and wanting to stop life and go into himself. Then he picked me. I was him. And I think I was him in many of the movies. We were not alike each other but in certain ways we were. There is a reason he then used me continually until he died.

AP: How would you describe how deep your connection was?

Ullmann: He said that. You and I are painfully connected. We lived together for five years but maybe the most wonderful connection was when we lived separately. We became more connected that way. I came to Fårö (the island he lived on) the night he died and he was already on his way.

AP: Did you share any words on his death bed?

Ullmann: He was already on his way. One thing I did say. The last film we did together was "Saraband." That's about a woman who comes to her husband many years after it's over. And he asks her, "Why did you come to me?" She says, "You called for me." When I was sitting there on the bed, I said, "If you're wondering why I'm here, you called for me." He may have heard that, I don't know.

AP: You've often been described as his "muse" but that doesn't seem the right word for your collaboration.

Ullmann: I don't think I was a muse but you can say that. I did a lot of things that he wanted to do that he didn't do. I traveled. I went into the world. I became famous. The strange thing with all these actors who he loved dearly, he didn't like them to go. Bibi Andersson and Max von Sydow. But he thought it was fun with me. I don't know why. When I did "A Doll's House," he came to New York. He hated to travel. He enjoyed what I did. There was so much I got to do because I wasn't him, and maybe he would have loved to do. All his seriousness, of course that wasn't me.

AP: You consider yourself at heart a theater actor, but what was your relationship to the camera? In the documentary, Blanchett says you were "looking up at the world sort of with a face of unconditional love."

Ullmann: If you're really close to somebody you love, when you look at each other, you know everything about each other. I see the camera that way. I don't have to be shy. You are an actor from the inside. Your soul, your heart can come out if you want to show the camera the real truth. It tells what is under there. It's nothing you can act or do Stanislavski about. It's not your brain. Your brain is not the actor. It's from here (points to heart). If you relax your body, the camera will take it.



In this photo released on Monday, May 22, 2023, actors Mike Faist playing Jack and Lucas Hedges as Ennis, during a scene of the play Brokeback Mountain. (AP)

Stage

'Brokeback Mountain' draws mixed reviews

Play brings rising US stars to London stage

LONDON, May 23, (AP): "Brokeback Mountain" was a star-making story onscreen. It may turn out to be the same onstage.

Rising American stars Lucas Hedges and Mike Faist are making their London theater debuts in an adaptation of Annie Proulx's short story about two star-crossed Wyoming shepherds whose love is stifled by the strictures of their society.

Proulx's tale of homophobia on the range, first published in 1997, reached a huge global audience through Ang Lee's Academy Award-winning 2005 film, which cemented the stardom of Jake Gyllenhaal and the late Heath Ledger.

A new stage version at London's Soho Place theater, stars Hedges as taciturn ranch hand Ennis Del Mar and Faist as livewire cowboy Jack Twist, who fall passionately in love during a 1960s summer on an isolated mountainside.

Both are already acclaimed young actors. Hedges got an Oscar nomination for playing a bereaved teenager in 2016 drama "Manchester by the Sea," and Faist is a Tony Award nominee for "Dear Evan Hansen" and made a splash as gang leader Riff in Steven Spielberg's "West Side Story."

Still, Hedges admitted he was "pretty nervous" before opening night.

"It's constantly a process of feeling like I've discovered the character and then losing the character and then finding it again," Hedges told the Associated Press.

"We're always nervous," added Faist. But he said the actors trusted that director Jonathan Butterell had cast them for a reason.

"It's because he sees those qualities in us," he said. "I think all of us in general have both of them. We're all Ennises and we're all Jacks, in our way. So the duality exists within all of us and part of our job is to just find those parts and bring them to the surface and make them the most ac-

cessible as possible."

Ashley Robinson's script aims to match the gut-wrenching economy of Proulx's 35-page story. It covers two decades in 90 minutes, as the pair struggle to convert their passion into something sustainable and sustaining.

Hedges said the director had compared the show to the last production to run at Soho Place, Euripides' Greek tragedy "Medea."

"Of course it's not ancient Greek theater, but there's something deeply fundamental about it, about these two characters, about the way in which they need each other and can't ultimately be together," Hedges said. "There is something classic about the dynamic, and the stakes."

The actors are accompanied onstage by a live band that includes Scottish singer Eddi Reader and legendary British pedal steel player B.J. Cole. But don't call it a musical - this version of Wyoming is a long way from "Oklahoma!"

Characters

"These characters bursting into song would make no sense at all," said Dan Gillespie Sells, who composed the show's plaintive, country-tinged songs. "These characters don't have an inner dialogue."

"They can't express themselves, and they can't express themselves to themselves."

Instead, "a pedal steel guitar and a harmonica - those things can deliver you into landscape" both interior and exterior, said Sells, whose theater work includes songs for the musical "Everybody's Talking About Jamie."

"Brokeback Mountain," which runs until Aug. 12, has drawn mixed reviews. The Guardian thought the play had a "distilled purity," but the Times of London said the production "smolders fitfully" rather than catching fire. But there has been wide praise for the two leads, as well as for British actor Emily Fairn, mak-

ing her professional stage debut as Ennis's disappointed wife, Alma.

What's undeniable is the power of the "Brokeback Mountain" story, which also was adapted into an opera, first staged in 2014, with music by Charles Wuorinen and libretto by Proulx. Some see it as a classic love story - but director Butterell thinks that is a misunderstanding.

"It's not a love story," he said. "It's a story about fear. It's a tragedy, because fear wins out."

"This story is still very, very, very relevant," he added. "We have not shifted so far."

Also:

NEW YORK: Jeremy Strong is going from a corporate boardroom on TV to a whistleblower on Broadway.

The actor who plays Kendall Roy in the HBO television series "Succession" has signed on to play a man who tries to expose water contamination in a Norwegian spa town in Henrik Ibsen's 1882 play "An Enemy of the People."

The play - with a rewrite from Amy Herzog, whose adaptation of Ibsen's "A Doll's House" just won a Tony nomination - will premiere on Broadway in early 2024 at a theater to be revealed later, producers said. The rest of the cast will be announced later. Sam Gold, who won a Tony directing "Fun Home," will helm the revival.

It will be Strong's second time on Broadway. He was in "A Man for All Seasons" in 2008 with Frank Langella and Patrick Page. Since then, his work on "Succession" has earned him an Emmy and a Golden Globe.

Strong will play a public-minded doctor in a small town who discovers the water supply for the public spa is contaminated and may have made tourists - the community's economic lifeblood - ill. But his efforts to clean up the mess pit his ethics against political cowards and the media, leaving his family suffering.



Liv Ullmann poses for portrait photographs for the television series "Liv Ullmann: A Road Less Travelled" at the 76th international film festival, Cannes, southern France, Saturday, May 20, 2023. (AP)



Stevenson



Hackman

Variety

LOS ANGELES: Ray Stevenson, who played the villainous British governor in "RRR," an Asgardian warrior in the "Thor" films, and a member of the 13th Legion in HBO's "Rome," has died. He was 58.

Representatives for Stevenson told The Associated Press that he died Sunday but had no other details to share on Monday.

Stevenson was born in Lisburn, Northern Ireland, in 1964. After attending the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School and years of working in British television, he made his film debut in Paul Greengrass's 1998 film "The Theory of Flight." In 2004, he appeared in Antoine Fuqua's "King Arthur" as a knight of the round table and several years later played the lead in the pre-Disney Marvel adaptation "Punisher: War Zone."

Though "Punisher" was not the best-reviewed film, he'd get another taste of Marvel in the first three "Thor" films, in which he played Volstagg. Other prominent film roles included the "Divergent" trilogy, "G.I. Joe: Retaliation" and "The Transporter: Refueled."

A looming presence at 6-foot-4, Stevenson, who played his share of soldiers past and present, once said in an interview, "I guess I'm an old warrior at heart."

On the small screen, he was the roughish Titus Pullo in "Rome," a role that really got his career going in the United States and got him a SAG card, at the age of 44. The popular series ran from 2005 to 2007.

"That was one of the major years of my life," Stevenson said in an interview. "It made me sit down in my own skin and say, just do the job. The job's enough."

In an interview with Backstage in 2020, Stevenson said his acting idols were, "The likes of Lee Marvin (and) Gene Hackman." (AP)

CANBERRA, Australia: Prominent Australian Indigenous journalist Stan Grant quit television hosting duties on Monday in response to online racist

abuse over his comments during King Charles III's coronation about historic Aboriginal dispossession.

Grant, a member of the Wiradjuri tribe

of Indigenous Australians and former international correspondent for US-based CNN, said at the end of Australian Broadcasting Corp.'s weekly national



Alma Poysti, from left, director Aki Kaurismaki, and Jussi Vatanen pose for photographers at the photo call for the film "Fallen Leaves" at the 76th international film festival, Cannes, southern France, May 23. (AP)

panel discussion program "Q+A," that he was "stepping away for a little while" because his soul was hurting.

"To those who have abused me and my family, I would just say: If your aim was to hurt me, well, you've succeeded," Grants said. "I'm sorry that I must have given you so much cause to hate me so much, to target me and my family, to make threats against me."

Grant has been under fire since taking part in a panel discussion on the ABC ahead of the May 6 coronation ceremony in London. Topics included a push to have a president replace the British monarch as Australia's head of state and Indigenous suffering from colonization.

Critics complained that the ABC had soured the celebratory mood of the coronation.

His supporters say inaccurate and inflammatory reporting of his views in the mainstream media has fueled racially abusive and threatening personal attacks on social media, wearing the news veteran down.

After more than 30 years of news experience in Australian television, Grant wrote Friday in his regular ABC online column that Monday would be the last time in the foreseeable future that he would host "Q+A" because of the news media and social media abuse. (AP)

Climate

'Early warnings help'

2m killed, \$4.3trn losses from 'extreme weather'

GENEVA, May 23, (AP) — The economic damage of weather- and climate-related disasters continues to rise, even as improvements in early warning have helped reduce the human toll, the UN weather agency said Monday.

The World Meteorological Organization, in an updated report, tallied nearly 12,000 extreme weather, climate and water-related events over the past half-century around the globe that have killed more than 2 million people and caused economic damage of \$4.3 trillion.

The stark recap from WMO came as it opened its four-year congress among member countries, pressing the message that more needs to be done to improve alert systems for extreme weather events by a target date of 2027.

"Economic losses have soared. But improved early warnings and coordinated disaster management has slashed the human casualty toll over the past half a century," WMO said in a statement. The trend of rising economic damage is expected to continue.

The Geneva-based agency has repeatedly warned about the impact of man-made climate change, saying rising temperatures have increased the frequency and intensity of extreme weather - including floods, hurricanes, cyclones, heat waves and drought.

WMO says early warning systems have helped reduce deaths linked to climate and other weather-related catastrophes.

Most of the economic damage between 1970 and 2021 came in the United States - totaling \$1.7 trillion - while nine in 10 deaths worldwide took place in developing countries. The economic impact, relative to gross domestic product, has been felt more in developing countries, WMO says.

WMO Secretary-General **Petteri Taalas** said the cyclonic storm Mocha that swept across Myanmar and Bangladesh this month exemplified how the "most vulnerable communities unfortunately bear the brunt of weather, climate and water-related hazards."

Disaster

"In the past, both Myanmar and Bangladesh suffered death tolls of tens and even hundreds of thousands of people," he said, alluding to previous catastrophes. "Thanks to early warnings and disaster management these catastrophic mortality rates are now thankfully history."

"Early warnings save lives," he said. The findings were a part of an update to WMO's Atlas of Mortality and Economic Losses from Weather, Climate and Water Extremes, which previously had covered a nearly 50-year period through 2019.

WMO acknowledges some caveats to its report: While the number of disasters has risen, some of that may be due to improvements in reporting about extreme weather events that might have been overlooked in the past.

While the findings account for inflation, WMO cautioned that estimating the economic toll can be an inexact science, and the reports could understate the actual damage.

Worldwide, tropical cyclones were the primary cause of reported human and economic losses.

In Africa, WMO counted more than 1,800 disasters and 733,585 deaths related to weather, climate and water extremes - including flooding and storm surges. The costliest was Tropical Cyclone Idai in 2019, which ran to \$2.1 billion in damages.

Nearly 1,500 disasters hit the southwest Pacific, causing 66,951 deaths and \$185.8 billion in economic losses.

Asia faced over 3,600 disasters, costing 984,263 lives and \$1.4 trillion in economic losses - that cost mostly due to the impact of cyclones. South America had 943 disasters that resulted in 58,484 deaths and over \$115 billion in economic losses.

Over 2,100 disasters in North America, Central America and the Caribbean led to 77,454 deaths and \$2 trillion in economic losses.

Europe saw nearly 1,800 disasters that led to 166,492 deaths and \$562 billion in economic losses.

Last week, WMO forecast a 66% chance that within the next five years the Earth will face a year that averages 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) warmer than in the mid-19th century, reaching a key threshold targeted by the Paris climate accord of 2015.

Heat wave: Swathes of **India** from the northwest to the southeast braced for more scorching heat Monday, with **New Delhi** under a severe weather alert, as extreme temperatures strike parts of the country.

The Indian Meteorological Department issued a heat wave alert for seven southern and central states last week and broadened it to the capital and some northern states on Monday as sizzling temperatures breached normal levels.

It warned that blistering heat will continue for the next few days before rains bring some relief. The southwest monsoon is slightly delayed this year and will hit in the first week of June, causing temperatures to stay high longer than usual, it said.

As temperatures crossed 45 degrees Celsius (113 degrees Fahrenheit) in the northern state of **Uttar Pradesh**, some parts suffered blackouts lasting more than 12 hours despite a March order for all power plants in the country run at full capacity to reduce power cuts. The heat wave in the state is likely to continue for two more days, a weather official said.

Hundreds of frustrated residents protested outside power stations near the state capital, Lucknow, and blocked roads over the weekend.

"Power cuts mean no ACs, no fans, and even no water. The scorching heat has made our lives unbearable and the lack of power is adding to our misery," said **Ramesh Gupta**, a Lucknow resident. He said his wife was forced to sleep in the car over the weekend with the air conditioning on high so their 9-month-old baby would stop crying.

The searing heat forced many residents of the city to seek refuge indoors. "We have become prisoners to the relentless summer as no one wants to venture out," said **Sudhir Sehgal**, a teacher.

Sukhai Ram, a gardener who is paid only when he works, was forced to set down his tools. "I cannot work anymore now. I will work once the sun goes down," he said, drenched in sweat.

Temperatures

Dairy workers wrapped their cans with jute to keep the milk from spoiling. Construction workers hosed themselves down for a temporary respite from the soaring heat.

Nighttime temperatures are also rising, sparking increased demand for electricity to run air conditioners and fans.

The main summer months - April, May and June - are always hot in most parts of India before monsoon rains bring cooler temperatures. But temperatures have become more intense in the past decade. During heat waves, the country usually also suffers severe water shortages, with tens of millions of its 1.4 billion people lacking running water.

A study by World Weather Attribution, an academic group that examines the source of extreme heat, found that a searing heat wave in April that struck parts of South Asia was made at least 30 times more likely by climate change.

The heat caused 13 people to die at a government event last month in India's financial capital of Mumbai, and prompted some states to close all schools for a week.

Scientists say temperatures are at least 2 degrees C (3.6 degrees F) hotter in South Asia than in pre-industrial times because of climate change. Currently, the world is averaging about 1.1 to 1.2 C (2 to 2.2 F) warmer.

"Access to healthcare and to cooling solutions like fans and air conditioners is missing for a lot of the population in this region," said **Emmanuel Raju**, director of the Copenhagen Centre for Disaster Research at the University of Copenhagen.



In this image from NASA TV, Ali Al-Qarni, (second from left), and Rayyanah Barnawi of Saudi Arabia, (second right), have a drink alongside two cosmonauts in the International Space Station, May 22. The space station rolled out the welcome mat for the two Saudi visitors, including the kingdom's first female astronaut. (AP)

The Conversation

New brain stimulation therapy to treat disorder

Brain signals can measure chronic pain

By **Prasad Shirvalkar**
University of California, San Francisco

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

The Research Brief is a short take about interesting academic work.

Using a brain implant that can record neural signals over many months, my research team and I have discovered objective biomarkers of chronic pain severity in four patients with chronic pain as they went about their daily lives.

Pain is one of the most important and basic subjective experiences a person can have. While there is plenty of evidence that perception of pain takes place in the brain, there is also a major knowledge gap regarding where and how pain signals are processed in the brain. Even though pain is universal, there has not been a way to objectively measure its intensity.

Most prior studies on the brain signals responsible for pain have relied on laboratory experiments in artificial environments. Until now, most research on chronic pain has used indirect measures of brain activity such as functional magnetic resonance imaging or electroencephalography. Furthermore, although doctors widely recognize that chronic pain is not just an extension of acute pain - like stubbing your toe - it remains unknown how the brain circuits behind acute and chronic pain relate to each other.

Predict

Our study was part of a larger clinical trial aimed at developing a new brain stimulation therapy to treat severe chronic pain. My team surgically implanted electrodes in the brains of four patients with post-stroke pain and phantom limb pain to record neural signals in their orbitofrontal cortex, an area of the brain associated with planning and expectation, and cingulate cortex, an area associated with emotion.

We asked the patients about their pain severity levels several times a day for up to six months. We then built machine learning models to try to match and predict each patient's self-reported pain intensity scores with snapshots of their brain activity signals. These brain signals consisted of electrical waves that could be decomposed into different frequencies, similar to how a musical chord can be broken down into

What is that 'inner voice' in your head when you read?

By **Beth Meisinger** and **Roger J. Kreuz**
University of Memphis

Curious Kids is a series for children of all ages. If you have a question you'd like an expert to answer, send it to curiouskidsus@theconversation.com.

What is that voice in your head when you read? - **Luiza**, age 14, Goiânia, Brazil

When you first begin reading, you read out loud.

Reading aloud can make the text easier to understand when you're a beginning reader or when you are reading something that's challenging. Listening to yourself as you read helps with comprehension.

After that, you might "mumble read." That's when you mumble, whisper or move your lips as you read. But this practice slowly fades as your reading skills develop, and you start to read silently "in your head." That's when your inner voice comes into play.

As experts in reading and language, we see this transition from reading out loud to silently all the time. It's a normal part of the development of reading skills. Usually, kids are good at reading silently by the fourth or fifth grade.

The shift from reading out loud to reading silently is very similar to how kids develop thinking and speaking

skills. Young children often speak to themselves as a way to think through challenges. **Lev Vygotsky**, a Russian psychologist, called this "private speech." And kids aren't the only ones who talk to themselves. Just watch an adult try to put together a new vacuum cleaner. You might hear them muttering to themselves as they try to understand the assembly instructions.

As kids become better thinkers, they shift to talking inside their heads instead of out loud. This is called "inner speech."

Once you're a good reader, it's a lot easier to read silently. Reading becomes faster because you don't have to say each word. And you can jump back to reread parts without disrupting the flow of reading. You can even skip over short familiar words.

Silent reading is more flexible, and it allows you to focus on what's most important. And it's during silent reading that you may discover your inner voice.

Hearing an inner voice while reading is relatively common. In fact, one study found that 4 in 5 people say they often or always hear an inner voice when they read silently to themselves. (AP)

individual sounds of different pitches. From these models, we found that low frequencies in the orbitofrontal cortex corresponded with each of the patients' subjective pain intensities, providing an objective measure of chronic pain. The larger the shift in low-frequency activity we measured, the more likely the patient was experiencing intense pain.

Next, we wanted to compare the relationship between chronic pain and acute pain. We examined how the brain responded to short-term, intense pain caused by applying heat to the patients' bodies. Based on data from two participants, we found that the anterior cingulate cortex was more involved in processing acute pain than chronic pain. This experiment provides the first direct evidence that chronic pain involves information-processing areas of brain distinct from those involved in acute pain.

Chronic pain, defined as pain lasting more than three months, affects up to 1 in 5 people in the US. In 2019, the incidence of chronic pain was more common than that of diabetes, high blood pressure or depression.

Neuropathic pain resulting from damage to the nervous system, such as stroke and phantom limb pain, often doesn't respond to available treatments and can significantly impair physical and emotional function and quality of life. Better understanding how to measure brain activity to track pain could improve the diagnosis of chronic pain conditions and help develop new treatments such as deep brain stimulation.

Although our study provides a proof of concept that signals from specific brain regions can serve as an objective measure of chronic pain, it is more likely that pain signals are distributed over a wide brain network. (AP)



A police officer stands guard as a health worker administers a polio vaccine to a child at a neighborhood of Peshawar, Pakistan, May 22. (AP)



Reichling



Dunn

Discovery

Popocatepetl spewing ash: Mexico's Popocatepetl volcano spewed gas, smoke and ash Monday, leading education authorities to suspend in-person classes in parts of three states, a day after the government raised the warning level on the volcano's activity.

Activity at the 17,797-foot (5,425-meter) mountain just 45 miles (about 70 kilometers) southeast of Mexico City and known affectionately as "El Popo" has increased over the past week. Evacuations have not been ordered, but authorities were preparing for that scenario and telling people to stay out of 7.5-mile (12-kilometer) radius around the peak.

The volcano's activity temporarily halted flights at the capital's two airports over the weekend.

On Monday, an ash plume extended hundreds of miles (hundreds of kilometers) to the east, stretching out over the Bay of Campeche, according to a US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration report.

On Sunday, national Civil Defense Coordinator **Laura Velázquez** said in a news conference that the stoplight-style warning system for the volcano remained on yellow, but had risen to phase 3. Still, she said, "there is no risk to the population at this time."

In this phase, large domes develop and explode in increasing intensity, launching incandescent rock into the air and pyroclastic flows down its flanks.

Velázquez said only three of the volcano's 565 explosions since September had been big, and the current activity was not the greatest of this century. (AP)

Gator attacks man: A man in Florida lost his arm after being attacked by an alligator behind a bar, according to wildlife authorities.

The 23-year-old man was attacked early Sunday behind a bar in Port Charlotte, Florida, according to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

The man had been a patron at **Banditos Bar**, which is located next to a pond. Another bar patron, **Manny Hidalgo**, told The Daily Sun that he heard the man screaming from the pond area and went outside looking for him in the early morning darkness.

"He was yelling and swimming toward the shoreline," Hidalgo said. "I ran and dragged him up onto the sand. I was scared to get close to the water because it was dark out."

The man was taken by helicopter to Gulf Coast Hospital in Fort Myers, where his arm was amputated, said **Todd Dunn**, a spokesman for Charlotte County Fire and EMS.

A nuisance alligator trapper removed the 10.5-foot (3.2 meters) alligator from the property, according to wildlife officials. (AP)

Snakes released into wild: They were born and raised in captivity, but as they

slowly slithered away from their handlers and disappeared into gopher holes in the Kisatchie National Forest, the group of

Louisiana pine snakes appeared to be right at home.

The five pine snakes bred at the Mem-



A man and a boy walk across an almost dried up bed of river Yamuna following hot weather in New Delhi, India, Monday, May 2. The UN weather agency reported Monday that nearly 12,000 extreme weather, climate and water-related events over much of the last half-century around the globe have killed more than 2 million people and caused economic damage of \$4.3 trillion. (AP)

phis Zoo in Tennessee were released into the Kisatchie in early May as part of an ongoing conservation effort involving zoos in Memphis, New Orleans and two Texas cities, Fort Worth and Lufkin. This year, more than 100 pine snakes - a species the federal government lists as threatened - will be released into the central Louisiana forest.

"We provide the snakes in our snake factories, which are funded by the US Forest Service, into habitat that the Fish and Wildlife Service and Forest Service have developed," said **Steve Reichling**, the Memphis Zoo's Director of Conservation and Research. "It's just a perfect marriage, really."

Reichling said the characteristics of the area where the snakes were released - a high tree canopy dominated by longleaf pine, little mid-level vegetation, grassy ground and sandy soil - are all vital to the snakes' survival. The forest is also home to gophers that are both a food source for the snakes and the creators of the burrow system where the snakes live and hibernate.

"Unlike some of the other snakes that are here that can survive in different habitats, Louisiana pines, they cannot," Reichling said as the snakes were being released. Although they bear a resemblance to rattlesnakes, pine snakes are non-venomous constrictors and aren't considered dangerous to humans. (AP)

Valencia ban a fan for life

7 people arrested in Spain linked to racial abuse cases against Júnior

MADRID, May 23, (AP) — Seven people accused of racially abusing Real Madrid player Vinícius Júnior have been arrested in Spain, police said Tuesday.

Three were detained in Valencia for alleged abuse against Vinícius in a Spanish league match on Sunday. Four were arrested in Madrid for allegedly hanging an effigy of the player off a highway bridge in January.

The arrests come after an outpouring of support for Vinícius after he said he was abused in Valencia. The case prompted widespread reaction from sports figures and government officials in Spain and worldwide.

The nation has been criticized for its lack of action in racism cases in soccer. Brazilian government officials, including President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, had publicly expressed their concerns.

Vinícius, who is Black, has been subjected to repeated racist taunts since he arrived in Spain five years ago, and especially this season after he began celebrating his goals by dancing.

The Brazilian has heavily criticized Spanish soccer for not doing more to stop racism.

The match against Valencia was temporarily stopped after Vinícius said a fan behind one of the goals called him a monkey and made monkey gestures toward him. Vinícius considered leaving the field but eventually continued playing.

The effigy of Vinícius was hanged by the neck on the morning of a derby match between Real Madrid and Atletico Madrid in the Copa del Rey. Along with it was a banner with the words "Madrid hates Real."

The perpetrators used a black figure with Vinícius' name on it, tied a rope around its neck and hanged it from an overpass while still dark in the Spanish capital.

Police said three of those arrested belonged to one of Atletico's fan groups, and the other was a follower of the group. Some had prior bookings with police for other crimes.

The hate message on the banner is often used by Atletico's hardcore fans, though at the time they denied being responsible for the display.

The men arrested are between the ages of 19 and 24. Authorities said some were previously identified dur-

ing matches considered at high risk of violence. Police showed images of them arriving in handcuffs and escorted by agents on Tuesday.

Spanish media said police had used security cameras to identify the perpetrators but no action had been taken until now. Police did not say if the timing of the arrests had to do with the widespread attention being received by the latest abuse against Vinícius on Sunday.

The lights at the Christ the Redeemer statue in Rio de Janeiro were turned off Monday night in a show of solidarity for Vinícius.

"It's an action of solidarity that is moving," Vinícius said on Twitter. "But more than everything, what I want is to inspire and bring more light to our fight."

Vinícius thanked all the support he has received in the last months in Brazil and abroad.

"I know who you are," he said. "Count on me, because the good ones are the majority and I'm not going to give up. I have a purpose in life, and if I have to keep suffering so that future generations won't have to go through these types of situations, I'm ready and

prepared."

Valencia banned for life a fan identified with insulting Vinícius during the game. Real Madrid took the case to prosecutors as a hate crime.

The Spanish league has filed nine criminal complaints of cases of racial abuse against Vinícius in the last two seasons, with most of them being shelved by prosecutors. The league said Tuesday it will seek to increase its authority to issue sanctions in cases of hate crimes during games. It had been saying it can only detect and denounce incidents to authorities and the country's soccer federation.

Supporters have been fined and banned from stadiums for their abuse against Vinícius, but so far only a Mallorca fan may end up going on trial for allegedly racially insulting the Brazilian during a game.

The first trial against a fan accused of racial abuse in Spanish professional soccer is expected to happen at some point this year; the case involved Athletic Bilbao forward Inaki Williams, who was insulted by an Espanyol supporter in a match in 2020.

Windhorst's money dried up during pandemic

Hertha, burned by ambition, must rebuild after relegation

BERLIN, May 23, (AP) — Though it had long seemed likely, Hertha Berlin's relegation from the Bundesliga still felt like a blow out of nowhere when it came.

The "Old Lady" was leading against Bochum deep into injury time on Saturday - in a game it had to win - and hopes of another dramatic escape were rising. Hertha's fans were already celebrating the chance to fight again on the last day of the season.

Then Keven Schlotterbeck - a former Union Berlin player - scored Bochum's equalizer for 1-1. There was no time for a response.

Hertha was relegated after a 10-year stint in the top division and, all around Olympiastadion, the club's fans stood in stunned silence with their hands on their heads.

But Hertha's downfall arguably started years earlier, when billionaire Lars Windhorst started backing the team in 2019 and declared it a "big city club" that could challenge the traditional giants.

Windhorst invested 374 million euros (\$405 million) in Hertha, fueling a spending spree and prompting a managerial merry-go-round that started badly when the inexperienced Ante Čović was fired and his replacement, Jurgen Klinsmann, quit after seven games.

Klinsmann had said Hertha was the "most exciting soccer project in Europe."

Coaches came and went, managing directors departed, sporting directors and chief executive officers, too. There were scandals and renewed low points, and Hertha never came close to Windhorst's dream of challenging Europe's best.

Instead, the team found itself fighting relegation every season, and the "big city club" moniker became a term of derision.

Windhorst's money dried up during the coronavirus pandemic, when restrictions impacted ticket sales, and suddenly Hertha found it needed to cut costs. A team that was already struggling was progressively weakened. Hertha stayed up only after a playoff last year. Then it got rid of more players.

Windhorst sold his stake to American investors 777 Partners in March.

"We weren't relegated today," Hertha coach Pál Dárdai said, referring to

the reasons for the team's demise. "We have to cross it off, analyze it, learn from the mistakes, everyone, including myself, very important, and then we can be proud again."

Dárdai, who was brought back for his third stint as coach to save the team from relegation, might yet stay on to oversee its rebuilding in the second division. Hertha president Kay Bernstein, sporting director Benjamin Weber and academy director Andreas "Zecke" Neundorff all want the Hungarian to stay.

"We have super fans, a super city, super grounds, and it pays off to work here," Dárdai said. "I'll use the word again - work. Not just to be here, happy, but to work, and then it will be a promising future." Some Hertha fans showed up to applaud the players as they trained

SOCCER

on Sunday. Hertha visits Wolfsburg for its last Bundesliga game on Saturday and then the breakup of the squad will begin.

Hertha managing director Thomas E. Herrich previously said it needs to reduce squad costs by 30% - the club's license from the German soccer league (DFL) is on the line. New majority stakeholder 777 has committed to providing 100 million euros (\$108 million) but Herrich said more is needed to show the DFL that Hertha is financially secure for next season.

On Monday, Hertha said it started an application to postpone the repayment of a 40-million-euro (\$43.2 million) bond due in November by two years. Club members have until June 19 to approve or reject the application.

"We'd be able to stabilize and improve Hertha BSC's financial situation next season with this extension," Herrich said. "It would also be an important and central building block in the DFL's licensing process. That's why quick approval and support would mean a lot to us."

The contracts of Prince Boateng, Marvin Plattenhardt and Stevan Jovetic are up at the end of the season, and the likes of Dodi Lukebakio, Lucas Tousart, Suat Serdar, Wilfried Kanga and others are all likely to leave.

Hertha will hope to make up for the shortfall through its own academy players, with Derry Scherhant (20), Pascal Klemens (18) and Ibrahim Maza (17) given more playing time.

Weber, who will oversee Hertha's transfer activity, faces a busy summer ahead.

Rays 'hit' 3 more HRs in win over sliding Blue Jays



Los Angeles Angels shortstop Zach Neto throws out Boston Red Sox's Alex Verdugo at first during the sixth inning of a baseball game in Anaheim, Calif. (AP)

Dodgers rally past Braves

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla., May 23, (AP) — Jose Siri, Randy Arozaena and Luke Raley homered, and the major league-leading Tampa Bay Rays beat the sliding Toronto Blue Jays 6-4 on Monday night.

Tampa Bay leads the major leagues with 94 home runs. The Rays opened a three-game lead over Baltimore in the AL East.

After opener Trevor Kelley pitched two scoreless innings, Josh Fleming (1-0) allowed two runs and five hits over the next six as the Rays improved to 22-4 at home.

Toronto's Chris Bassitt (5-3) pitched 28 consecutive scoreless innings before the Rays scored three times in the second. He allowed six runs - two earned - and seven hits over 6 1/3 innings.

Whit Merrifield and Daulton Varsho homered for the Blue Jays, who have lost seven of eight.

Dodgers 8, Braves 6

In Atlanta, Freddie Freeman's three-run homer in the fifth inning gave Los Angeles the lead, J.D. Martinez had four hits, including two homers, and the Dodgers rallied to beat Atlanta.

BASEBALL

The Dodgers, who trailed 4-0 in the first, won the opener of a three-game series between the top two teams in the National League. Freeman, a longtime Braves star, made the most of his second Atlanta homecoming with three hits to join Martinez in leading the comeback.

Dodgers rookie Gavin Stone allowed five runs on five hits and five walks in four innings in his second start for Los Angeles.

Charlie Morton (5-4) couldn't hold the early lead, allowing six runs in five innings. Freeman's three-run homer off Morton gave the Dodgers a 6-4 lead.

Angels 2, Red Sox 1

In Anaheim, Mickey Moniak homered in the eighth inning and Los Angeles won for the fourth time in five games.

Moniak drove a changeup from Kutter Crawford (1-2) over the wall in the right field to lead off the eighth.

Masataka Yoshida had two hits and an RBI for the Red Sox, who have dropped two straight after winning four in a row.

Chase Silseth (1-1) got the win, striking out two in two scoreless innings.

Pirates 6, Rangers 4

In Pittsburgh, Tucupita Marcano hit his first career grand slam, rookie Luis Ortiz pitched into the eighth inning and earned his first major league victory and Pittsburgh beat AL West-leading Texas.

Ortiz (1-2) allowed two runs and five hits in 7 2/3 innings for the win in his eighth career start. The 24-year-old right-hander struck out four and walked two in a 93-pitch effort.

Earlier in the inning, Carlos Santana singled to drive in Bryan Reynolds with the go-ahead run with two outs on a play that was overturned after a video review. Reynolds was originally called out on right fielder Adolis Garcia's throw to home plate, a play that would have ended the inning.

Guardians 3, White Sox 0

In Cleveland, Rookie Hunter Gaddis pitched six strong innings for his first major league win and struggling Cleveland catcher Mike Zunino connected for a two-run homer.

Gaddis (1-1) was recalled from Triple-A Columbus and gave the Guardians a badly needed quality start after they were swept over the weekend in New York. He gave up just two hits, combining with four relievers on a three-hitter. Zunino hit his third homer - first since April 28 - in the seventh off Gregory Santos. Sam Hentges, Nick Sandlin and Trevor Stephan combined for two scoreless innings before Emmanuel Clase worked a perfect ninth for his 16th save in 21 chances.

Reds 6, Cardinals 5, 10 Innings

In Cincinnati, Nick Senzel hit a sacrifice fly in the 10th inning and Cincinnati snapped a four-game losing streak.

Spencer Steer launched an early

In Denver, Elías Díaz homered

and scored the winning run for the Reds. Ian Gibaut (4-1) struck out two in a hitless 10th to keep it tied.

Paul DeJong homered and drove in four runs for the Cardinals, who had won 11 of 14 since a 10-24 start. St. Louis had the bases loaded in the ninth and two runners aboard in the 10th, but failed to score.

Tigers 8, Royals 5

In Kansas City, Javier Báez hit a bases-clearing double in the 10th inning for his third hit of the night to lift Detroit.

Matt Vierling had three hits, including a home run, and four RBIs for the Tigers. Alex Lange (2-0) earned the victory with two hitless innings of relief. Jose Cisnero picked up his first save.

Scott Barlow (1-3) allowed Báez's winning hit and took the loss.

Diamondbacks 6, Phillies 3

In Philadelphia, Lourdes Gurriel Jr. extended the longest active hitting streak in the majors to 15 games with a homer, double and two RBIs to lead Arizona.

Pavin Smith also homered for the Diamondbacks, who have won eight of their last 10 games. Kyle Schwarber and Bryson Stott hit solo homers for the Phillies, who have lost six of their last eight games. Gurriel went 4 for 4 and improved his average to .321. During his hitting streak, Gurriel has a .416 average (25 for 60) with six doubles, seven homers and 14 RBIs.

Zack Wheeler (3-4) was slowed by a fielding error by Stott on a possible double play ball in the second. It proved costly when Geraldo Perdomo doubled into the right field corner, scoring two runs.

Rockies 5, Marlins 3

In Denver, Elías Díaz homered

and doubled to drive in two runs and Jurickson Profar doubled twice to extend his on-base streak to 30 games and drive in another pair to lead Colorado.

Bryan De La Cruz had four hits for the Marlins, scoring twice and Jacob Stallings had two RBIs on an infield force play and a single.

With the score tied 2-all going into the bottom of the sixth inning, Díaz connected for his fourth home run, driving an offering from Edward Cabrera (3-4) into the left field bleachers. Profar, whose on-base streak is the longest active streak in the majors, added a two-run double in the bottom of the seventh.

Giants 4, Twins 1

In Minneapolis, Michael Conforto hit a three-run homer and the first of our San Francisco batters scored en route to their sixth win in seven games.

Lamonte Wade Jr. walked on eight pitches and Mike Yastrzemski on five, and J.D. Davis doubled on the 15th pitch from Bailey Ober (3-1) for the go-ahead run. Conforto hit a belt-high 1-0 fastball into the visitors bullpen in left-center for his ninth home run this season.

Sean Manaea (2-2) struck out eight in 3 2/3 scoreless innings in relief of opener John Brebbia, allowing three hits and three walks. Tristan Beck relieved with runners on second and third and induced Byron Buxton's inning-ending groundout in the fifth.

Mariners 11, Athletics 2

In Seattle, Jarrod Kelenic hit his 10th homer of the season and Luis Castillo pitched six scoreless innings for Seattle.

Kelenic also singled twice and had three RBIs. Jose Caballero launched a three-run homer and Julio Rodríguez had three hits, including two doubles, and scored three times as the Mariners matched a season high for runs.

Castillo (3-2) snapped a two-start losing streak and surpassed 1,000 strikeouts for his career. The right-hander had eight strikeouts and two walks against Oakland, which has lost five in a row and eight in nine.

Astros 12, Brewers 2

In Milwaukee, Yordan Alvarez had a grand slam among his two homers and Houston won its eighth straight.

Alvarez hit a solo shot off Corbin Burnes in the fifth inning and capped a five-run outburst in the sixth with a grand slam off Hoby Milner. Alvarez has 12 homers this season.

Corey Julks, Martín Maldonado and Mauricio Dubón also homered against Burnes (4-4), who allowed four homers in a game for the first time in his career.

MLB Results/Standings

WASHINGTON, May 23, (AP) — Results and standings from the MLB games on Monday.

Team	W	L	Pct	GB	Team	W	L	Pct	GB
Cleveland	3	14	.174	—	LA Angels	2	18	.118	—
Pittsburgh	6	14	.294	—	Seattle	11	18	.379	—
Tampa Bay	6	16	.263	—	Arizona	6	23	.209	—
San Francisco	4	24	.167	—	Cincinnati	6	24	.200	—
Houston	12	22	.353	—	St. Louis 10 Inn	5	25	.167	—
Detroit	8	25	.242	—	LA Dodgers	8	25	.242	—
					Miami	5	25	.167	—
					Colorado	3	25	.108	—
American League					National League				
East Division					East Division				
Tampa Bay	35	14	.714	—	Atlanta	29	18	.617	—
Baltimore	31	16	.660	3	New York	25	23	.521	4 1/2
New York	29	20	.592	6	Miami	24	24	.500	5 1/2
Boston	26	22	.542	8 1/2	Philadelphia	22	25	.468	7
Toronto	25	23	.521	9 1/2	Washington	20	27	.426	9
Central Division					Central Division				
Minnesota	25	23	.521	—	Milwaukee	25	22	.532	—
Detroit	21	24	.467	2 1/2	Pittsburgh	25	22	.532	—
Cleveland	21	26	.447	3 1/2	Chicago	20	26	.435	4 1/2
Chicago	19	30	.388	6 1/2	St. Louis	21	28	.429	5
Kansas City	14	35	.286	11 1/2	Cincinnati	20	27	.426	5
West Division					West Division				
Texas	29	18	.617	—	Los Angeles	30	19	.612	—
Houston	28	19	.596	1	Arizona	28	20	.583	1 1/2
Los Angeles	26	23	.531	4	San Francisco	23	24	.489	6
Seattle	23	24	.489	6	San Diego	21	26	.447	8
Oakland	10	39	.204	20	Colorado	20	28	.417	9 1/2

Change Name

I, RABIYA SAHER holder of Passport No. 4758290 write full name as per present passport) hereby change my name to RABIHA SAHER (as Sumame) for all purposes. (as Given name) henceforth be known in the name RABIHA SAHER (write full name as changed now) also undertake to carry out this name change in all my documents.

Marciniak picked for CL final duty

NYON, Switzerland, May 23, (AP) — After refereeing the World Cup final in December, Szymon Marciniak of Poland was picked Monday to officiate the Champions League final between Manchester City and Inter Milan.

UEFA selected Marciniak to complete a rare feat on June 10 in Istanbul of refereeing the biggest finals in national team and European club soccer in the same season. The 42-year-old Pole won praise for his handling of Argentina's World Cup win over France in a penalty shootout in Doha, Qatar.

The first World Cup-Champions League final double was done by English referee Howard Webb in 2010.

Marciniak handled games with both Champions League finalists in the knockout rounds - Manchester City's 4-0 win over Real Madrid in the semifinals and Inter Milan's 0-0 draw at Porto in the round of 16.

SPORTS

Brady to buy stake in Raiders – owner

HENDERSON, Nev., May 23, (AP): Recently retired and seven-time Super Bowl champion quarterback Tom Brady will become a minority owner of the Las Vegas Raiders, pending NFL approval, principal owner Mark Davis told ESPN on Monday.

"We're excited for Tom to join the Raiders, and it's exciting because he will be just the third player in the history of the National Football League to become an owner," Davis said.

George Halas and Jerry Richardson were the other two.

Brady and Davis also have a business relationship with the WNBA's Las Vegas Aces. Davis is the majority owner, and Brady has a stake in the club.

At least 24 NFL owners will need to approve Brady's deal with the Raiders. He also has a 10-year, \$375 million broadcasting contract with Fox Sports that begins in 2024.

Brady won six Super Bowls with the New England Patriots and one with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. On the way to his first title, in 2002, Brady beat the

FOOTBALL

Raiders in an AFC playoff game after having a fumble overturned in the famous "Tuck Rule" game.



The NFL draft will be in Green Bay in 2025.

The league announced the 2025 draft's location on Monday during its spring meetings. The draft and related activities will take place inside and around Lambeau Field and Tiletown, the collection of shops and restaurants surrounding the stadium. With an expected 250,000 visitors, the draft will be the largest event ever held in Green Bay, which has a population of 107,000.

"We're the smallest market in the National Football League by a wide margin, but we're a big community," said Ed Policy, chief operating officer and general counsel for the Packers. "I think it's very fair to say that no other community on the planet has as close of a nexus to the past, present and future of the game of football than Green Bay."

Panthers on brink of Stanley Cup Final



Carolina Hurricanes center Sebastian Aho (20) and Florida Panthers left wing Anthony Duclair (10) battle for the puck during the second period of Game 3 of the NHL hockey Stanley Cup Eastern Conference finals in Sunrise, Fla. (AP)



Germany's Nico Sturm (centre), and France's Jules Boscq battle for the puck during the group A match between Germany and France at the ice hockey world championship in Tampere, Finland. Germany shut out France 5-0 in its final group game on Tuesday to clinch a place in the quarterfinals at the ice hockey world championship.

Eyes on European prizes

Inter, Fiorentina meet in final

MILAN, May 23, (AP): Both Inter Milan and Fiorentina head into Wednesday's Italian Cup final with their eyes on even bigger prizes this season.

Inter plays Manchester City in the Champions League final on June 10, three days after Fiorentina takes on another Premier League side in West Ham in the Europa Conference League final.

First they'll have to focus on the match at the Stadio Olimpico in Rome.

Inter is looking to defend the Italian Cup title and maintain its bid for a trio of trophies this season under coach Simone Inzaghi, who has become known as something of a cup specialist.

Inzaghi has won six of seven previous finals as coach. He led Lazio to the Italian Cup in 2019 as well as two Italian Super Cup trophies.

He's also won two Italian Super Cup titles with Inter - including beating city rival AC Milan this season - as well as last year's Italian Cup.

Despite Inzaghi's cup success, the 47-year-old has constantly been under pressure this season and had to face questions about his future, with the team perceived to have underperformed in the league.

However, Inter CEO Giuseppe Marotta recently said that Inzaghi would "100%" still be the Nerazzurri coach next season.

"It's great that the club has faith in me," Inzaghi said. "Four games remain, two of which are finals."

"We're on a path of growth; our fifth final in two years is coming up, and these finals are very helpful in terms of helping the team grow even more."

Inter lost 3-1 at Serie A champion Napoli on Sunday to end a run of eight straight wins in all competitions. But it can nevertheless ensure a top-four finish and a spot in next season's Champions League with a draw against Atalanta at the weekend.

Inter's winning run was aided by Romelu Lukaku's return to form. After a season beset by injuries, Lukaku is back to something akin to his best and has netted four goals in his past three league matches.

"Lukaku is feeling really good, and this also applies to all of his teammates," Inzaghi said. "In the last two

months, he's returned to being the Romelu that we all know. I'm using him and all our other strikers, who are doing just as well.

"Today was our 15th game in 50 days. I need the whole squad because the fixture list is, quite frankly, incredible, but I've had excellent responses from all the lads."

Lukaku's strike partner, Lautaro Martínez, is the only player to have appeared in all 53 of Inter's match this season. The Argentine World Cup winner has netted 25 goals for the Nerazzurri this campaign, equaling his personal record he set last year.

Fiorentina will be especially wary of Martínez as he scored twice against them back in October, in a 4-3 victory for Inter. Fiorentina won 1-0 at San Siro at the start of last month.

While Inter has become used to contesting finals in recent years, Fiorentina has had to wait almost a decade - and now two have come along at once.

The Tuscan team last contested a final when it lost to Napoli in the 2014 Italian Cup.

SOCCER

With little to play for in the league, however, Fiorentina coach Vincenzo Italiano had the luxury of completely revamping his team or Sunday's draw at Torino and giving players some much-needed rest after its extra time victory over Basel midweek.

"We are tired, mental tiredness is also part of tiredness, it's not just hard on the legs but on everything else," Italiano said. "We let players rest that hadn't recovered at all from the 130 minutes because, as I have heard said, on Wednesday we're playing the match of our lives."

"We tried to spare players who weren't even able to get on the train. Now we have three days to prepare this final, and I am convinced we will recover all our energy to face a team that is one of the strongest in Italy and we have to try to put them in difficulty." The last of Fiorentina's six Italian Cup titles came in 2001. Eight-time champion Inter has won five since then.

SUNRISE, Fla., May 23, (AP): The chants of fans in Florida drowned out the public-address announcer at the end of the game Monday night, making it impossible to hear his call of the first star of the game.

Then again, they already knew who it was going to be.

Sergei Bobrovsky earned those cries from the 20,000 or so who chanted in unison, after leaving no doubt in Game 3 of the Eastern Conference final - and putting the Panthers are on the brink of their first trip to the Stanley Cup Final in 27 years. Bobrovsky stopped 32 shots for his first playoff shutout, and the Panthers blanked the Carolina Hurricanes 1-0 on Monday night.

ICE HOCKEY

"No matter what the score is, we're just trying to make it as easy as possible for him," said Panthers forward Sam Reinhart, who got the game's lone goal on the power play midway through the second period.

He's rewarded their work, and then some. Bobrovsky is now 10-1 in his last 11 appearances and has been almost perfect in the last eight games. Going back to Game 1 of Round 2 against Toronto, Bobrovsky has not allowed more than two goals in any contest, with 296 saves on 309 shots - a .958 save percentage.

And if that doesn't sound absurd enough, try this one: Out of the last 110 shots he's faced, Bobrovsky has stopped 109 - starting in the third period of the four-OT win in Game 1.

"We're happy with the 'W,' we're happy with the win, but the next game is going to be a big game," Bobrovsky said. It could be Florida's biggest since 1996. That was the last year in which the Panthers played for the Stanley Cup, but they can clinch a trip to the title round with a win in Game 4 on Wednesday.

This marks the 205th time that a team has taken a 3-0 series lead in NHL playoff history. Of the first 204,

200 went on to win the series. The Panthers are 2-0 when taking the first three games of a series; the Hurricanes are 0-5 when dropping the first three.

"We can't do much more," Hurricanes coach Rod Brind'Amour said. "We like how we're playing, clearly. It's just, we've got to find a way to put one in."

Matthew Tkachuk and Sam Bennett had the assists on Reinhart's goal for Florida. It wasn't a perfect night for Florida, however: Captain Aleksander Barkov left with about 7 minutes left in the first period with a lower-body injury and did not return, even though the team listed him as questionable. Panthers coach Paul Maurice did not have an update on Barkov's condition after the game.

Frederik Andersen stopped 16 shots for Carolina. The Hurricanes pulled him with 3:22 left, desperate for the tying goal, but barely even managed to test Bobrovsky the rest of the way. And when it was over, the Hurricanes' Jesperi Kotkaniemi was seen smashing his stick on the way to the locker room, the frustration so obvious.

That's what a night of facing Bobrovsky does right now.

"He's been incredible, all playoffs long," Bennett said.

The 3-0 lead matches the one that the eighth-seeded Miami Heat have in their Eastern Conference final against the Boston Celtics, with a chance for South Florida's other storybook team right now to clinch an NBA Finals trip and a matchup with the Denver Nuggets on Tuesday night. Monday's contest was the first East final game in the Panthers' current arena - the franchise's only other time going this deep into the playoffs was 1996, when it played in Miami at a building that was demolished long ago.

It also likely was the first time that they played with the Wanamaker Trophy in attendance. Newly crowned PGA champion Brooks Koepka - a South Florida native and Panthers fan - put on a jersey and brought the big silver cup to the game.

The crowd roared when they saw him displaying the trophy he won Sunday. Of course, there is another silver trophy that Panthers fans would prefer seeing someone in their jersey

Bobrovsky gets shutout

30,000 officers per day

Fans will need to pre-register for free tickets to Paris Oly opening ceremony

PARIS, May 23, (AP): To pull off the most audacious opening ceremony in Olympic history, French organizers are now - literally - on the same page.

France's government, the organizing committee president for the 2024 Paris Games and the French capital's mayor signed an 11-page security protocol Tuesday that for the first time publicly laid out some of the gritty details of their planning to shield the unprecedented July 26 opening ceremony from the threats of terrorism, drone attacks and other risks for the massive crowds and 10,500 athletes.

A notable change is that the hundreds of thousands of spectators who will watch the open-air gala for free, spread along a 6-kilometer (3 1/2-mile) parade route on the River Seine, will need to pre-register for tickets. French Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin, in charge of Olympic security, had been pushing for that shift so throngs of non-paying spectators can be allocated designated spots on the river's upper embankments, separated from 100,000 other guests paying for a closer, waterside view.

In the face of experts' misgivings about the size and complexity of the security operation, Darmanin, organizing committee president Tony Estanguet and Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo spoke at a news conference in defense of France's decision to use the center of the city as the venue for the extravaganza, ditching the safety of a traditional stadium setting for the first time.

It promises great television if all goes well, showcasing iconic monuments and the Seine that is being cleaned up for Olympic swimming. But the unique logistical and secu-

rety requirements could backfire spectacularly in front of a global audience for France if there are major problems.

Paris' plans are gargantuan in other ways, too:

- The athletes will be paraded from east to west along the river aboard 91 boats, with 25 other craft in reserve for breakdowns or other needs. There will also be about 30 boats for security; the river could get crowded. There will be trial runs starting this July. The whole event, including the water-borne parade to the foot of the Eiffel Tower, an artistic and musical show, and the official ceremony with the lighting

OLYMPICS

of the Olympic flame and attended by heads of state is expected to last about 3 1/2 hours.

■ With a planned deployment of 35,000 police officers - swallowing up a sizable chunk of France's total of 250,000 - Paris' ceremony will dwarf "Operation Golden Orb," Britain's huge policing operation for the coronation of King Charles III. It mobilized nearly 13,000 police officers. London's police commissioner said it was the largest security operation that his 194-year-old Metropolitan Police force had ever led.

■ In all, 30,000 officers will be mobilized on average per day during the July 26-Aug. 11 Olympics, rising to as many as 45,000 on the busiest days in the Paris region. Darmanin told senators in October. Police vacations will be canceled in June, July and early August with "very rare exceptions" and other events that would have needed policing will be postponed, he said.

hoisting before too long. And the eighth-seeded Panthers are only five wins away now, tantalizingly close to

the trip to the final - a trip that few could have seen coming after barely making the playoffs and then having to get past a record-setting Boston team in Round 1 and Toronto in Round 2.

A pair of overtime wins in Carolina, with Tkachuk getting the winner both nights, and the win Monday now have Florida on the brink of June hockey. And Carolina now needs something pretty close to a miracle.

"It's tough," Brind'Amour said, "because we have played really well."

Bobrovsky got the shutout in his 58th playoff start.

Jeff Conine, who won two World Series titles with the then-Florida Marlins, beat the drum to get the crowd going just before game time.

It was the Panthers' 98th game of the season. This will be the second season in which Florida has more than 100 games; the most was 104 in the 1995-96 season that ended in the Stanley Cup Final. ... Carolina was shut out for the seventh time this season, with two of those coming at Florida. The Hurricanes lost 3-0 in Sunrise on Nov. 9.

There has been 261 minutes, 38 seconds of hockey in this series - just over 13 periods, thanks to all the overtimes - and neither team has led by more than one goal at any time.



Inter's Raoul Bellanova (left), and Napoli's Khvicha Kvaratskheli vie for the ball during the Italian Serie A match between Napoli and Inter at the Diego Armando Maradona stadium in Naples, Italy. (AP)



Portugal's Joao Almeida celebrates winning the 16th stage of the Giro D'Italia, tour of Italy cycling race from Sabbio Chiese to Monte Bondone. (AP)

Sports

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Nuggets sweep Lakers, advance to NBA Finals

LeBron questions retirement

LOS ANGELES, May 23, (AP): Nikola Jokic is a player unlike almost anything the NBA has ever seen, and now he's taking his Denver Nuggets somewhere they've never been.

Jokic had 30 points, 14 rebounds and 13 assists, and the Nuggets advanced to the NBA Finals for the first time in team history Monday night, sweeping the Western Conference finals with a 113-111 victory over the Los Angeles Lakers.

Jamal Murray scored 25 points for the top-seeded Nuggets, who overcame LeBron James' 31-point first half and a 15-point halftime deficit with a tenacious finish in Game 4 to earn their first conference title in their 47 NBA seasons.

"It's incredible," Murray said. "It's a lot of fun. It's surreal. We're going to keep making history, that's the thing. We're going to keep that mindset."

Jokic earned his eighth triple-double of the playoffs by the third quarter, breaking Wilt Chamberlain's 1967 NBA record for triple-doubles in a single postseason. The bulky Serbian center with a point guard's grace also led the Nuggets' gritty defensive effort despite picking up his fifth foul midway through the fourth quarter.

Jokic didn't leave the floor for the final 33 minutes of Game 4 - and when Denver needed a big basket, Jokic delivered that as well. He muscled past Anthony Davis for the game's final points on a layup with 51 seconds to play.

BASKETBALL

James finished with 40 points, 10 rebounds and nine assists after the highest-scoring postseason half of his career, but even the top scorer in NBA history couldn't keep the deep, dynamic Nuggets from their sixth consecutive victory overall.

James missed two tying shots in the final seconds, with Aaron Gordon getting official credit for blocking his tying try at the buzzer.

The Nuggets will cap their superb season by playing for their first NBA championship. Denver both eliminated the Lakers for the first time in eight playoff meetings and swept a playoff series for the first time, likely earning several days off before the finals.

Unless the Boston Celtics make basketball history by rallying from their 3-0 deficit in the East finals, Denver will host the eighth-seeded Miami Heat to open the NBA Finals, beginning June 1.

The Lakers erased a seven-point deficit and tied it with five minutes to play, but Jokic hit a 25-foot fallaway 3-pointer - the kind of ridiculously impressive shot for a big man that Jokic makes routinely. After Davis hit two free throws to tie it with 1:13 left, Jokic put the Nuggets ahead again.

James then badly missed a strange fallaway jumper with 26 seconds left. Murray missed a turnaround to give the Lakers one last chance, but James' drive at the buzzer was thwarted by Murray and Gordon, who scored 22 points.

James scored 21 points in the first quarter and worked desperately to keep the Lakers competitive in the final game of his 20th NBA season. But the Lakers couldn't even force a Game 5, with an apparently exhausted Davis scoring 10 of his 21 points in the fourth quarter and adding 14 rebounds.

Austin Reaves scored 17 points for the Lakers, who were swept in a playoff series for the 11th time in team history, including nine best-of-seven series.

James began the final game of his 20th NBA season with the highest-scoring postseason half of his matchless NBA career.

He ended the night by questioning retirement after his Los Angeles Lakers were swept out of the Western Conference finals.

James set a personal record with 31 points in the first half of Game 4 on Monday night, but he missed two potential tying shots in the final minute as the Denver Nuggets ended the Lakers' season with a 113-111 victory.

The 38-year-old James finished with 40 points, 10 rebounds, nine assists and immense frustration after Los Angeles' remarkable late-season surge ended with four consecutive defeats. Although the top scorer in NBA history spoke about himself as part of the Lakers next season, James also said he hasn't made up his mind.

"We'll see what happens going forward," James said in the final answer of his postgame news conference. "I



Denver Nuggets head coach Michael Malone lift the conference championship trophy after defeating the Los Angeles Lakers 113-111 in Game 4 of the NBA basketball Western Conference Final series in Los Angeles. (AP)



Denver Nuggets guard Jamal Murray (27) shoots over Los Angeles Lakers forward Anthony Davis (3) in the first half of Game 4 of the NBA basketball Western Conference Final series in Los Angeles. (AP)

England win, France 'lose' at U-20 WCup

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina, May 23, (AP): England beat Tunisia 1-0 and France collapsed against an organized South Korea 2-1 at the Under-20 World Cup.

Dane Scarlett's first-half header proved to be enough for England in La Plata. Tunisia had few opportunities to equalize during their Group E match.

England played with the same base team that won the 2022 U-19 European championship title.

"We controlled the game from start to finish. It is true we could have been a bit more ruthless, though," England coach Ian Foster said. "The boys were a little nervous, it is normal for the first game. There was a lot of anticipation ahead of this tournament."

France's nerves were also evident against South Korea in Mendoza.

don't know. I don't know. I've got a lot to think about, to be honest. Just for me personally going forward with the game of basketball, I've got a lot to think about."

Newcastle qualify for CL for first time in 20 years

NEWCASTLE, England, May 23, (AP): Newcastle qualified for the Champions League for the first time in 20 years after drawing with Leicester 0-0 in the English Premier League on Monday, a milestone moment for a Saudi-controlled club with the resources and ambition to become a major force in European soccer.

The point ensured Newcastle cannot be denied a top-four finish heading into its final game of the season, at Chelsea on Sunday.

Leicester's campaign-closing game has far more riding on it, with the team still in the relegation zone and needing a win at home to West Ham to avoid falling into the second-tier Championship - seven years after winning the Premier League at preseason odds of 5,000-1 in a sporting fairytale.

SOCCER

Newcastle swarmed all over Leicester at St. James' Park, hitting the post on three occasions - through Callum Wilson, Miguel Almiron and Bruno Guimaraes - and forcing a series of saves from goalkeeper Daniel Iversen.

Still, it was job done for Newcastle, which was last in Europe's top club competition in 2003 when it reached the second group stage before finishing below Barcelona and Inter Milan. These are the types of European heavyweights Newcastle's players will be mixing with next season.

"We beat Juventus here 1-0 and I've seen that on DVDs - to hopefully be a part of it and be involved in those nights is something special," Newcastle midfielder Sean Longstaff said.

Third-placed Newcastle moved a point ahead of Manchester United, which can also guarantee a top-four spot by avoiding defeat at home to Chelsea on Thursday.

United is the only team fifth-placed Liverpool can catch now.

Playing in the Champions League so soon is probably beyond the expectations of Saudi Arabia's sovereign wealth fund, which completed a 300-million-pound (\$409 million) buyout of Newcastle in October 2021 and has spent methodically rather than lavishly since.

Thomas boosts bid to become oldest Giro winner

MONTE BONDONE, Italy, May 23, (AP): Geraint Thomas boosted his bid to become the Giro d'Italia's oldest winner by moving back into the leader's pink jersey on Tuesday as the race exploded into life at the start of a dramatic and decisive final week in the Dolomites.

João Almeida won the tough 16th stage atop Monte Bondone for his first victory in a Grand Tour. The Portuguese cyclist crossed the summit finish just ahead of Thomas, who also picked

up valuable bonus seconds.

Primož Rogli was third 25 seconds further behind.

CYCLING

The result saw Thomas move back into the lead, 18 seconds ahead of Almeida and 29 in front of Rogli.

Thomas turns 37 on Thursday, three days before the race ends in Rome. The

oldest Giro winner is Fiorenzo Magni, who was 34 when he won in 1955.

Tuesday marked the beginning of a brutal final week. It was one of three of the last six stages that have been given the maximum difficulty rating of five stars.

There was more than 5,000 meters of elevation and five categorised climbs along the 203-kilometer (126-mile) route from Sabbio Chiese, including the top-category climb to the finish.

Leicester climb above Leeds on goal difference

Bad day for Juve with points penalty and loss at Empoli

Juventus hopes of qualifying for CL implode

MILAN, May 23, (AP): A bad day for Juventus turned worse when a 4-1 loss at Empoli saw its hopes of qualifying for the Champions League implode.

Before kickoff, Juventus was hit by a 10-point penalty for false account-

ing. That dropped the club to seventh in Serie A, five points behind fourth-placed AC Milan. Juve hosts Milan next weekend in one of its final two matches.

"It was a mental collapse which is

normal after a surreal season," Juventus coach Massimiliano Allegri said. "At this point it's enough, it's one thing after the other. They (league organizers) need to decide once and for all where we are."

"The guys did their best. It's not an excuse, but finding yourself with 10 points less, a quarter of an hour before the match is at least mitigating circumstances. It's been a really tiring year, always going back and forth. And on the field, we're second."

Another route into the Champions League ended last week in a loss to Sevilla after extra time in their Europa League semifinal.

Despite the points penalty - which it could still appeal - Juventus knew a win at Empoli would still leave its chances of a Serie A top-four finish in its own hands.

Juventus thought it took an early lead when Arkadiusz Milik headed a corner off the crossbar and Federico Gatti bundled in the rebound but it was ruled out for a foul by Bremer on the goalkeeper.

SOCCER

Instead, Empoli went in front from a Francesco Caputo penalty in the 18th minute after Milik had fouled Nicolò Cambiaghi.

Sebastiano Luperto doubled Empoli's lead three minutes later, tapping in the rebound after Juventus goalkeeper Wojciech Szczesny brilliantly parried Jean-Daniel Akpa Akpro at close range.

After the break, Akpa Akpro stole the ball off Bianconeri defender Alex Sandro and bore down on goal before rolling across for Caputo to dink it over Szczesny.

The only good news for Juventus came late when Federico Chiesa scored his first league goal in more than a year. Chiesa was out for 10 months last year with a knee injury.



Empoli's Nicolò Cambiaghi (right) challenges Juventus' Fabio Miretti during the Serie A soccer match between Empoli and Juventus, at the Carlo Castellani stadium in Empoli, Italy. (AP)



Newcastle's Callum Wilson sees his shot hit the post during the English Premier League soccer match between Newcastle United and Leicester City at St. James' Park, Newcastle upon Tyne, England. (AP)