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HH the Amir receives Minister of Justice and State Minister for Endowment and Islamic Affairs Dr. Mohammad Al-Wasmi and Attorney General Saad Al-Safran with the newly appointed general attorneys Meshal Al-Ghanam and Nasser Al-Sumait.



Amiri Diwan photos
HH the Amir receives Saleh Al-Fadhala –
Chairman of Central Agency for Remedy-
ing Status of Illegal Residents.

Kuwait's Amir hosts officials

KUWAIT CITY, July 1, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace on Monday, the Chairman of Central Agency for Remedy-
ing Status of Illegal Residents, Saleh Al-Fadhala.

His Highness the Amir also received Minister of Justice and State Minister for Endowment and Islamic Affairs Dr. Mohammad Al-Wasmi, and Attorney General Saad Al-Safran and they presented His Highness the newly appointed general attorneys Meshal Al-Ghanam and Nasser Al-Sumait.

750 expats caught in post-amnesty sweep

Kuwait warns against harboring residency violators

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 1: As per the directives of First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior and Defense Sheikh Fahad Yousuf Saud Al-Sabah and under the leadership of Inte-

rior Ministry Undersecretary Lieutenant General Sheikh Salem Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, the Ministry of Interior launched an intensive security campaign at dawn Monday covering many areas like Bneid Al-Gar, Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh and Mutlaa.

This step was taken immediately after the grace period given to violators to

leave the country or legalize their status. The amnesty started on March 14, 2024 and was extended until June 30, 2024.

The ongoing campaign including Farwaniya resulted in the arrest of more than 750 violators of different nationalities, most of whom have absconding cases and were referred to the competent authorities for deportation.

Accordingly, the necessary legal measures were taken against them. They were referred to the competent authorities where procedures were completed and they are now scheduled for deportation.

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Left: Ministry of Interior Undersecretary Lieutenant-General Sheikh Salem Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah leading the campaign. Right: Interior Ministry officer checking fingerprints during the campaign to crackdown on residency violators.



Mol photos

Newswatch

KUWAIT CITY: The Amiri Diwan announced on Monday the postponement of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah's reception of citizens, which was scheduled Monday. (KUNA)

KUWAIT CITY: Amiri Diwan, Monday, expressed condolences over the death of Sheikhha Sahera Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, widow of Sheikh Fahad Al-Hamad Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, at the age of 79. (KUNA)

Ministry of Information sets official launch date for new news channel

KUWAIT CITY, July 1, (KUNA): The Ministry of Information announced that the official reveal of the news channel in its first phase will be on July 21, with the channel's main programming schedule reflecting a Kuwaiti cultural ethos consistent with the ministry's strategy to stay updated with local, regional, and international events.

Speaking to KUNA Monday, the official spokesman for the Ministry of Information, Acting Undersecretary of

the News and Political Programs Sector Dr. Bader Al-Enezi said that the channel will officially launch its first phase on July 28, focusing on delivering local news, programs, and reports, including 24-hour news bulletins, news summaries, cultural, and talk shows.

The channel will feature a variety of programs and reports covering economic, sports, social, and cultural topics, produced by highly experienced

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Smart services cut bureaucratic red tape

Kuwait 'open door' policy goes digital

KUWAIT CITY, July 1, (KUNA): The Kuwait Government has adopted the "open door" policy in line with guidelines by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to bolster further confidence between state officials and the citizens and improve public services.

In addition to the removal of physical bureaucratic barriers in the face of the nationals, the citizens can easily

request meetings with top officials via the government "Tawasul System", available on the smart service "Sahel."

The Cabinet, during a session held on May 19, stressed on necessity "to open the doors for citizens seeking to work out transactions at the ministries and other government authorities."

The digital service is designed to enable citizens to present queries and complaints quickly, boosting transpar-

ency and confidence between the nationals and the government.

Amer Al-Ajmi, the head of the local affairs sector and the government official spokesperson, said in a statement to KUNA that the open door policy is in line with instructions by Their Highnesses the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Crown

Continued on Page 5

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
يَا أَيُّهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ اجْعِي إِلَىٰ بَرِّكَ رَبِّكَ وَأَصْبِحِي عَلَىٰ عِبَادٍ مُّوَحَّدَةٍ
مَدَدَ اللَّهُ الْعَظِيمِ

CONDOLENCES

Ahmed Abdel Aziz Al Jarallah

Editor - in - Chief, all employees of Dar Al Seyassah, Arab Times, and Al Hadaf
extend our sincere condolences and deepest sympathy to

His Majesty King Mohammed VI

Their Highness the Princes, the Royal Family, and the Moroccan people on the passing of

Princess Lalla Latifa

Mother of King Mohammed VI

We ask God Almighty to bestow His mercy on the deceased, grant her eternal peace in His paradise,
and provide patience and solace to His Majesty the King,
the members of the royal family, and the Moroccan people during this difficult time.

إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

Prayer Timings			
Fajr	03:17	Asr	15:26
Sunrise ..	04:52	Maghrib ..	18:52
Zohr	11:52	Isha	20:23

Local

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

His Highness congratulates Australian Governor-General Mostyn on assuming office

HH the Amir congratulates Canada and Somalia on national days

KUWAIT CITY, July 1, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a congratulatory cable Monday to Governor General of Canada Mary Simon, on her country's National Day.

His Highness the Amir wished the governor general and the Canadian people good health, wealth, and prosperity.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-

Sabah sent a congratulatory cable to Governor General of Canada Mary Simon, on her country's National Day.

His Highness the Crown Prince wished the governor general and the Canadian people good health, wealth, and prosperity.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah also sent a congratulatory cable to Governor General Mary Simon, on her country's National Day.

In the meantime, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad sent Monday a congratulatory cable to President of Somalia, Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, on occasion of the National Day.

His Highness the Amir wished the president good health and the people of Somalia further progress and prosperity.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled also sent a congratulatory cable to President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, on

occasion of the National Day, and wishing him good health.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah sent a congratulatory cable to President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, on occasion of the National Day.

In another development, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad sent a cable on Monday to Australian Governor-General Samantha Mostyn, congratulating her on the occasion of assuming office.

His Highness the Amir wished the Australian Governor-General good health and wellness, and for Australia to prosper.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled sent a cable to Governor-General Samantha Mostyn, congratulating her on the occasion of assuming office.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah sent a cable to Governor-General Samantha Mostyn, congratulating her on the occasion of assuming office.



HH the Crown Prince with the officials.

HH Crown Prince receives officials at Bayan Palace

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace, on Monday, chairman of Central Agency for Remedying Status of Illegal Residents, Saleh Al-Fadhala.

His Highness the Crown Prince also received Min-

ister of Justice and State Minister for Endowment and Islamic Affairs Dr. Mohammad Al-Wasmi and Attorney General Saad Al-Safran. They presented His Highness with newly appointed general attorneys Meshal Al-Ghanam and Nasser Al-Sumait. (KUNA)

Dr Al-Awadhi tours new hospital

New maternity hospital qualitative addition to medical care: minister

KUWAIT CITY, July 1, (KUNA): The new maternity hospital is a qualitative addition to the national healthcare system, said the Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi on Monday.

In a statement after visiting the new hospital in Al-Sabah medical district, the minister expressed confidence that it would largely contribute to enhancing medical care for women and children.

The minister, during his tour of the premises, discussed with officials detailed matters related to operating the hospital and checked readiness of the equipment.

The project, one of the main ventures in the national development strategy, had been executed on a 65,000-sq-m plot of land. It was designed according to the latest international criteria.

Moreover, the 289-bed hospital includes 59 labor chambers, 28 operation rooms, and 81 external clinics, in addition to pharmacies and laboratories.



Minister of Health Dr Al-Awadhi during the tour of the new maternity hospital.

Each winner receives KD 1,000

Warba Bank announces winners of weekly 'Sunbula' draw: Al-Bekheet

KUWAIT CITY, July 1: Warba Bank - the best bank in banking services for the corporate sector and banking services for the investment sector in Kuwait - announced the winners of the weekly Sunbula draw.

Warba Bank will continue to make draws for 10 weekly winners for the Sunbula account in the presence of a representative of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and Warba Bank employees.

As for the lucky customers for the weekly Sunbula draw, 10 winners were chosen from Warba Bank's customers, each of whom received 1,000 Kuwaiti dinars. The winners are: Mrs. Hanan Muhammad Khalaf Al-Nuaimi, Mr. George Nabih Girgis Markos, Mr. Abdulaziz Saud Al-Harbi, Mr. Abdullah Hamoud Al-Ajmi, Mr. Muhammad Walid Saleh Al-Ali, Mr. Salem Zayed Mutlaq Al-Anazi, and Mr. Abdulaziz Muhammad Salah Al-Muhammad, Mr. Issam Adnan Abu Shalhoub, Mr. Ahmed Jawad Jaber Al-Otaibi, and Mr. Muhammad Fayez Amri Abdel Halim.

The Sunbula account is the perfect choice for all those who wish to save

money and achieve great financial returns on their balances at the same time; in addition to multiple opportunities to win cash prizes throughout the year.

With regards to the conditions for winning the Sunbula, Mr. Abdulaziz Soud Al-Bekheet - Director Region Retail Banking Group states: "Only 100 KD is required to enter the weekly Sunbula draws and other major draws, whereby the customer still gets one chance per every 10 KD in the account, and the chances are calculated according to the lowest balance in the account during a month. Therefore, a full month must have passed in the account to qualify for the weekly draw, and two full months for the major draws to calculate the opportunities. There are no restrictions or limits for withdrawal and deposit, the higher the



Al-Bekheet

deposited amount, the greater the customer's chances of winning".

Notably, in accordance with the terms of its ambitious five-year strategy, Warba Bank has launched its latest banking solutions service "Customer Onboarding". This will enable non-Warba Bank customers to apply for opening an account in an easy digital way through the bank's website without the need to visit any of the bank's branches, and within only five minutes - through the new and unique automated system used to enable this service - new customers will be able to complete the request to open an account at any time and any place.

It is further mentioning that Warba Bank is one of the banks that achieved great successes in a short period of time, as it occupied a leading position in the field of digital Islamic banking services for individuals, and it is one of the most local banks in terms of the number of shareholders, and these are among the most prominent elements that make the bank close to all members of society.

Weather			
Expected weather for next 24 hrs:			
By Day: Very hot with light to moderate northwesterly wind, with speeds of 12-35 km/h.			
By Night: Hot to rather hot with light to moderate freshening at			
Station	Max Exp	Min Rec	
Kuwait City	48	36	
Kuwait Airport	49	28	
Abdaly	48	29	
Jahra	49	32	
Salmiyah	42	35	
Nuwaisib	47	30	
Wafra	48	27	

Court rules disability care societal duty, not charity

PADA decision challenged

KUWAIT CITY, July 1: In application of the provisions of the Cassation Court, which stressed in its ruling that caring for persons with disabilities is neither a favor nor an act of pity, but a societal duty based on the Islamic concepts of interdependence and solidarity; the Court of Appeals upheld the ruling of a lower court that obliged the Public Authority for Disabled Affairs (PADA) to include a citizen's condition under the category of developmental, moderate and permanent disability and the consequences thereof, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Details of the lawsuit filed by Attorney Youssef Hussein on behalf of his client's son, who was born on April 15, 2012 and suffered from permanent illnesses that led to a deficiency in his physical abilities are summarized below:

"The competent technical committee at PADA previously decided to include his condition under the moderate and permanent developmental disability category and issued him a certificate or proof of disability dated Sept 24, 2017. However, it later decided to exclude his condition from the disability category and notified him about it on Aug 29, 2022.

"The plaintiff filed a grievance against this decision in a letter addressed to the authority's Medical Grievances Committee on Sept 26, 2022; but his grievance was rejected on Nov 9, 2022.

"Since this decision is in violation of the laws and regulations and was tainted by abuse of power, as the person suffering from the same ailments has not been cured; the legal status he acquired should not be affected."

Hussein also presented a portfolio of documents that included scanned copies of the disability proof certificate dated Sept 24, 2017; text message received on Aug 29, 2022 notifying him about the decision of the competent technical committee not to include his son's condition under disability category; grievance submitted on Sept 26/2022; text message about the rejection of the grievance on Nov 9, 2023; and a number of translated medical reports confirming the ailments.

Judge extends detention of 15 in Mangaf fire case

By Jaber Al-Hamoud
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 1: The detention renewal judge has extended the detention of eight citizens, three Indians and four Egyptians in the Mangaf building fire case -- which killed 49 people and injured several others -- on charges of manslaughter, accidental injury and negligence.

The Public Prosecution initiated investigation into the fire incident. It formed a team of Ahmadi and Mubarak Al-Kabeer prosecutors who inspected the crime scene and visited the hospitals to interview the injured. It also instructed the Criminal Evidence and Forensic Medicine departments to take the necessary measures.

Case files indicate that fire brigades were able to put out the fire in the Mangaf building, which claimed the lives of a number of expatriates and injured others. An investigation was opened to determine the circumstances leading to the fire, confirming that the cause of the fire was an electrical fault.



Minister of Municipal Affairs Dr Al-Mashaan and Head of the Council Al-Mahari visit the site.

Minister holds inspection tour of project

'Darwazat Al-Abdulrazzaq set to reopen'

KUWAIT CITY, July 1, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan affirmed the development and maintenance completion of Darwazat Al-Abdulrazzaq project, indicating the reopening of the Darwaza soon.

In a statement to KUNA, Dr. Al-Mashaan highlighted the inspection tour she conducted at the site accompanied by the Head of the Municipal Council Abdullah Al-Mahari, saying that the project's plans are well underway and would reopen in a timely manner.

The inspection tour is part of a commitment which follows up on the developments of the ministry's projects, ensuring their progress in achieving the highest standards of quality and safety of its infrastructure, Dr. Al-Mashaan added.

She expressed her gratitude towards Kuwait's leadership and the Council of Ministers for their continuous confidence and support of the ministries of Municipal Affairs and Public Works, which, in turn, reflects their gratitude to the efforts of officials in the projects.

On his part, Head of the Municipal Council Abdullah Al-Mahari reaffirmed that the inspection tour of the Darwazat Al-Abdulrazzaq underpass underscores the importance of the project's success.

Al-Mahari also praised Dr. Al-Mashaan's efforts and her keenness in seeing to the projects.

Furthermore, Al-Mahari stated that the through the maintenance work occurring at the Darwaza, it would contribute greatly towards restoring the aesthetic appearance of the historical landmark.

Darwazat Al-Abdulrazzaq is a historical landmark in Kuwait, it used to be a horse stable and camel passageway, as well as a current pedestrian underpass in the heart of Kuwait City and close to Souk Al-Mubarakiya.

Sheikh Humoud leads Kuwaiti team

Kuwait participates in ACAO Executive Council 69th meet being held in Rabat

RABAT, July 1, (KUNA): The 69th session of the Executive Council of the Arab Civil Aviation Organization (ACAO) began on Monday in Rabat, with the participation of representatives from member states, including Kuwait, whose delegation was led by Sheikh Humoud Mubarak Humoud Al-Sabah.

Sheikh Humoud Al-Sabah stressed in a statement to KUNA - during his participation in the opening of the meeting - Kuwait's keenness to support joint Arab action, especially in the field of civil aviation.

In a statement to KUNA during the opening session, Sheikh Hamoud Al-Sabah emphasized Kuwait's commitment to supporting joint Arab efforts, particularly in the field of civil aviation.

Sheikh Humoud highlighted Kuwait's pivotal role in advancing the civil aviation sector across Arab countries, aiming to develop and enhance this sector to achieve safe, efficient, and sustainable air transport that aligns with the sustainable development goals of Arab nations.

He stressed the importance of co-operation and integration among Arab countries in the civil aviation sector to boost this vital industry, which serves as a catalyst for development and economic growth. He also highlighted the crucial role played by the ACAO in this regard.



Head of the Kuwaiti delegation, Head of the GACA, Sheikh Hamoud, during the meeting.

The Executive Council's agenda includes several key topics, such as reviewing the recommendations from the 68th session of the Council, approving the recommendations of the ACAO's technical committees, and setting the organization's activity program for 2025 and 2026.

The Executive Council of the Arab Civil Aviation Organization comprised of nine members elected by the General Assembly from the nominees of member states for a two-year term.

KFAS's commitment recognized

SACGC celebrates the graduation of 74 students

KUWAIT CITY, July 1, (KUNA): Sabah Al-Ahmad Center for Giftedness and Creativity (SACGC), one of the centers of the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences, celebrated on Sunday the graduation of 74 students from the center's fourth batch under the patronage and attendance of Bader Al-Humaidhi, the center's Chairman.

In an exclusive statement to KUNA, the (SACGC) Director Nada Al-Daihani expressed her pride in the 72 graduates from the fourth batch. She particularly highlighted the achievement of



Top & above: Photos during the SACGC graduation ceremony. KUNA photos

'Kuwait crown jewel of GCC nations'

SKorean envoy bids farewell

KUWAIT CITY, July 1: The South Korean Ambassador to Kuwait, HE Chung Byung-ha, bid farewell to Kuwait and the Kuwaitis at the end of his term of office, which lasted about 3 years.

During his tenure he built a large network of friends, pushed the excellent bilateral relations between the two countries to a greater and deeper level, and also contributed to introducing the Kuwaiti society to the traditions and his country's rich culture, and Korean cuisine and art, through a series of events he hosted during his work period.

He said, "Kuwait is my second country and my work experience there will remain engraved in my heart and



HE Chung Byung-ha, South Korean Ambassador to Kuwait

mind forever, and it is the jewel in the crown of the rest of the Gulf countries." The Korean envoy has left Kuwait to settle in Seoul, awaiting his assignment to a new mission.

University launches admission exhibit

KU receives 'accreditation' for PharmD program from CCAPP

KUWAIT CITY, July 1: The College of Pharmacy at the Kuwait University has received accreditation for its Doctor of Pharmacy (PharmD) program from the Canadian Council for Accreditation of Pharmacy Programs (CCAPP), reports Al-Jarida daily.

In a press release, the college highlighted this significant academic milestone as a crucial advancement for both the College of Pharmacy and Kuwait University, underscoring the high standard of education offered at the institution.

Meanwhile, the Deanship of Admission and Registration at the Kuwait University has announced the launch of an admission exhibition for high school graduates, reports Al-Seyassah daily. This event is organized in cooperation with the Public Relations and Media Department as a continuation of

the campaign under the slogan "Here Your Future Begins."

Acting Dean of Admissions and Registration at Kuwait University, Dr. Fadel Aziz, stated that the campaign will be held at the Avenues Mall (Phase Two) starting Tuesday and will run until July 6, from 10 am to 10 pm. The campaign aims to familiarize high school graduates who wish to join Kuwait University with the admission and transfer conditions.

It will also address inquiries to reach a broad segment of society, including high school graduates and students wishing to transfer from foreign universities and some colleges of the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training.

Specialized staff will be available to answer questions and provide information.

Kuwait asserts its commitment to human rights principles in AI

Ethical tech agenda promoted

JEDDAH, July 1, (KUNA): Kuwait has reiterated its commitment to human rights principles in the field of artificial intelligence (AI) related to personal data, privacy, intellectual property, education, and work, emphasizing the importance of respecting human rights and preserving human dignity regardless of modern changes.

This statement was made during Kuwait's speech at the 23rd regular session of the Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission (IPHRC) of Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) held at the OIC headquarters in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, delivered by Diplomatic Attache Jana Al-Dhafiri.

Al-Dhafiri pointed out the importance of discussing recent developments in AI and technology, noting that the session's topics were significant and worthy of study, which indicated that the impact of AI now extends beyond individuals and has become an integral part of international relations.

She underlined the importance of properly utilizing AI tools to benefit users in fields such as health, education, and environment.

Al-Dhafiri echoed the call of IPHRC Chairman Ambassador Talal Al-Mutairi, for extraordinary measures to bridge digital gaps and foster innovation, including creating a comprehensive global regulatory framework and unifying efforts to advance a free, open, and secure digital future centered on human rights.

Kuwait has kept pace with technological and digital advancements by establishing specialized bodies like the Communications and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA), Central Agency for Information Technology (CAIT), and National Cyber Security Center (NCSC), she explained.

Kuwait has made significant strides in AI, being a global leader in developing the communications and information technology sector for two consecutive years, with internet usage reaching 99.7 percent of the population, she said.

In education, Kuwait University (KU) established its first AI lab in 2001, and



KUNA photo
Jana Al-Dhafiri, Kuwait's diplomatic attache during her speech at the 23rd regular session of the Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission (IPHRC) of Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) held at the OIC headquarters in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

in 2019, Abdullah Al-Salem University (ASU) was founded with a focus on modern technology and AI, Al-Dhafiri mentioned.

Urban plans accelerate

Capital Governorate addresses key issues

KUWAIT CITY, July 1: The Capital Governorate Committee of the Municipal Council, chaired by Dr. Hassan Kamal, addressed several key matters at the request of the Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy including the allocation of a site for a secondary electricity conversion station in Block 2 of the Daiya area, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Additionally, the committee forwarded to the executive branch the transaction concerning the final approval for the reorganization of parts of plots 4 and 7 in the Qibla area of Kuwait City.

This decision, originally issued by the municipal council on July 4, 2022, awaits updated feedback, particularly from the National Council for Culture, Arts, and Letters due to its supervision over the relevant area.

Moreover, the committee referred to the executive branch a letter from an engineering office regarding the twelfth meeting of the Capital Governorate Committee.

This meeting will focus on the development of the Liberation Tower and Safat Square area, their linkage to Mubarakia, and a proposal for the introduction of an electric tram surface train in Kuwait City, necessitating a comprehensive study.

Moreover, the committee will conduct further study on a submission from the Mukhtar of the Cordoba District regarding mobile vehicles in the Qortuba Main Park parking lots.

Furthermore, the committee retained on its agenda a proposal by Dr. Hassan Kamal concerning the design and construction of longitudinal parking lots for the Dasma Association branch in Block 5.



Dr. Hassan Kamal

MoSA to hold series of training courses

KUWAIT CITY, July 1: The Ministry of Social Affairs, through the Department of Charitable Societies and Foundations and in collaboration with local banks, will hold a series of training courses and several awareness lectures targeting the employees of the Ministry and those working for well-known charity organizations in the country, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The purpose is to educate them on the dangers of money laundering and terrorist financing crimes, and to enhance their capabilities in detecting and combating these crimes.

According to sources from the Ministry, a directive will be issued to all boards of directors of charitable entities, emphasizing the necessity of participating in these courses and attending the associated lectures and workshops.

The goal is to fully benefit from the training and practically apply the recommendations. The development of mechanisms to continuously address money laundering and terrorist financing will effectively raise Kuwait's international assessment in combating these crimes.

JULY

Room Promotion

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Queen Cabana (2 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.	2 Bedroom Chalet (4 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.
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Queen Cabana (2 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.	2 Bedroom Chalet (4 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.
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Forum targets economic and environmental preservation

PAFN unveils 15 recommendations to secure Kuwait’s food systems

By Marwa Al-Bahravi
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 1: The fourth forum of the Public Authority for Food and Nutrition (PAFN) entitled, “Let us Work Together to Sustain Food Systems in Kuwait,” resulted in 15 recommendations to guarantee food security in the country.

The most important recommendations include training nationals to be professionals in the fields of food and agricultural security, animal production, and food technology; developing the infrastructure for food stores; generating jobs in the field of water efficiency; rationalizing water consumption in manufacturing and agricultural sectors; and raising awareness on the optimal use of these resources.

Representative of the organizing committee of the forum Eng. Saud Al-Gharib informed the newspaper on the sidelines of the inauguration of the forum at Kuwait Institute for Medical Specializations under the patronage of PAFN Director Dr. Reem Al-Fulaij that “the forum aims to develop food systems to be compatible with the needs of current and future generations in order to preserve the economic and environmental systems, and contribute to providing healthy and safe foods by discussing the most

important challenges and solutions in this regard.”

He affirmed the participation of various ministries, government agencies and related sectors, such as public benefit societies, private companies, and individuals as well. He said about 120 people interested in this sector participated in the discussion sessions during the forum.

He revealed that two dialogue sessions were organized; the first focused on most important problems and obstacles to the sustainability of food systems, and the second on the solutions and opportunities for the sustainability of food systems.

He pointed out that the difficulty of marketing the local product is one of the most important obstacles to the sustainability of food systems in the country, in addition to the delay in some procedures regarding imports and lack of awareness on managing food loss and waste.

He added Kuwait depends on 90 percent of food imports and a large percentage of these imports are wasted due to the lack of food loss and waste management, which aims to raise public awareness on food waste management. He also stressed the importance of establishing a college of agriculture to develop the agricultural sector and mitigate environmental risks.



KUNA photo
Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya with the Ambassador of the Russian Federation to the State of Kuwait, Vladimir Zheltov.

FM receives Russian Ambassador

KUWAIT CITY, July 1, (KUNA): Kuwait Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya received on Monday Russian Ambassador Vladimir

Zheltov. During the meeting, the two sides discussed bilateral relations and ways to bolster them.

‘Unique shopping experience redefines luxurious lifestyle’

NBK holds exclusive event for privilege banking customers in collaboration with Harvey Nichols

KUWAIT CITY, July 1: Within its constant dedication to offering customers a more luxurious banking experience, National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) sponsored a private event for Harvey Nichols to unveil its exclusive new collection, which was held at the renowned ROKA restaurant.

In a truly immersive and luxurious experience, guests from NBK Customers were chauffeured to the event in limousines and treated to a night of unparalleled elegance. The private collection was showcased in a captivating display, highlighting NBK’s commitment to providing its customers with more than just banking services.

The evening offered guests a chance

to mingle with like-minded individuals, indulge in exquisite cuisine, and discover the latest offerings from NBK and Harvey Nichols. The event solidified NBK’s position as a leader in providing a comprehensive and luxurious banking experience.

“This event was a testament to NBK’s dedication to exceeding customer expectations and offering a truly unique and



Abbas

luxurious banking experience,” said Intekhab Abbas, Marketing Segment Manager, Consumer Banking Group at National Bank of Kuwait.

“The collaboration with Harvey Nichols further underscores our commitment to providing our customers with access to the finest products and services, as we aim to provide a unique shopping experience tailored to customers’ needs, redefining their luxurious lifestyle,” he remarked.

In addition to “Harvey Nichols exclusive Event”, NBK has recently enhanced Privilege Banking benefits by having 10 % discount when purchasing at Harvey excluding skincare and perfumes valid until 11 September



KUNA photo
Part of the signing of the memorandum of understanding.

Sheikh Nimr Al-Sabah emphasized the Ministry’s commitment to enhancing research and contributing to petroleum industry studies. He highlighted KISR’s role in addressing petroleum-

related topics and facilitating knowledge exchange and expertise with all stakeholders.

The MoU aims to bolster technical and engineering partnerships and

promote cooperation in research, development, and training in petroleum, environment, and energy transformation fields. Sheikh Nimr stressed the MoU’s significant impact on Kuwait’s public interest, promoting research cooperation, knowledge transfer, and capacity building among specialists.

The memorandum includes provisions for conducting research events, data collection, exchanging and analyzing research, and implementing joint projects, especially related to environmental sustainability and climate change within the petroleum industry.

Cooperation efforts also involve joint training programs, expert visits, and organizing scientific seminars and conferences in the oil and gas sector. Sheikh Nimr expressed optimism that the MoU’s outcomes will meet both parties’ ambitions for scientific cooperation, fostering technological, economic, and environmental advancements benefiting Kuwait and developing its national workforce through innovative ideas and knowledge.

Deteriorating living conditions

Residents of Al-Mutlaa plead for immediate government attention

By Abdalnasser Al-Aslami
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 1: More than thirty families in Al-Mutlaa city have decided to leave due to severe deficiencies in essential services, particularly the chronic water shortage despite scorching summer conditions.

The concerned citizens have expressed their dismay over the deteriorating living conditions in Al-Mutlaa, causing potential new residents to reconsider moving there until infrastructure and basic services are improved, especially the continuous supply of water through functional pipelines and pumps operating round the clock.

Residents lament that “Al-Mutlaa is suffering from thirst,” as water supplied by tankers has become scarce. They have appealed directly to Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmed Al-Abdullah to personally look into their plight and alleviate their suffering. One of the residents, reflecting on his year-long residency in Al-Mutlaa, described the city’s decline due to water scarcity and other challenges, making it increasingly unappealing for residents.

He emphasized how easy access to water had reversed dramatically after pump shutdowns, forcing dependence on a single overburdened pump shared with nearby areas, particularly Jahra. This has led to exorbitant tanker costs and severe disruptions in daily life, including difficulty in performing essential tasks like ablutions for prayer.

He and others have called on officials from the Ministry of Electricity and Water to urgently address the situation by either completing the water network or installing additional pumps.

They stressed that the current conditions in Al-Mutlaa are untenable, pushing many families to leave their homes and seek refuge elsewhere due to the worsening quality of life and inadequate public services.

In addition to water issues, residents like Mubarak Al-Anquodi cited concerns about security due to inadequate lighting and safety measures, describing the city as increasingly resembling a ghost town. He highlighted the presence of illegal workers posing risks to residents, alongside deteriorating infrastructure and public cleanliness.

Abdulaziz Al-Hassan echoed these sentiments, expressing disappointment over broken promises of improved infrastructure and basic services, which have failed to materialize despite assurances.

He emphasized the urgent need for governmental intervention to address the mounting challenges facing Al-Mutlaa, including suspending rent allowances and credit bank installments to alleviate financial burdens on residents unable to complete their homes due to lacking services.

Overall, the residents of Al-Mutlaa are pleading for immediate government attention to prevent further abandonment of the city and restore essential services essential for a decent quality of life.

New guidelines on facility maintenance

Co-ops urged to adhere Resolution No. 159 of 2023

KUWAIT CITY, July 1: The Assistant Undersecretary for the Cooperation Sector at the Ministry of Social Affairs, Ahmed Al-Anzi, in a letter to the Union of Cooperative Societies on initiatives related to cosmetic agriculture, beautification, and maintenance of facilities within the framework of the societies’ activities emphasized the importance of adherence to Ministerial Resolution No. 159 of 2023 by all cooperative societies, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The resolution outlines specific guidelines and directives for these societies in their efforts towards beautification and facility maintenance.

The cooperatives are urged to promptly in-

form the ministry of any challenges or impediments they face, enabling swift resolution. Additionally, they are required to submit quarterly reports to the ministry to monitor their compliance with these guidelines. The directive underscores the pivotal role of cooperative societies in Kuwait, highlighting their responsibility in providing essential social services to residential communities.

This includes initiatives aimed at enhancing the aesthetic appeal of neighborhoods, thereby contributing to the happiness and well-being of families. The establishment of green spaces, gardens, and well-maintained facilities is intended to create

a healthy and pleasant environment for residents, particularly children.

Furthermore, the directive confirms the authority of cooperative societies to allocate a portion of their profits towards social services, specifically in the realm of cosmetic agriculture.

This includes activities such as planting gardens and maintaining facilities, which are designed to elevate the visual and social quality of residential areas across Kuwait.

Such initiatives are aligned with the ministry’s commitment to sustainable development, promoting environmental health, climate resilience, and overall quality of life.

ing, and production, with several state-of-the-art studios prepared for this purpose.

Kuwait ‘open door’

Continued from Page 1

Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

Al-Ajmi added that the government, through this mechanism, is seeking to bolster the confidence with the masses by creating a transparent medium for facilitating and speeding up solutions to diverse issues.

The smart service, available to deal with all ministries involved in utilities and public services, is helpful to cut red tape.

Meetings could be requested with ministers, deputies or undersecretaries, Al-Ajmi explained, indicating that duration of the meeting and other relevant terms can be set by each department.

Ministries have already declared that they are accessible via the online service and a number of ministers have given instructions to tackle hurdles facing citizens while processing transactions at the state departments.

750 expats

Continued from Page 1

In a press statement, the ministry disclosed: “In compliance with the directives of Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousuf to strictly implement the law on violators of the Residency Law who did not amend their status within the grace period granted to them, Sheikh Salem Nawaf supervised the launching of the security campaign in various governorates.”

Also, present were Assistant Undersecretary for the Special Security Sector Major General Abdullah Saffah, senior security leaders, security directors and their assistants. They laid down a plan for each governorate before launching the campaign in the early hours of the morning on Monday, including the establishment of checkpoints along the public and internal roads to verify the residency documents of people. The Public Security, Rescue, Traffic and Special Forces patrols participated in the campaign.

The ministry added that it is continuing its inspection campaigns in all governorates, calling on everyone to refrain from harboring violators in order to avoid legal problems and to cooperate with police officers in reporting violators through the emergency number 112.

Moreover, Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousuf and Sheikh Salem Al-Nawaf issued directives to deal well with everyone during security campaigns, and to take into account the humanitarian aspect when arresting and deporting violators.

The following will be deported immediately:

- Those with expired residency,
- Those with absconding cases,
- Those working for other sponsors even if their residency is valid, because they violated the Labor Law.

In addition, Farwaniya Governorate recorded the highest number of violators arrested on the first day of the campaign – more than 150 expatriates with absconding cases.

It has been noted that the number of those arrested with absconding cases is higher than those with expired residency. The sponsor is absolved of responsibility for the violating expatriate in an absconding case, while he bears the cost of the ticket of the violating worker in other cases.

Ministry of

Continued from Page 1

and skilled staff, and it is equipped with the latest technology and innovations in broadcasting, film-

Committee of Bankruptcy Trustees
announces
Investment Dar Company (K.S.C.) - (Closed)

Dr. Ali A Wayed Rakhees Mr. Ahmad Duaij Al-Duaij Dr. Hanadi Humoud Al-Bader

Submitted by	Investment Dar Company
Against	Kuwait International Bank and Others

On August 27, 2023, Investment Dar Company submitted a request to the Bankruptcy Management to open preventive settlement procedures against all of its creditors, and requested a judgment as follows:-

First : Authorizing it to take preventive settlement measures to address its situation in accordance with what is contained in the Rules and provisions of the Bankruptcy Law.

Second : Endorsing the acceptance of this request and completing the legally required documents and attaching them to it.

Third : Stopping all civil and commercial litigation and enforcement procedures related to the company's obligations in implementation of the legal effect stipulated in the aforementioned law.

Fourth : Warning that preventive settlement measures be taken and presented to the creditors for their approval.

Whereas Request No. 6/2023 for a preventive settlement was circulated in the Bankruptcy Management according to the minutes of the sessions, and in a session on Sunday, 23/6/2024, at the Bankruptcy Management headquarters, the Counselor/ Bankruptcy Judge issued the following decision:-

By rejecting the request of preventive settlement, due to the lack of its conditions, in accordance with the provisions of Article 31/2 of the Bankruptcy Law, while assigning the requesting company, Bankruptcy Trustees Committee, and Bankruptcy Management to carry out the necessary impact of this decision, in accordance with Articles 33 and 55 of the same law.

World News Roundup

Europe

‘Support Ukraine, EU’

Le Pen party leads in 1st round of poll

PARIS, July 1, (AP): France’s National Rally surged into the lead in the first round of legislative elections, according to results released early Monday, bringing the far-right party to the brink of power and dealing a major blow to President Emmanuel Macron’s centrists in an election that could set the country, and Europe, on a starkly different course.

The results confirmed polling that showed the party - with a history of racism and xenophobia and once shunned by the mainstream - is no longer taboo, confined to the fringes of French politics. There remains another torrid week of campaigning before the decisive final voting Sunday, and whether the National Rally will be able to win an outright majority and form France’s first far-right government since World War II remains uncertain.

Marked by high turnout of nearly 68% that reflected the high stakes, voters handed the **Marine Le Pen’s** National Rally a strong lead, with about 33% of the vote. The number includes the votes from a group of conservative candidates of The Republicans party who had allied with the far-right party in the first round. The New Popular Front, a leftist alliance, finished second with about 28%. The president’s centrist group came third with around 20%, according to figures released by the Interior Ministry.

When Macron dissolved the National Assembly on June 9, after a stinging defeat at the hands of the National Rally in French voting for the European Parliament, the deeply unpopular and weakened president gambled that his rivals wouldn’t repeat that success when the country’s own fate was in the balance.



Le Pen

Efforts

He and his allies, as well as politicians on the left, are still hoping they can head off an outright win by the National Rally, and horse-trading began Monday, with some efforts to block far-right candidates taking shape. The leftist coalition said it would withdraw its candidates in districts where they arrived in third position in order to support other politicians opposed to the far right. Macron’s centrist alliance also said some of its candidates would step down before the runoff.

In Sunday’s voting, 78 of the National Assembly’s 577 seats were won outright, by candidates who got more than 50% of the vote in their district, according to French newspaper Liberation’s analysis of the Interior Ministry data. Of those, 38 were from the National Rally, including Le Pen herself.

That triumph provided an additional boost for the far-right parties in Europe as Viktor Orbán’s Hungary takes over the European Union’s rotating presidency for six months.

To underline her party’s triumph, Le Pen said that National Rally lawmakers would meet at the parliament on Monday and symbolically claim their seats.

Addressing a jubilant crowd waving French tricolor flags of blue, white and red, Le Pen called on her supporters and voters who didn’t back her party in the first round to push it over the line and give it a commanding legislative majority. That scenario would make the party’s young leader, Jordan Bardella, prime minister - and force him and Macron into an awkward power-sharing arrangement.

Also:

THE HAGUE, Netherlands: Long-serving Dutch Prime Minister **Mark Rutte** urged his country to support **Ukraine** and international cooperation in his final address to his compatriots Sunday, as an inward-looking new government is set to take over the Netherlands in two days.

“It is crucial that our country is embedded in the European Union and NATO. Together we are stronger than alone. Especially now,” the 57-year-old Rutte said from his office in The Hague.

After leading the country for 14 years, he will take his experience with consensus-building to **Brussels**, where he will take over as NATO’s new secretary-general later this year.

He stressed the need to continue support for Ukraine, “for peace there and security here.” The new government, expected to take office on Tuesday, has pledged to maintain assistance. But far-right populist **Geert Wilders**, whose party won the largest block of seats in last year’s election, has expressed pro-Russia views and Kremlin backers cheered his victory at the polls.

Rutte described the MH17 tragedy in 2014 as “perhaps the most drastic and emotional event” during his tenure. The passenger jet was shot down over eastern Ukraine as it traveled from **Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia**, killing all 298 passengers and crew, including 196 Dutch citizens.

A Dutch court convicted two Russians and a pro-Moscow Ukrainian in 2022 of involvement in the downing of the Boeing 777.

Known for cycling to meetings and his dedication to politics, Rutte highlighted his country’s positive attributes.

He acknowledged that there had been low points during his tenure, including a child benefits scandal that wrongly labeled thousands of parents as fraudsters.



SOFIA, Bulgaria: Bulgarian President **Rumen Radev** on Monday tapped the largest group in parliament, the center-right GERB-UDF coalition, to form the country’s new government.

Accepting the mandate, Prime Minister-designate **Rosen Zhelyazkov** presented a proposal for a Cabinet and asked the president to send it to parliament for approval.

The 56-year-old lawyer and former parliament speaker, who has served in different ministerial positions in previous governments, said that the new Cabinet was “a team of experts and seasoned politicians from GERB”. He outlined stabilizing of public finances as a priority and stressed the need for continuity in Bulgaria’s European perspective.

The GERB-UDF coalition finished first in the June elections but only has 68 legislators in the 240-seat National Assembly. The coalition picked Zhelyazkov to head a new government over its leader, **Boyko Borissov**, who led three governments between 2009 and 2021, when his third Cabinet resigned following major anti-corruption protests.

Trying to find coalition partners in the fragmented legislature, Borissov said immediately after the vote that he didn’t want to be prime minister and invited his political opponents for talks.



A Chinook helicopter drops water over a wildfire at Keratea area, southeast of Athens, Greece on June 30. Inset: A firefighter tries to extinguish a forest fire at Keratea area, southeast of Athens, Greece on Sunday. (AP)

Firefighters tackle blazes on Greek islands of Chios, Kos as PM warns of ‘dangerous summer’

Firefighters were racing to tackle wildfires that broke out on the eastern Aegean islands of Chios and Kos Monday, as Greece’s prime minister warned of a dangerous summer ahead and said the public’s help was essential in limiting the impact of wildfires.

Emergency services issued evacuation orders for those in the Metohi area of western Chios, urging

them to head to a nearby beach. Further to the south in the Aegean, on the island of Kos, the fire department said 20 firefighters, a helicopter and volunteers were tackling a brush fire that broke out in the center of the island.

The blazes came a day after the fire department managed to tame two large forest fires near Athens

that had been fanned by strong winds.

“We have had an exceptionally difficult June regarding weather conditions, with high levels of drought and unusually strong winds for this season,” Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis said Monday during a Cabinet meeting. This year’s summer, he said, “is predicted to be particularly dangerous” for wildfires. (AP)

Politics

Scott hopes for another helping hand

Biden’s family tells him to stay in race

WASHINGTON, July 1, (AP): US President Joe Biden’s family used a Sunday gathering at Camp David to urge him to stay in the race and keep fighting despite his dreadful debate performance, and some members criticized how his staff prepared him for the faceoff, according to four people familiar with the discussions.

Biden spent the day sequestered with first lady Jill Biden, his children and grandchildren. It was a previously scheduled trip to the presidential retreat in Maryland for a photo shoot with Annie Leibovitz for the upcoming Democratic National Convention.

But the gathering was also an exercise in trying to figure out how to quell Democratic anxiety that has exploded following Thursday’s performance.

While his family was aware of how poorly he performed against Donald Trump, they also continue to think he’s the best person to beat the Republican presumptive nominee. They also believe he is capable of doing the job of president for another four years, according to the people who were not authorized to speak publicly about internal discussions and spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity.

by staff and wondered if they could have done something better, the people said.

Biden’s campaign has spent the days since the debate - where he appeared raspy, trailed off, and at times gave convoluted answers - working to keep donors and surrogates on board as Democrats increasingly questioned whether he should stay in the race.

At this point in the delegate process, Biden would likely have to decide to drop out for there to be a new nominee. And the people he listens to most in the world - his wife and son - are telling him to stay in.

Even before the debate, the age of the 81-year-old Democratic president had been a liability with voters, and the prime-time faceoff appeared to reinforce the public’s deep-seated concerns before perhaps the largest audience he will have in the four months until Election Day. CNN said more than 51 million people watched the debate.

Deliver

While the president was huddled with his family, prominent Democrats rallied to deliver a public show of support for his campaign on Sunday.

“I do not believe that Joe Biden has a problem leading for the next four years,” said one close ally, Democratic Rep. James Clyburn of South Carolina. “Joe Biden should continue to run on his record.”

Sen. Raphael Warnock, a Georgia Democrat and Baptist minister, said there had been “more than a few Sundays when I wish I had preached a better sermon,” relating the experience to Biden’s debate performance.

“But after the sermon was over, it

was my job to embody the message, to show up for the people that I serve. And that’s what Joe Biden has been doing his entire life,” Warnock said. It was an echo of the message from other supporters that Biden had a bad debate, but a lifetime of good governance.

Also:

COLUMBIA, SC: When **Tim Scott** was a teenager, a Chick-fil-A manager named **John Moniz** offered him a sandwich, a job, and four years of indispensable mentoring about how to be a businessman and a citizen. Later, after that helping hand put Scott on a path that eventually led him into politics, **South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley** appointed him to a vacancy in the U.S. Senate.

Now Scott stands on the precipice of perhaps another breathtaking leap, but once again he will need an assist. The South Carolina senator is one of a handful of prominent people being considered by former President **Donald Trump** to be his running mate this year.

Scott, a rarity as a Black Republican senator from the South, tells his story with rags-to-riches flourish, crediting Moniz for helping to lift him from a dead-end life before Moniz died suddenly while Scott was in college. But Scott’s own role in taking advantage of the opportunities that came his way is part of the story, too.

From Moniz, Scott says, he learned the ins and outs of business, how to be a good citizen, and less tangible lessons about how, in order to receive, one must first give. Scott put that guidance to use as he made his way from business into politics.



A man holds flowers while standing with his dog during a vigil for 13-year-old Nyah Mway in Utica, NY on June 29. (AP)



Galime



Hobbs

America

Virginia gym shooting kills 2: Two people are dead after a shooting at a gym in Virginia, according to police.

Officers responded to the shooting at OneLife Fitness, a gym and health club in southwest Alexandria, at about 4 p.m. on Saturday, according to the Alexandria Police Department. Two people, including the alleged shooter, initially had life-threatening injuries and were taken to the hospital, police said.

Both the male victim and the accused shooter were pronounced dead by police Saturday night. OneLife Fitness said neither man was an employee of the gym.

At the time of the shooting, about 60 people were inside and fled through the building’s front and back exits, according to local news outlets.

“We are deeply saddened by the tragic events that occurred on Saturday at our Alexandria location. Our thoughts and prayers go out to the families of the people involved,” OneLife Fitness said in a statement. (AP)

Family demands accountability: On Wednesday, Nyah Mway finished middle school in the central New York city where his family moved about a decade ago as refugees from Myanmar, relatives said.

By Friday night, the 13-year-old was fatally shot by police who’d tackled him to the ground after he allegedly pointed what turned out to be a BB gun at them during a foot chase.

Struggling to comprehend his death, his anguished relatives and outraged members of their immigrant community called Sunday for justice for him and accountability for police.

But instead of celebrating the teen’s ascent to high school, his parents were waiting for medical examiners to release his body and wondering what would become of the officers.

As the state attorney general and the Utica Police Department investigate the shooting, Nyah’s relatives and other local mem-

bers of Myanmar’s Karen ethnic minority said they planned to meet Sunday afternoon with Utica Mayor **Michael P. Galime**. (AP)

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Man recovers from shark bite: A man

on Florida’s northeast coast was bitten by a shark this weekend but is now recovering, authorities said Sunday, in the third shark attack in state waters over the past month.

Officials from the Nassau County Sheriff’s Office Marine Unit responding to a dis-



Denmark’s King Frederick X and Queen Mary gesture, during a visit to Qeqertarsuaq in Greenland on June 30. Qeqertarsuaq is Greenland’s largest island and home to the Arctic Station research station, which aims to promote natural science Arctic research. (AP)

tress call Friday morning found the victim in critical condition aboard a boat, losing blood from a “severe” shark bite on his right forearm, according to a social media post from the sheriff’s office.

The attack occurred in the Amelia River near Fernandina Beach, about 35 miles (56 kilometers) north of Jacksonville, after the victim caught the shark while fishing, according to sheriff’s office public affairs officer Alicia Tarancon.

After officers applied a tourniquet, the victim was taken to shore, where he was airlifted to a local hospital, The Florida Times-Union reported. (AP)

□ □ □

Evacuation orders lifted: Evacuation orders in Arizona have been lifted for some residents of northeast Scottsdale, days after they were forced from their homes by a wildfire, authorities said Sunday.

The Boulder View Fire was 19% contained Sunday after charring nearly 6 square miles (15 square kilometers) on the cusp of the Boulder Heights subdivision since Thursday.

About 60 homes were evacuated Friday. No injuries have been reported and no structures have been damaged. Arizona’s governor is **Katie Hobbs**.

Authorities said the cause of the fire remains under investigation. It began about 5 miles (8 kilometers) outside northern Scottsdale on the edge of the Tonto National Forest. (AP)

Africa

New Cabinet in SAfrica

Mauritania’s prez ‘wins’ re-election

NOUAKCHOTT, Mauritania, July 1, (AP): Mauritania’s President **Mohamed Ould Ghazouani** will be re-elected, provisional results from all polling stations showed on Sunday, after positioning the country as a strategic ally of the West in a region swept by coups and violence.

Ghazouani, who campaigned on a pledge of providing security and economic growth, obtained 56.1% of votes, the country’s independent electoral commission said late on Saturday. His main rival, anti-slavery activist **Biram Dah Abeid**, received 22.1% of votes, but earlier on Sunday rejected the results, alleging fraud.

The country’s constitutional court is now expected to review the results to announce the final outcome of the election, but it remained unclear when it would happen.

The turnout was 54% of the two million eligible voters, the commission said.

Although his opponents accused him of corruption and mismanagement, Ghazouani, a former army chief, remains popular among Mauritians who see him as a beacon of stability. The vote is taking place in a tense regional climate, with Mauritania’s neighbors shaken by military coups and jihadi violence.

Mauritania is rich in natural resources including iron ore, copper, zinc, phosphate, gold, oil and natural gas. It is poised to become a gas producer by the end of the year, with the planned launch of the BP-operated Greater Tortue Ahmeyin offshore gas project on the border with Senegal.

Yet almost 60% of the population lives in poverty, according to the United Nations, working as farmers or employed informally. With few economic opportunities for young people at home, many are attempting to reach Europe, and some are even trying to get to the United States through Mexico.

Commit

“The last word belongs to the Mauritanian voters,” Ghazouani said after voting in Ksar, a suburb of the capital. “I commit myself to respecting their choice.”

Saturday’s vote unfolded peacefully, according to observers.

“Nothing has been detected so far and the CENI has not received any complaints,” said Taghioullah Ledhem, the spokesman for CENI, the country’s independent electoral commission.

But some opposition candidates held a different view. CENI is made up of representatives of political parties and its president is appointed by the government, and some accused it of colliding with Ghazouani’s regime. **Biram Dah**, who came second in the vote, rejected the provisional results and warned of an “electoral coup d’état for the benefit of Ghazouani, who was defeated by voters.”

During a press conference Sunday morning, he accused the electoral commission of fraud by giving Ghazouani thousands of votes “out of nowhere.”

Speaking later on Sunday from his home in Riadh, a poor suburb of the Mauritanian capital, he called for civil disobedience and appealed to the military and security forces to not “accept being used by the government against the people.” “The battle is not over, we are not defeated,” he said. “The people are not defeated and will not be defeated, we are there to defend the people until the last drop of blood.”

The African Union sent an observation mission to Saturday’s vote but have yet to release their statement.

Also:

CAPE TOWN, South Africa: South African President **Cyril Ramaphosa** named a new Cabinet late Sunday night after his African National Congress, the former main opposition party, and nine other parties agreed on the makeup of a coalition government following weeks of haggling.

Ramaphosa’s party retained the largest share of ministerial positions as he appointed ANC officials to 20 of the 32 Cabinet minister roles in the new coalition. But there were six ministers from the Democratic Alliance, once the main opposition and the fiercest critic of the ANC, and Ramaphosa shared out the remaining ministerial posts among some of the smaller parties.

Ramaphosa’s announcement of his new, multi-party Cabinet came a month after the ANC lost its 30-year political dominance of Africa’s most industrialized country in a national election, forcing it to seek coalition partners. The ANC’s share of the vote slumped to 40% in the May 29 vote and it lost its parliamentary majority for the first time since it came to power at the end of the apartheid system of white minority rule in 1994.

The DA won the second largest share of the vote with 21%. Others have also joined what the ANC called a government of national unity that is open to any of the 18 parties represented in Parliament. Some have refused to take part.

The power-sharing coalition is unprecedented for South Africa. The country briefly had a coalition government at the end of apartheid, but that was under different circumstances. The ANC held a clear majority then after the first all-race election, but new President **Nelson Mandela** invited others into his government in an act of reconciliation.



ALGIERS, Algeria: Algerian authorities arrested two journalists for publishing a video showing businesswomen protesting how they were treated at a government-sponsored event.

Journalists in Algeria have faced mounting repression since President **Abdelmadjid Tebboune** came to power four years ago, with possible long jail time on flimsy charges, experts say. Many news outlets have also shuttered due to mounting legal fees.

Sofiane Ghirous and **Ferhat Omar** of the news website “Algerie Scoop” were detained last week for broadcasting material authorities claimed “constituted incitement and hate speech,” according to a statement from the National Committee for the Liberation of Detainees, a local watchdog group, on Saturday.

In the video, women start-up founders accused the government of “humiliating” and treating them with “contempt” at an innovation event organized by the Ministry of Education and Professional Training.

Ghirous is the editor-in-chief of *Algerie Scoop* - accredited by the government in 2021- and Omar is the website’s director.

The press freedom group Reporters Without Borders has recently downranked Algeria on its freedom of expression index to 139th out of 180 in 2024 while decrying the country’s “pressure on independent media and threats to arrest journalists.”



Attendees stand for the anthem during a ceremony to handout Parliamentary membership cards to newly-elected lawmakers at the Mongolian Government Palace in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia on July 1. (AP)

Mongolia may return to coalition govt after results confirm setback for ruling party

Mongolia’s ruling party won a much smaller majority in a parliamentary election than it had held previously, according to official results released on Monday, raising the possibility of a return to a coalition government for the first time in eight years.

The Mongolian People’s Party took 68 seats in the 126-seat body in Friday’s nationwide vote, while the opposition Democratic Party won 42, according

to a certified list of winners posted on the General Election Commission website. The remaining 16 seats were divided among smaller parties.

The commission presented the final results to the country’s president on Monday shortly before handing out membership cards to the newly elected lawmakers at a ceremony in the State Palace, a grand building in the capital city that houses the parliament chamber

and the offices of the president and the prime minister.

The ceremony, held in a palace auditorium, was a time for hearty handshakes and backslapping embraces as lawmakers congratulated each other on their victories. As their names were read out, they went on stage one-by-one to receive a card in a folded, wallet-size protector that certified them as members of parliament. (AP)

Asia

Australia appoints 2nd woman governor-general

NKorea test-launches 2 ballistic missiles

SEOUL, South Korea, July 1, (AP): North Korea test-fired two ballistic missile Monday but one of them possibly flew abnormally, South Korea’s military said, a day after the North vowed “offensive and overwhelming” responses to a new US military drill with South Korea and Japan.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff said in a statement the missiles were launched 10 minutes apart in a northeasterly direction from the town of Jangyon in southeastern North Korea.

It said the first missile flew 600 kilometers (370 miles) and the second missile 120 kilometers (75 miles), but didn’t say where they landed. North Korea typically test-fires missiles toward its eastern waters, but the second missile’s flight distance was too short to reach those waters.

Joint Chiefs of Staff spokesperson Lee Sung Joon later told a briefing the second missile suffered a possible abnormal flight during the initial stage of its flight. He said if the missile exploded, its debris would likely have scattered on the ground though no damages was immediately reported. Lee said an additional analysis of the second missile launch was under way.

South Korean media, citing unidentified South Korean military sources, reported that it was highly likely the second missile crashed in an inland area of the North. The reports said the first missile landed in the waters off the North’s eastern city of Chongjin.

Threat

The Joint Chiefs of Staff condemned the North’s launches as a provocation that poses a serious threat to peace on the Korean Peninsula. It said South Korea maintains a firm readiness to repel any provocations by North Korea in conjunctions with the military alliance with the United States.

The launches came two days after South Korea, the US and Japan ended their new multidomain trilateral drills in the region. In recent years, the three countries have been expanding their trilateral security partnership to better cope with North Korea’s evolving

nuclear threats and China’s increasing assertiveness in the region.

The “Freedom Edge” drill was meant to increase the sophistication of previous exercises with simultaneous air and naval drills geared toward improving joint ballistic-missile defense, anti-submarine warfare, surveillance and other skills and capabilities. The three-day drill involved a US aircraft carrier as well as destroyers, fighter jets and helicopters from the three countries.

On Sunday, North Korea’s Foreign Ministry issued a lengthy statement strongly denouncing the “Freedom Edge” drill, calling the US-South Korea-Japan partnership an Asian version of NATO. It said the drill openly destroyed the security environment on the Korean Peninsula and contained a US intention to lay siege to China and exert pressure on Russia.



For the first time, North Korean officials have been seen wearing lapel pins with the image of leader **Kim Jong Un**, another sign the North is boasting his personality cult to the level bestowed on his late dictator father and grandfather.

Verified

North Koreans are required to wear pins over their hearts which for decades bore images of either the country’s founder, **Kim Il Sung**, or his son **Kim Jong Il**, or both. The existence of pins dedicated to Kim Jong Un had not been verified until state media published photos on Sunday showing officials wearing his pins at a ruling Workers’ Party meeting.

The pins are part of a state-sponsored mythology surrounding the Kim family which treats Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il like heroes. They are memorialized with numerous statues across North Korea, their birthdays are two of the country’s main holidays and their portraits are hung in all homes and offices.

Few question current leader Kim Jong Un’s hold on power, but few images honoring the 40-year-old have

been displayed in public since he took power in late 2011 upon his father’s death. Recently, however, he has begun taking steps to boost his own personality cult while also trying to further move out of the shadow of his father’s and grandfather’s legacies.

In May, his portrait was publicly displayed along with those of the two other Kims for the first time at a Workers’ Party-run training school. In January, Kim announced he will no longer pursue peaceful unification with South Korea, a decadeslong policy cherished by his father and grandfather. Observers also say North Korea appears to be refraining from using terms like “the Day of Sun,” a reference to the April 15 birthday of Kim Il Sung.

Also:

MELBOURNE, Australia: Australia appointed **Sam Mostyn** on Monday as only its second woman governor-general, a largely ceremonial role representing the British monarch who is the nation’s head of state.

It is the first such Australian appointment since the reign of **King Charles III** began in 2022 and the first by Prime Minister **Anthony Albanese**’s center-left Labor Party government that wants to replace the British monarch with an Australian president as head of state.

The businesswoman and gender equality advocate, who in 2005 became the first woman Australian Football League Commissioner, was sworn in as Australia’s 28th governor-general since 1901.

In her first speech in her new role, Mostyn quoted Australia’s first woman governor-general **Quentin Bryce**, who described her role in 2013 as “striking a balance between observing traditions and protocol and being thoroughly contemporary.”

“I will be an optimistic, modern and visible governor-general, committed to the service and contribution that all Australians expect and deserve from the holder of this office,” Mostyn said.

ished and disappointed.

Participants in the capital, Caracas, on Sunday were mostly uniformed police officers and other law enforcement agents as well as employees of government ministries and state-owned companies. They took photos of each other casting mock votes to send proof of participation to organizers. (AP)



‘Jail attorneys and officials’: A judge in Ecuador on Sunday ordered that more than a dozen suspects including judges, attorneys and government officials be held in jail while authorities investigate judicial rulings that allegedly favored criminals.

The suspects were arrested Saturday following operations launched across Ecuador, with 14 of them ordered held. House arrest was ordered for two elderly suspects and a ban on leaving the country was issued for a pregnant woman. The judge also ordered that the suspects’ bank accounts be frozen.

The suspects join 14 other defendants already linked to a case dubbed “Plague” as prosecutors investigate what they say is an illegal network that sold favorable sentences, prison releases and other favors to members of organized crime groups.

During a hearing that began Saturday afternoon and lasted until Sunday morning, the prosecution alleged that in exchange for \$70,000, one judge granted freedom to a collaborator of **Fabrizio Colón Pico**, leader of Los Lobos, considered one of the largest drug trafficking organizations in the Andean country. (AP)



People gather outside a polling station in Nouakchott, Mauritania on June 29. Mauritania’s President **Mohamed Ould Ghazouani** will be re-elected, provisional results from all polling stations showed on June 30 after positioning the country as a strategic ally of the West in a region swept by coups and violence. (Xinhua)



Morales



Maduro

Lat/Am

‘Arce orchestrated self-coup’: Former Bolivian president **Evo Morales** on Sunday accused his political ally-turned-rival President **Luis Arce** of deceiving Bolivians by staging a “self-coup” last week to earn political points among the electorate, marking a sharp downturn in an already fraught relationship.

Morales was initially among the country’s most powerful voices to say the approximately 200 members of the military who marched on Bolivia’s government palace alongside armored vehicles Wednesday had attempted a “coup d’état.” He called for “all those involved in this riot to be arrested and tried.” But on Sunday, Morales joined others who contend Arce himself orchestrated the incident in an attempt to win the sympathy of Bolivians at a time when his popularity is extremely low.

Arce “disrespected the truth, deceived us, lied, not only to the Bolivian people but to the whole world,” Morales said in a local broadcast program Sunday. Morales also called for an independent investigation into the military action in a post on X.

Morales is throwing his support behind an accusation made by former Gen **Juan José Zúñiga**, who allegedly led the coup attempt. Morales said Zúñiga had informed colleagues and family of his plan beforehand and while in custody had told authorities that Arce had “betrayed” him.

“The president told me: ‘The situation is very screwed up, very critical. It is necessary to prepare something to raise my popularity,’” Zúñiga quoted Arce as saying.

That theory was quickly adopted by Arce’s political enemies, who dubbed it a “self-coup.” (AP)




Venezuelans rehearse voting: Some Venezuelans cast mock votes in a rehearsal Sunday, less than a month before the highly anticipated election in which President **Nicolás Maduro** seeks a third term.

The test allows Venezuela’s ruling party to gauge its voter-mobilizing powers, which have significantly diminished during Maduro’s crisis-ridden presidency.

The exercise, largely featuring ruling party supporters and public employees, was held prior to other elections. It is technically



Governor-General of Australia **Sam Mostyn**, (center), speaks during the swearing in ceremony in the Senate chamber at Parliament House in Canberra on July 1 as Prime Minister **Anthony Albanese**, (left), listens. Mostyn is Australia’s second woman governor-general, a largely ceremonial role representing the British monarch as the nation’s head of state. (AP)

Market Movements				01-07-2024						
	DUBAI	-	DFMGI	Change	Closing pts	SAUDI	-	TASI	Change	Closing pts
	JAPAN	-	Nikkei 225	+27.04	4,057.04	PHILIPPINES	-	PSEI	-20.97	11,658.53
	EGYPT	-	EGX 30	+47.98	39,631.06				-13.14	6,398.77
	PAKISTAN	-	KSE 100	+203.32	27,969.59					
				+517.43	78,890.56					

Business

Boursa indices decline to close first half of '24

Companies increase capital through priority rights sales

KUWAIT CITY, July 1: The Boursa Kuwait indices experienced a notable decline during the first trading session of the week, marking the conclusion of the first half of 2024, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The General Market Index fell by 0.43%, or 30.12 points, closing at 6936.98 points. Liquidity decreased to 37.4 million dinars, with a total of 141.4 million shares traded across 9,412 transactions.

The Premier Market Index also dropped by 0.43%, or 32.61 points, ending at 7543.64 points. Liquidity was 28.2 million dinars, with 88.8 million shares traded through 5,982 transactions.

The Main Market Index declined by 0.44%, or 26.17 points, to 5912.40 points. Liquidity reached 9 million dinars, with 52.5 million shares traded in 3,430 transactions.

The day started positively with increased activity in the IFA bloc, particularly Kuwait Real Estate and IFA shares, which saw rising prices. Agility, Joint Stock Company, and Human Soft also contributed positively.

However, the banking sector remained relatively calm initially, stabilizing in the first half-hour before

fluctuations, particularly noticeable in Gulf Bank, National Bank, and Boubiyan Bank shares.

Human Soft shares notably grew by 5.7%, while Joint Stock Company achieved a 3.3% increase with good trading volume. Conversely, shares of Gulf Bank decreased by 2.1% across all major market indices.

There was varied performance among GCC market indices, with Qatar and Oman showing limited gains while Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Bahrain recorded declines. Oil prices closed at \$84.8 per barrel of Brent crude on Friday evening.

Also:

KUWAIT CITY: The recent period has seen many companies listed on the Boursa Kuwait opt to increase their capital through the sale of priority rights shares, reports Al-Jarida daily.

These rights, acquired by shareholders registered in the company's records on the day of the extraordinary general assembly, gave shareholders the opportunity to subscribe to new shares when a capital increase is approved, entitling them to subscribe to new shares at the offering price.

Fifteen companies have utilized this process since its approval, with notable participation in 2021 by Jazeera Airways, Gulf Insurance Group,

Kuwait Projects, Burgan Bank, and Warba Bank.

In 2022, National Industries Group, Boubiyan Bank, and National Consumer Holding Company followed suit. The trend accelerated in 2023 and 2024, with six companies raising their capital through subscription to priority shares, totaling an increase of 150.15 million dinars.

The National Bank of Kuwait led in 2023 with a capital increase from 187.4 million to 237.4 million dinars, followed by Kuwait International Bank and Gulf Bank.

In 2024, Arabi Holding Group's prospectus was approved by the Capital Markets Authority for a 50% increase in capital, primarily aimed at financing expansion plans, investments, and settling financial obligations, notably loans burdened with high interest rates.

Shareholders have options with priority rights, including selling, relinquishing, or subscribing to them. Selling rights forfeits the subscription privilege, transferring it to the buyer. This flexibility allows shareholders to participate or monetize their rights effectively. The companies resorting to this method typically enhance their financial position and attractiveness to investors, especially in sectors like banking, operations, and services, known for robust demand in subscription offerings.

Central Bank of Kuwait Bonds

KUWAIT CITY, July 1: The Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) announced the most recent issues of CBK Bonds and Related Tawarruq at a total value of KWD (240) million for (3) months with Rate of Return (4.375%)

'Bridging trust gap'

Efficient accounting enhances SME operational performance

By Essam Ahmed

KUWAIT CITY, July 1: SMEs (small to medium-sized enterprises) are the cornerstone of any economy. They not only account for job creation opportunities but also help the economy move by connecting larger enterprises to consumers and enabling supply chains. According to the World Bank, SMEs constitute about 90% of the businesses and more than 50% of the employment worldwide. The challenge, however, is to maintain a consistency in the overall ecosystem for SMEs and MSMEs (micro, small and medium enterprises) that facilitates growth which is both sustained and profitable.

Today, SMEs are faced with many challenges that are dampening their growth prospects. While external factors, such as geopolitics, market competition, technological advancement, and regulatory policies, can impact small businesses, business owners also grapple with various internal challenges like talent and technology. Of these internal challenges, the one that stands out most is financial management.

However, with contemporary financial management tools such as management accounting reports, SMEs are changing the business landscape and ensuring sustainable growth for their organization.

Why an SME should have a structured management accounting reporting system

In the financial landscape of SMEs, the difference between a business that is doing well and one that is struggling to are the accounting and financial reporting measures they have in place. It is the data that emerges from employing these practices that paints an accurate picture of a business' financial health, helps identify trends and encourages informed decision-making that contributes to its bottom lines. Not having them takes away from SMEs' ability to identify bumps in strategic decisions and (or) resource utilization.

According to a report by the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS), SMEs are perceived as 'lacking financial skills' by financiers. Bridging this trust gap requires financial statements to reflect a company's performance accurately and transparently, which could be achieved through measures such as cost accounting and management accounts reporting. And, despite the complexities involved in setting up financial reporting and accounting measures, businesses must fulfill regulatory obligations regularly.

This is all the more important when you consider that Kuwait's financial regulatory landscape is as dynamic as it is. And, non-compliance for SMEs could mean heavy fines as well as reputational damage.

However, this is only one part of a larger challenge as this non-compliance also points at discrepancies in accounting and business disruptions that could be inhibiting an SME's growth but could be overcome using adequate



Essam Ahmed

financial expertise.

Moreover, efficient accounting and financial reporting can also help SMEs better their internal operations. For instance, using processes such as management accounts reporting, SMEs could look deeper into their businesses' overall performance or choose to go more granular and analyze how they are performing on a department-level. It essentially serves as a top light, highlighting areas where processes are inefficient or where resources are misallocated and (or) underutilized so you can maximize their overall efficiency.

Final thoughts

In conclusion, when SMEs manage internal challenges well, it becomes easier for them to tackle external challenges. That is why having the right accounting and financial reporting measures should be a strategic imperative for them. It is these measures that set the premise for making informed decisions, building trust and credibility, navigating regulatory compliance, maximizing operational efficiency, and facilitating strategic planning.

However, looking ahead, more digitalization is anticipated as are the challenges and opportunities in Kuwait's regulatory landscape.

Therefore, for businesses aiming to thrive in the SME ecosystem, it is crucial that they prioritize accurate accounting and financial reporting and view it as a non-negotiable investment for their future rather than an immediate payoff.

About the author

Essam Ahmed leads KPMG Kuwait's Accounting Advisory Services (AAS) and has led engagement teams for clients within construction, contracting investment, trading, manufacturing, and media and publishing sectors. He has over 21 years of experience in cost accounting, auditing, financial and management accounting, and performs forensic investigations of public, private, government and non-profit entities. His practice includes preparation of prospective financial information, due diligence investigations, lost profits, damage calculation and analysis, breach of contract disputes, and embezzlement investigations.

GCC banks projected to outperform global averages in '24

KUWAIT CITY, July 1: A recent report by McKinsey & Co. Consulting highlights the strong financial performance and resilience of banks in the GCC countries, projecting continued outperformance in 2024, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The report notes that Gulf banks have consistently achieved high returns on shareholders' equity, surpassing the global average by 3 to 4% during 2022 and 2023.

This superior performance is attributed to several factors:

High Net Interest Margins -- Gulf banks maintain significantly higher net interest margins compared to global banks, at 2.3% versus the global average of 1.4%.

Strong Asset Revenue -- Revenues from Gulf banks' assets reached 3.2%, much higher than the global average of 2.3%. Better Capitalization -- Gulf banks enjoy better capitalization, with an average return on shareholders' equity of 10.9%.

The report forecasts a recovery in GDP growth for Gulf economies to 3.6% in 2024, driven by rapid expansion in non-oil sectors such as construction, finance, and consumer services. Investment in these sectors is expected to peak by 2030. Impact of Interest Rates -- Due to the pegging of Gulf currencies to the US dollar, Gulf interest rates closely follow US rates.

The recent rise in US interest rates has significantly boosted the annual profits of Gulf banks. However, the report cautions that this high-interest rate environment may not be permanent. If US inflation declines, the Federal Reserve may cut interest rates, potentially impacting Gulf banks' earnings. Thus,

Kuwait's basket of currencies system under scrutiny

Effectiveness of Central Bank's policies questioned 'amid global uncertainties'

KUWAIT CITY, July 1: The Central Bank's policies, particularly its adherence to a basket of currencies exchange rate system amidst global economic uncertainties questions whether the Central Bank's policies, described as "prudent" in media, are truly effective given current economic challenges like geopolitical tensions, inflation, and high debt costs due to strict monetary policies, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Here is a brief look at the key concerns which include:

Exchange Rate Policy -- Kuwait's unique basket of currencies system is justified for monetary policy flexibility and to avoid risks associated with a single major currency.

However, the article questions whether aligning with the US Federal Reserve's policies, despite different exchange rate mechanisms, adequately addresses local economic needs or overly prioritizes currency stability.

Inflation Management -- Despite efforts to preserve purchasing power and mitigate inflationary pressures, Kuwait has experienced higher inflation rates compared to major trading partners.

banks that leverage short-term gains to reduce costs and implement business transformation plans will gain a competitive edge when rates fall.

Optimistic Outlook -- Despite global macroeconomic uncertainties, the report expresses optimism about the future of Gulf banks. Strong economies, favorable demographics, supportive government programs, and evolving regulatory frameworks position Gulf banks well for business expansion and

economic diversification.

The following are the five supporting factors:

Strong Economic Growth -- Continued robust economic performance in the Gulf region.

Favorable Demographics -- Young and growing populations driving demand.

Supportive Government Programs -- Initiatives aimed at economic diversification.

Regulatory Development -- Progress in regulatory frameworks enhancing the banking sector.

Technological Investments -- Continued investment in advanced technology and business transformation.

However, McKinsey & Co.'s report paints a positive picture for Gulf banks, emphasizing their robust performance, strong financial fundamentals, and readiness to capitalize on economic diversification opportunities.

Kuwait Benchmarks Fall in June 2024, Premier Index Down 1.8%

GCC index sees first monthly gain in June after three months of decline

By KAMCO Invest

After three consecutive months of decline, the GCC index monthly performance witnessed its first monthly gain during June-2024 amid mixed market performance in the region. A similar trend was seen in key global benchmarks mainly reflecting mixed messaging coming on the global inflation front. Nevertheless, the latest economic data from the US indicated growth possibility of rate cut in the near term.

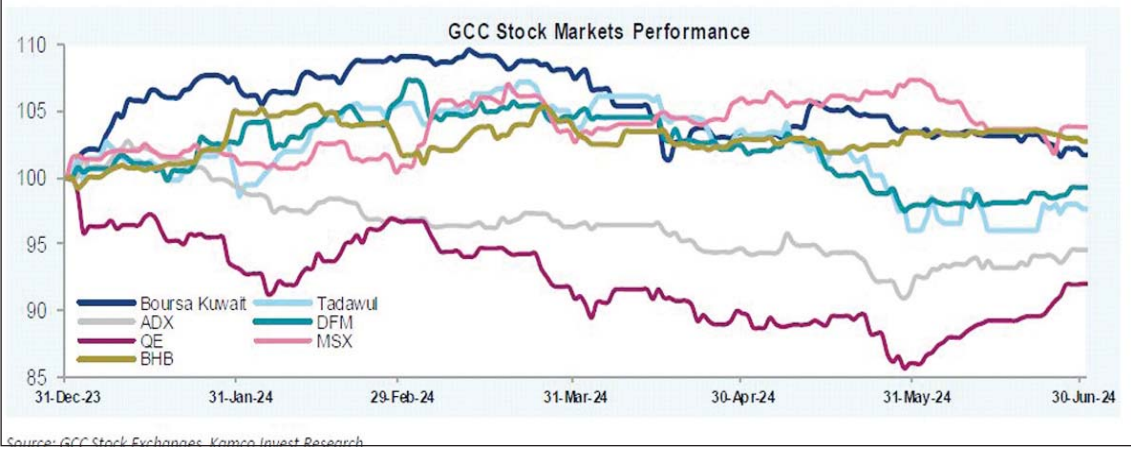
The MSCI GCC index was up by 3.4% during the month mainly led by strong gains in Qatar and Abu Dhabi benchmarks further supported by low-single-digit gains in Saudi and Dubai benchmarks. Gains in Qatar came as a relief rally after the index witnessed consecutive declines over the last few months and was the worst performing market in the GCC with double digit declines. The gains of 7.0% during June-2024 lowered these declines YTD to 8.0%, still the biggest drop in the GCC. These monthly gains were partially offset by declines seen in the remaining markets, i.e. Oman, Kuwait and Bahrain. The 1H-2024 performance of the MSCI GCC index showed a relatively smaller decline of 5.1% reflecting equivalent gains and declines in individual markets. Oman, Bahrain and Kuwait continued to remain in the green during 1H-2024, albeit with low-single digit gains.

On the sector front, the Insurance index showed double-digit monthly gain of 10.6% during June-2024 followed by Healthcare and F&B indices with gains of 8.0% and 5.9%, respectively. Large-cap sectors like Banks and Telecom showed relatively smaller gains of 4.6% and 3.3%, respectively. On the decliner's side, the Utilities index topped with a decline of 4.8% followed by Materials and Consumer Durables indices with declines of 1.8% and 0.7%, respectively. The Energy index also showed marginal decline of 0.6%.

Boursa Kuwait

Kuwaiti benchmarks receded during June-2024 following a broad-based decline that affected most sectors on the exchange. In terms of market segments, the Premier Market Index witnessed the biggest monthly decline of 1.8% as the performance of constituent stocks in the index were skewed downwards. The Main Market Index and the Main 50 Index reported relatively smaller monthly declines of 0.8%, and 0.5%, respectively, while the All Share Market Index receded 1.6% during the month. The performance

GCC Equity Markets	Index Closing	MTD Chg%	YTD Chg%	M-Cap (USD Bn)	Monthly Val Traded (USD Bn)	P/E (x) TTM	P/B (x) TTM	Div. Yield
Kuwait - Premier Market Index	7,543.6	(1.8%)	0.9%	132.2	2.7	12.8	0.9	3.0%
Kuwait - Main 50 Index	5,762.5	(0.5%)	5.0%					
Kuwait - Main Market Index	5,912.4	(0.8%)	6.2%					
Kuwait - All Share Index	6,937.0	(1.6%)	1.8%					
Saudi Arabia	11,679.5	1.5%	(2.4%)	2,681.8	43.6	20.3	2.4	3.6%
Abu Dhabi	9,060.7	2.2%	(5.4%)	741.7	4.8	18.2	2.7	2.2%
Dubai	4,030.0	1.3%	(0.7%)	184.2	1.7	7.9	1.2	5.9%
Qatar	9,967.6	7.0%	(8.0%)	158.0	2.2	11.2	1.3	4.8%
Bahrain	2,025.5	(0.7%)	2.7%	91.8	0.0	8.5	0.8	8.3%
Oman	4,687.3	(3.3%)	3.8%	23.7	0.1	12.5	0.9	5.3%
Total GCC				4,013.3	55.2	17.0	2.1	3.7%



during 1H-2024 also reflected relatively better performance of Main Market stocks with a gain of 6.2% while the Main 50 Index and All Share Market Index showed smaller gains of 5.0% and 1.8%, respectively. The Premier Market Index witnessed a gain of 0.9% during 1H-2024. In the primary market, the month saw Beyout Investment Group added to the Financial Services sector marking the first listing on the exchange in over two years and as a constituent of the Premier Market index bringing the total number of companies listed in the index to 34.

The sector performance chart also highlighted the broad-based decline in the market during the month with merely three sector witnessing gains. The gainer's side was topped by the Industrials index with a gain of 4.2% followed by Utilities and Insurance sectors with gains of 0.6% and 0.4%, respectively. On the other hand, the Basic Materials index witnessed the steepest decline of 10.1%, followed by the Technology and Consumer Staples indices with declines of 6.8% and 6.0%, respectively.

In the Basic Materials sector, shares of Kuwait foundry and Boubyan Petrochemicals declined by 20.1% and 11.1%, respectively. The Consumer Staples Sector was dragged down by a decline in the shares of Mezzan Holding which was down by 6.5%. The decline in the Technology sector was led by the fall in the shares of its sole constituent Automated Systems Co. Large-cap indices like Banking declined after shares of most banks dropped indicating seasonal weakness and profit booking on elevated prices. In the Telecom sector, most of the constituent stocks declined with shares of STC Kuwait fell 7.7%. Gains for the Industrials sector was mainly led by double-digit gains in shares of United Projects Group, Gulf Cable and KCPC.

In terms of monthly stock performance, United Projects Group topped with a gain of 32.1% followed by Arkan Al-Kuwait Real Estate Co. and KMEFIC with gains of 24.6% and 17.4%, respectively. On the decliner's side, Dar Al-Thuraya Real Estate Co. topped with a decline of 23.7% followed by Arabi Holding Group Co. and Kuwait foundry with declines of 20.6% and 17.4%, respectively. Trading activity on the exchange fell during June-2024, due to the Eid holidays. Total monthly volume traded dropped by 47.7% to 3.2 Bn shares as compared to 6.1 Bn shares during the previous month. Similarly, monthly value traded decreased by 34.9% to KWD 838.5 Mn as compared to KWD 1.3 Bn during May-2024.

BUSINESS

deal reached in WestJet strike

Canada's second largest airline, WestJet, has reached a deal with its mechanics to end a strike that had disrupted the travel plans of tens of thousands of passengers over the Canada Day long weekend.

WestJet said late Sunday there will still be flight disruptions in the week ahead as its planes are brought back into service.

In its own news release, the Airplane Mechanics Fraternal Association urged its members to re-

turn to work immediately pending a vote on the temporary agreement.

Some 680 workers, whose daily inspections and repairs are essential to airline operations, had walked off the job on Friday evening despite a directive for binding arbitration from the labor minister.

Since Thursday, WestJet has canceled 829 flights scheduled between then and Monday in the busiest travel weekend of the season in Canada.

The vast majority of Sunday's

trips were called off as WestJet pared down its 180-plane fleet to 32 active aircraft and topped the global list for cancellations among major airlines over the weekend.

"The damage to Canadians and our airline is massive, a swift resolution was necessary; we take no victory laps on this outcome but will sleep better tonight knowing further harm has been prevented," Diederik Pen, President of WestJet Airlines and Group Chief Operating Officer, said in a statement. (AP)

Japan revises economic growth in 1Q downward

Japan revised its earlier estimates to show that its economy contracted at a 2.9% annual pace in the first quarter of the year, as meanwhile a survey by the central bank released Monday showed conditions remain sluggish.

Analysts had expected the downward revision in the GDP data for January-March and said it was mainly based on a change in data on construction activity. The earlier estimate was of a 1.8% contraction in annual terms.

The quarterly survey by the Bank of Japan showed a modest improvement in business sentiment among large and medium-size manufacturers. But details of the survey showed weakness in demand both in Japan and overseas.

"Across all industries and firm sizes, business conditions held steady at 12, which is on past form consistent with (quarterly) GDP growth of around 0%," Marcel Thieliand of Capital Economics said

in assessing the tankan.

"A renewed slowdown in GDP growth this quarter would be consistent with the slump in industrial production firms were predicting for June," he said.

A resumption of normal production among automakers after they had slowed factory lines due to shortages of computer chips last year was one factor behind the slight improvement in overall manufacturing sentiment, economists at ING Economics said. (AP)

Company given chance to respond to accusation

EU accuses FB owner Meta of breaking digital rules with paid ad-free option

LONDON, July 1, (AP): European Union regulators accused social media company Meta Platforms on Monday of breaching the bloc's new digital competition rulebook by forcing Facebook and Instagram users to choose between seeing ads or paying to avoid them.

Meta has been giving European users the option since November of paying for ad-free versions of Facebook and Instagram as a way to comply with the continent's strict data privacy rules.

Desktop browser users can pay about 10 euros (\$10.50) a month while iOS or Android users will pay roughly 13 euros to avoid being targeted by ads based on their personal data.

The U.S. tech giant rolled out the subscription option after the European Union's top court ruled that under strict EU data privacy rules, Meta must first get consent before showing ads to users.

The European Commission, the EU's executive arm, said preliminary findings of its investigation show that Meta's "pay or consent" advertising model was in breach of the 27-nation bloc's Digital Markets Act.

The commission said Meta's model doesn't allow users to exercise their right to "freely consent" to allowing their personal data to be used to target them with online ads.

The commission had opened its

investigation shortly after the rulebook, also known as the DMA, took effect in March. It's a sweeping set of regulations aimed at preventing tech "gatekeepers" from cornering digital markets under threat of heavy financial penalties.

"The DMA is there to give back to the users the power to decide how their data is used and ensure innovative companies can compete on equal footing with tech giants on data access," European Commissioner Thierry Breton, who oversees the bloc's digital policy, said in a statement.

Meta now has a chance to respond to the commission, which must wrap up its investigation by March 2025. The company could face fines worth 10% of its annual global revenues, which could run into the billions of euros.

"Subscription for no ads follows the direction of the highest court in Europe and complies with the DMA," Meta said in a statement. "We look forward to further constructive dialogue with the European Commission to bring this investigation to a close."

Under the Digital Markets Act, Meta is classed as one of seven online gatekeepers while Facebook, Instagram and its ad business are among about two dozen "core platform services" that need the highest level of scrutiny.

BANGKOK, July 1, (AP): Surveys of Chinese factory managers showed a mixed outlook for the world's second-largest economy in June, with growth steady but not picking up much steam.

The China Federation of Logistics and Purchasing's official purchasing managers index, or PMI, remained at 49.5, the same as in May, on a scale up to 100 where 50 marks the cut off for expansion.

"From the perspective of output, China's economy is maintaining expansion, but the momentum of recovery still needs to be consolidated," the official Xinhua News Agency cited Zhao Qinghe, senior statistician for the National Bureau of Statistics, as saying.

The PMI for new export orders slipped to 49.4 from 49.6, perhaps reflecting announcements by the European Union and United States of plans to increase their tariffs on imports of electric vehicles from China.

A private-sector survey released Monday by the financial media group Caixin was more optimistic, edging up to 51.8 from 51.7 in the previous month. That was the fastest expansion of factory output in two years, it said. Analysts had forecast that it would fall.

But while sentiment was positive, the level of confidence among purchasing managers fell to the lowest in over four-and-a-half years due to worries over intense competition and uncertain market conditions, Caixin said.

The surveys offered scant insight into whether various measures to boost the property sector, such as cutting mortgage interest rates and down payments, have had much impact on an industry-wide slump that followed a crack-down on excessive borrowing by developers.

"The PMIs for June were mixed but on balance suggest that the recovery lost some momentum last month," Capital Economics said in a report.

The official PMI reading for high-tech manufacturing rose to 52.3 in June from 50.7 in May, reflecting the government's drive to boost investment in upgrading factories and equipment in new industries such as computer chip and electric vehicles.

"This shows that the transformation and upgrading of China's manufacturing industry has continued to advance," Zhao was quoted as saying.

Chinese leader Xi Jinping has made growth of such advanced industries a top priority, a theme likely to dominate an upcoming meeting of top officials of the ruling Communist Party when they meet later in the month.

Xinhua said in a separate report that during the meeting the party would disclose a new round of "deep and comprehensive reforms."

Such measures will "chart the course forward for the world's second largest economy," it said.

Businesses, public service strained

Millions of Nigerians have very little to no electricity

IBADAN, Nigeria, July 1, (AP): Dimly lit and stuffy classrooms stir with life every morning as children file in. Rays of sunlight stream through wooden windows, the only source of light. Pupils squint at their books and intermittently the blackboard as teachers try to hold their attention.

It's a reality for many schoolchildren across Nigeria, where many buildings don't have access to the national electricity grid. In Excellent Moral School in Oloodo Okin in Ibadan, "the entire community is not connected, including the school," said school founder Muyideen Raji. It acutely affects pupils, he said, who can't learn how to use computers or the Internet and can't study in the evenings.

About half of Nigeria's more than 200 million people are hooked up to a national electricity grid that can't provide sufficient daily electricity to most of those connected. Many poor, rural communities like Oloodo Okin are off the grid entirely.

In a country with abundant sunshine, many are looking to solar energy to help fill the gaps, but getting risk-averse investors to finance major solar projects that would give Nigeria enough reliable energy is an uphill struggle. It means that millions in the country are finding ways to live with little to no electricity.

Studies have shown that Nigeria could generate much more electricity than it needs from solar energy thanks to its powerful sunshine. But 14 grid-scale solar projects in the northern and central parts of the country that could generate 1,125 megawatts of electricity have stalled since contracts were signed in 2016.

Those trying to develop solar projects in the country blame interest rates for borrowing which can be as high as 15 percent, two to three times higher than in advanced economies and China, according to the International Energy Agency.

That means it's more costly for solar companies to work in Nigeria or other developing nations than in rich countries. Africa only has one-fifth the solar power capacity of Germany, and just 2% of global clean energy investments go to the continent.

"The same project put up in Nigeria and Denmark; the Danish project will get funding for 2 to 3 percent" interest rate, said Najim Animashaun, director of Nova Power, one of the stalled solar projects. Meanwhile he struggles to get loans even with interest rates of 10 percent or higher, "even though my solar project can produce two and half times more power," than a Danish one.

Nigeria also does not set so-called cost-reflective tariffs, meaning the price consumers pay for electricity doesn't cover the costs to produce and distribute it. This means distribution companies can't fully pay producers and the industry relies on government interventions to stay afloat, scaring off lenders from investing in the solar industry.

Currently, power producers say they are owed up to 3.7 trillion Naira (\$2.7 billion) by the government, making it difficult to meet obligations to their lenders and contractors.

One option would be getting World Bank guarantees that would put investors at ease and make them more willing to put money into solar projects - but the government is wary of signing up to anything that would force them to pay large sums even if electricity from the projects does not get the consumers because of inadequate transmission and distribution infrastructure.

But without World Bank guarantees "nobody will develop or finance a project with a government subsidy, because it can dry off," said Edu Okeke, the managing director of Azura Power. Azura Power has a stake in the now-stalled 100 megawatt Nova solar project in Nigeria's northern Katsina State.

With less than 8,000 megawatts of capacity and an average supply of less than 4,000 megawatts - less than half of what Singapore supplies to just 5.6 million people - power outages are an everyday occurrence in Nigeria.

Communities like Excellent Moral School's in Ibadan that have no access to electricity are often surrounded by more fortunate ones that are connected to the grid but experience frequent outages and have to use gasoline and diesel-run private generators.

With the long-running petroleum subsidies now removed, many households, schools, hospitals and businesses struggle with the cost of the fuel for their backup generators.

"We have stopped using a diesel generator as an alternative due to costs," said Abdulhakeem Adedaja, the head of Lorat Nursery and Primary School in Ibadan. He added that although the school is in an Ibadan area that is connected to the grid, they could go two weeks without a power supply.

The problem is not just the lack of electricity for computer-aided learning, proper lighting, and fans to make classes less stuffy for pupils and teachers, but also that students are unable to complete their school assignments at home, Adedaja said.

For more energy-hungry small businesses like restaurants, they either close shop or continue with alternative power generation, incurring high costs that hurt their capacity for expansion.

Ebunola Akinwale, the owner of Nature's Treat Cafe in Ibadan, said she pays 2.5 million Naira (\$1,700) monthly to power backup generators in her four branches.

"If nothing changes, I probably would have to close one or two branches," she said, though she is planning to go solar which she enthuses will help us cut "pollution from the diesel (generators)." She's in talks with her bank for a low-cost loan package specially designed for young women entrepreneurs to finance the solar alternative.



Chinese riding bicycle pass by a local business building in the background in Beijing, China, Friday, June 28, 2024. Surveys of Chinese factory managers showed a mixed outlook for the world's second-largest economy in June, with growth steady but not picking up much steam. (AP)

Company's approach criticised

Under pressure on plane safety, Boeing buying stressed supplier Spirit for \$4.7b

ARLINGTON, Va., July 1, (AP): Boeing announced plans to acquire key supplier Spirit AeroSystems for \$4.7 billion, a move that it says will improve plane quality and safety amid increasing scrutiny by Congress, airlines and the Department of Justice.

Boeing previously owned Spirit, and the purchase would reverse a long-time Boeing strategy of outsourcing key work on its passenger planes. That approach has been criticized as problems at Spirit disrupted production and delivery of popular Boeing jetliners including 737s and 787s.

"We believe this deal is in the best interest of the flying public, our airline customers, the employees of Spirit and Boeing, our shareholders and the country more broadly," Boeing President and CEO Dave Calhoun said in a statement late Sunday.

Concerns about safety came to a head after the Jan. 5 blowout of a panel on an Alaska Airlines 737 Max 9 at 16,000 feet (4,876 meters) over Oregon. The Federal Aviation Administration soon after announced increased oversight of Boeing and Spirit, which supplied the fuselage for the plane.

No one was seriously injured in the Alaska Airlines door incident, which terrified passengers, but Boeing is under pressure from the U.S. Justice Department to plead guilty to criminal fraud in connection with two deadly plane crashes involving its 737 Max jetliners more than five years ago.

Boeing has until the end of the week to accept or reject the offer, which includes the giant aerospace company agreeing to an independent monitor who would oversee its compliance with anti-fraud laws, according to several people who heard federal prosecutors detail a proposed offer Sunday.

The Justice Department said in a May court filing that Boeing violated terms of a 2021 settlement allowing the company to avoid prosecution for actions leading up to the crashes in

Ethiopia and Indonesia, which killed 346 people.

Those crashes were blamed on a faulty sensor in a flight-control system and the investigation is separate from the probe of the more recent Alaska Airlines blowout, which involved Spirit.

Boeing spun off Spirit, which is based in Wichita, Kansas, and not related to Spirit Airlines, in 2005. In recent years, quality problems have mounted, including fuselage panels that didn't fit together precisely enough and holes that were improperly drilled.

Spirit removed its CEO in October and replaced him with Patrick Shanahan, a former Boeing executive who served as acting defense secretary in the Trump administration.

Things seemed to be going more smoothly until the Alaska Airlines incident. Investigators said a panel used in place of an extra emergency door had been removed at a Boeing factory to let Spirit workers fix damaged rivets, and bolts that help hold the panel

in place were missing after the repair job. It is not clear who removed the bolts and failed to put them back.

Spirit said in May that it was laying off about 450 workers at its Wichita plant because of a production slowdown since the January incident. Its total workforce was just over 13,000 people.

"Bringing Spirit and Boeing together will enable greater integration of both companies' manufacturing and engineering capabilities, including safety and quality systems," Shanahan said.

The acquisition's equity value of \$4.7 billion is \$37.25 per share, while the total value of the deal is around \$8.3 billion, which includes Spirit's last reported net debt, the aerospace company said.

Boeing common stock will be exchanged for Spirit shares according to a variable formula that depends on a weighted average of the share price over a 15-trading-day period ending on the second day before the deal closes, Boeing said.



A Boeing 737 Max jet prepares to land at Boeing Field following a test flight in Seattle, Sept. 30, 2020. Boeing announced plans late Sunday, June 30, 2024, to acquire Spirit AeroSystems for \$4.7 billion in an all-stock transaction for the manufacturing firm. (AP)

Japanese big makers' business confidence up 1st time in Q2

TOKYO, July 1, (KUNA): Business confidence among major Japanese manufacturers improved from three months ago in June, marking the first improvement in two quarters, the Bank of Japan said Monday.

The central bank's quarterly survey showed the business sentiment index among big manufacturers, such as automakers and electronics makers, rose to plus 13 in June, compared with 11 in the previous March

survey.

The improvement showed that the impact of factory shutdowns of Daihatsu Motor Co., a Toyota Motor Corp. subsidiary, due to a safety testing scandal reduced, and raw-material producers successfully passed on higher costs through price hikes.

Confidence among large retailers, banks, real estate companies, and other non-manufacturers worsened

by one point to plus 33, the first decline since June 2020.

The headline index represents the percentage of companies, which are positive about their business minus the percentage of those who gave negative replies. Thus, a positive number means optimists outnumber pessimists.

The "tankan," which means short-term economic outlook, is the most closely watched index of business

confidence for the world's third-largest economy.

Looking ahead, large manufacturers expect their business sentiment index to improve by 1 point to plus 14 in the next survey in September, while major non-manufacturers predict a 6-point drop to plus 27.

The latest poll was conducted between May 29 and June 28, covering 9,076 companies, of which 99.2 percent responded.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Business Plus



‘Not all industries benefit equally from summer hour policies’

Summer hours boost morale and flexibility for workers



Chris Langer, (top right), co-founder of CMYK, a digital design agency, speaks with a staff member at their office in New York, Tuesday, June 25, 2024. Last year, Langer started hearing chatter about the four-day work week, so he decided to try it out during the summer. (AP)

Adapting schedules to fit the season, enriching work-life harmony,

NEW YORK, July 1, (AP): With summer having gotten off to a scorching start, workers across the country may be dreaming of a seaside escape or cutting out early to watch a movie in an air-conditioned theater.

For some, that can be a reality. Business owners have found that offering summer hours - a reduced schedule on Fridays, usually between Memorial Day and Labor Day - can be a way to boost employee morale. Workers are able to deal with summer childcare gaps, return to the office refreshed and feel like their job values them, owners say.

Reduced hours in the summer months can also enable smaller businesses to stand out to prospective employees in a competitive marketplace.

“When smaller employers have less resources and they want to

be more competitive with attracting and retaining quality talent, they want to be creative with the benefits that they offer. And one of the benefits they can offer would be flexible time in the summer,” said Rue Dooley, a knowledge advisor at the Society for Human Resources Management.

Special summer schedules don’t work for all types of industries, however. And it takes some trial-and-error to figure out the best option for each company.

Michael Wieder, co-founder of Lalo, which makes baby and toddler products, thought summer hours were a good fit for his 32 employees because so many of them - about 75% -- are parents.

His staffers work remotely and are spread across the U.S. and several other countries. Since founding the company in 2019, he tried various summer hour schemes,

such as offering every other Friday off, but the current system works the best, he said. On Fridays, the business closes at 1 p.m. local time. Staffers also get four-day weekends for Memorial Day, Labor Day and July 4th.

“We know that childcare is harder during the summer,” he said. “Summer is a time where people do like to take time with their family or take trips, and we want to be able to reward our employees with some additional time with their families.”

Greg Hakim, owner of Corporate Ink in Boston, which offers PR services to emerging tech companies, said he uses summer hours as both a recruitment and retention tool. He plays up summer hours in job descriptions and said the perk has helped him retain staff - particularly during the pandemic when others found it hard to keep workers.

“It’s just helped us retain our

team during the ‘Great Resignation,’ people are just like losing people left and right,” he said. “And I think we went 23 months without having someone resign. And that’s just such an important benefit and competitive advantage.”

Jim Christy co-owns Midwest Cards, a trading card retailer based in Columbus, Ohio, with about 30 employees. He started offering summer hours - Fridays off after 2 p.m. -- in 2021, a year after founding the company, as the pandemic upended normal ways of working.

The hardest part was figuring out what to offer people who worked in his brick-and-mortar shop, who also fill online orders, since they had to work normal hours to keep the store running. He decided to give logistics-side workers Friday afternoons off while the six staff who work on the brick-and-mortar side and do customer service for online

orders get off on Mondays, when the store was closed. Some workers can sign on remotely to answer customer queries if they want to, but it is not required.

“We couldn’t just apply one situation to everybody. So that that was a little challenging,” he said.

For some companies, summer hours work so well they’ve gone even further. Chris Langer, co-founder of digital marketing agency CMYK, has 14 staffers who all usually work in the company’s studio.

In 2014, rather than offer Friday afternoons off, he started offering entire Fridays off during the summer -- every other week. Then, last year, Langer started hearing chatter about the four-day work week, so he decided to try that out during the summer.

Communicating with the company’s tight knit staff, who have all worked together for years, makes the four-day week doable, Langer said.

“We’re small, so, it’s easy to have a discussion with everybody on like what’s real and how everyone’s feeling, if they’re feeling stressed out, can they get their work done,” he said.

If a big project is due, he might call people in on a Friday, but so far, that has only happened twice since CMYK instituted the four-day week.

“It is more stressful in terms of getting the work done throughout the week, but the day (off) was much more of a payoff,” he said.

Of course, summer hours don’t work for every company. Retail stores risk losing customers to big box stores or others that are open for more hours. And employees that are paid by the hour rather than set salaries can balk at getting paid for fewer hours.

Jennifer Johnson, owner of True Fashionistas, a consignment shop in Naples, Florida, thought she would try summer hours in 2022 because Naples is seasonal, with the busiest part of the year wrapping up around Easter. Beginning May 1, she changed her open hours from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. to 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. But the change didn’t work.

“We have a staff of 45 to 50 employees, and it cut their hours and that upset them, and rightfully so,” she said. “It also upset our customers who were used to our hours and wanted to shop.”

She abandoned the effort after two months and hasn’t tried again.

“I really believe that with anything consistency is the key,” she said. “The customers need to know they can rely on you to be open, you cannot always be changing your hours because that is a quick way to lose customers.”

‘Equity concerns raised as states introduce AI education initiatives’

AI literacy programs aim to close skills gap in workforce

Preparing today’s workforce for tomorrow’s technology,

HARTFORD, July 1, (AP): With many jobs expected to eventually rely on generative artificial intelligence, states are trying to help workers beef up their tech skills before they become outdated and get outfoxed by machines that are becoming increasingly smarter.

Connecticut is working to create what proponents believe will be the country’s first Citizens AI Academy, a free online repository of curated classes that users can take to learn basic skills or obtain a certificate needed for employment.

“This is a rapidly evolving area,” said state Democratic Sen. James Maroney. “So we need to all learn what are the best sources for staying current. How can we update our skills? Who can be trusted sources?”

Determining what skills are necessary in an AI world can be a challenge for state legislators given the fast-moving nature of the technology and differing opinions about what approach is best.

Gregory LaBlanc, professor of Finance, Strategy and Law at the Haas School of Business at Berkeley Law School in California, says workers should be taught how to use and manage generative AI rather than how the technology works, partly because computers will soon be

better able to perform certain tasks previously performed by humans.

“What we need is to lean into things that complement AI as opposed to learning to be really bad imitators of AI,” he said. “We need to figure out what is AI not good at and then teach those things. And those things are generally things like creativity, empathy, high level problem solving.”

He said historically people have not needed to understand technological advancements in order for them to succeed.

“When when electricity came along, we didn’t tell everybody that they needed to become electrical engineers,” LeBlanc said.

This year, at least four states - Connecticut, California, Mississippi and Maryland - proposed legislation that attempted to deal with AI in the classroom somehow. They ranged from Connecticut’s planned AI Academy, which was originally included in a wide-ranging AI regulation bill that failed but the concept is still being developed by state education officials, to proposed working groups that examine how AI can be incorporated safely in public schools. Such a bill died in the Mississippi legislature while the others remain in flux.

One bill in California would

require a state working group to consider incorporating AI literacy skills into math, science, history and social science curriculums.

“AI has the potential to positively impact the way we live, but only if we know how to use it, and use it responsibly,” said the bill’s author, Assemblymember Marc Berman, in a statement. “No matter their future profession, we must ensure that all students understand basic AI principles and applications, that they have the skills to recognize when AI is employed, and are aware of AI’s implications, limitations, and ethical considerations.”

The bill is backed by the California Chamber of Commerce. CalChamber Policy Advocate Ronak Daylami said in a statement that incorporating information into existing school curricula will “dispel the stigma and mystique of the technology, not only helping students become more discerning and intentional users and consumers of AI, but also better positioning future generations of workers to succeed in an AI-driven workforce and hopefully inspiring the next generation of computer scientists.”

While Connecticut’s planned AI Academy is expected to offer certificates to people who complete certain skills programs that might

be needed for careers, Maroney said the academy will also include the basics, from digital literacy to how to pose questions to a chatbot.

He said it’s important for people to have the skills to understand, evaluate and effectively interact with AI technologies, whether it’s a chatbot or machines that learn to identify problems and make decisions that mimic human decision-making.

“Most jobs are going to require some form of literacy,” Maroney said. “I think that if you aren’t learning how to use it, you’ll be at a disadvantage.”

A September 2023 study released by the job-search company Indeed found all U.S. jobs listed on the platform had skills that could be performed or augmented by generative AI. Nearly 20% of the jobs were considered “highly exposed,” which means the technology is considered good or excellent at 80% or more of the skills that were mentioned in the Indeed job listings.

Nearly 46% of the jobs on the platform were “moderately exposed,” which means the GenAI can perform 50% to 80% of the skills.

Maroney said he is concerned how that skills gap - coupled with a lack of access to high-speed in-

ternet, computers and smart phones in some underserved communities - will exacerbate the inequity problem.

A report released in February from McKinsey and Company, a global management consulting firm, projected that generative AI could increase household wealth in the U.S. by nearly \$500 billion by 2045, but it would also increase the wealth gap between Black and white households by \$43 billion annually.

Advocates have been working for years to narrow the nation’s digital skills gap, often focusing on the basics of computer literacy and improving access to reliable internet and devices, especially for people living in urban and rural areas.

The advent of AI brings additional challenges to that task, said Marvin Venay, chief external affairs and advocacy officer for the Massachusetts-based organization Bring Tech Home.

“Education must be included in order for this to really take off publicly ... in a manner which is going to give people the ability to eliminate their barriers,” he said of AI. “And it has to be able to explain to the most common individual why it is not only a useful tool, but why this tool will be something that can be trusted.”

editor’s choice



Film

LOS ANGELES, July 1, (AP): “A Quiet Place: Day One ” is making noise at the box office. The prequel earned an estimated \$53 million in its first weekend in North American theaters, according to studio estimates Sunday.

It’s both a franchise best and significantly more than expected. Going into the weekend, prerelease tracking had “Day One” pegged for a \$40 million debut, but audiences were clearly more enthusiastic to see the action-horror starring Lupita Nyong’o and Joseph Quinn and released by Paramount. The same could not be said for Kevin Costner’s “Horizon: An American Saga-Chapter 1,” which opened to \$11 million.

The “Quiet Place” victory wasn’t quite enough to snag the coveted first place spot on the charts, though. That honor again went to Disney and Pixar’s juggernaut “ Inside Out 2,” which added an estimated \$57.4 million in its third weekend in theaters, and crossed \$1 billion globally.

There’s a distant possibility that the places will shift when actuals are released Monday. But either way it’s good news for movie theaters in a summer season that’s finally heating up but still running far behind last year (down 19%) and pre-pandemic norms (down 36% from 2019).

“Inside Out 2” continues to be a box office phenomenon, the likes of which the industry hasn’t seen since “Barbie” almost a year ago. In just three weeks of release, it’s earned nearly \$470 million in North America and \$545.5 million internationally, bringing its global total to \$1.01 billion. The sequel is the only 2024 release to cross the billion dollar mark and it did it in just 19 days, a record for an animated film.

“The film’s stunning global success once again illustrates that audiences the world over will respond to compelling, entertaining movies, and that they want to enjoy them on the big screen,” said Michael O’Leary, president and CEO of the National Association of Theatre Owners, in a statement.

“A Quiet Place: Day One,” directed by Michael Sarnoski and rated PG-13, is also fast approaching an important threshold out of the gates. Including the \$45.5 million from international showings in 59 markets, the \$67 million production has already made \$98.5 million.

Franchise

“There’s a lot of love for the ‘A Quiet Place’ franchise,” said Chris Aronson, the head of domestic distribution for Paramount. “We listened to the fans who wanted to expand the universe.”

In a rare feat for a third film, it opened higher than both “A Quiet Place” and “ A Quiet Place: Part II”. John Krasinski, who wrote and directed the first two, continued serving as a producer.

“It’s one of those rare horror franchises that has generated incredible goodwill with audiences and critics alike,” said Paul Dergarabedian, the senior media analyst for Comscore.

Playing on 3,708 screens in the US and Canada, nearly 40% of its domestic earnings came from “premium screens” including IMAX and other large formats. It entered the marketplace with mostly positive reviews (84% on Rotten Tomatoes); Audiences gave it a B+ CinemaScore and four out of five stars on PostTrak.

“We put together a compelling package but also I think it shows people want to go to the movies,” Aronson said. “The marketplace really works when there are choices and there’s something for everybody.”

The start for “Horizon,” meanwhile, was sluggish. Though older audiences, the ones most likely to support a Western epic, don’t typically rush out to see films on opening weekend the way people often do for horrors and superheroes, the road ahead will not be easy: Reviews have not been great and it got an underwhelming B- CinemaScore.

The stakes are also a little different for “Horizon,” a \$100 million production that Costner financed on his own and partnered with Warner Bros. to distribute. It opened in 3,334 locations. A decades-old passion project, he mortgaged property in Santa Barbara, Calif. to finance it and exited “Yellowstone” to see it through. In a bold, unconventional strategy, “Chapter 2” arrives in theaters later this summer, on Aug. 16. He also has plans for two more movies.

“The western genre is one of those that is very specific,” Dergarabedian said. “It’s going to be about the long game.”

A quick glance at the top 10 shows that audiences are largely favoring franchises and “known commodities” over originals. “Bad Boys: Ride or Die” was right behind “Horizon” on the charts, and it’s been in theaters for four weeks already.

“Audiences in the summer want the tried and true, they want the familiar,” Dergarabedian said.

Variety



Will Smith, (center), performs during the BET Awards on Sunday, June 30, at the Peacock Theater in Los Angeles. (AP)

Music

Killer Mike wins the album of the year award

Usher honored, Smith returns at BET Awards

LOS ANGELES, July 1, (AP): Usher accepted the lifetime achievement award at the 2024 BET Awards - even if the superstar mused it might be a bit early.

The Grammy winner stayed on his feet as a parade of artists performed his hits - Childish Gambino kicked it off with “U Don’t Have to Call,” joined by Keke Palmer, who took the lead on “You Make Me Wanna...” Coco Jones appeared in the audience for a sultry rendition of “There Goes My Baby,” serenading Usher and his wife Jenn Goicoechea.

Summer Walker hit the stage for “Good Good,” Tinashe did “Nice & Slow,” Marsha Ambrosius tackled “Superstar” and Chlöe performed “Good Kisser.” Teyana Taylor and Victoria Monét teamed up for “Bad Girl,” mirroring Usher and Beyoncé’s choreography from their performance of the song. Latto brought the energy for “Yeah!” In some ways, the homage underscored the women that carried much of the night - dominating the performances.

After introductions by Terry Lewis and Jimmy Jam, Usher accepted the award from music executive L.A. Reid.

“Getting here has definitely not been easy, but it has been worth it,” Usher began his lengthy speech, reflecting on his career, which has spanned over three decades. He questioned the timing, saying, “I’m still running and gunning and I still love this (expletive) like I did when I was 8 years old,” he said.

Much of his speech couldn’t be heard to audiences at home because it was censored.

“I forgive each and every person who had anything to say negative about me because it only motivated me to be who I am,” he said at one point.

Earlier in the night, Will Smith stood in a circle of fire - joined by Friday and the gospel choir Sunday Service - to make the live debut of his latest single, “You Can Make It.”

“I don’t know who needs this right now,” Smith opened his set. “But I am here to tell you, you can make it.”

Mid-way through, Kirk Franklin joined, and then two rapped together. “Nobody gets an easy ride,” Smith, who is in the midst of his comeback from slapping Chris Rock at the Oscars two years ago, told the room.

“There is wisdom in that fire. Dance in your darkest moments.”

The forthcoming presidential election was a huge topic of conversation throughout the show. After Childish Gambino presented Killer Mike with the album of the year award for “Michael,” the rapper used his acceptance speech to address his Grammys arrest and voting.

“Technically, I was not supposed to be here. I was put in handcuffs, and I was marched out of this building. But I want to tell you, look at God. ‘Cause I’m back, baby. I’m back and I’m winning,” he said in his speech. Killer Mike was arrested at the Grammys earlier this year over a physical altercation he said was caused by an “over-zealous” security guard; he was not charged over the incident.

Speech

“They going to tell you who we vote for is important,” he continued his speech. “And it is who we vote for on the big stage. It’s important, but it’s more important you know who your city council person is, who your prosecutor is.”

Megan Thee Stallion opened the show by emerging from an egg - a metaphor for her a new musical rebirth - before diving into with an energetic medley of her new singles “Hiss” and “Boa.”

“BET, Where my girls at?” she said, shouting out Monét and Jones in the crowd before launching into “Where Them Girls At” - a track that’s been an immediate fan favorite since Friday’s release of her third studio album, “Megan.”

Taraji P. Henson hosted the show at the Peacock Theater in Los Angeles. Her opening monologue was a performance, Henson rapping “It’s about us,” in a loose parody of Kendrick Lamar’s “Not Like Us,” which he released in the midst of his reignited feud with Drake.

“No beef in here tonight,” she joked, “Can we say plant-based?”

Tyla, the Johannesburg , South African amapiano superstar, won two honors on the show, starting with best international act.

Later in the night, she’d take home the award for best new artist. “This is crazy,” she said. “I just want to dedicate this one to Africa.”

Monét, who earlier this year won the Grammy for best new artist, made her BET debut and set a high bar for performances, condensing a full set into a few mins with three costume changes and a pair of songs, “On My Mama” and “Alright.”

Then Sexy Red took the stage, performing her smooth bedroom ballad “U My Everything” before moving to another stage and a costume change - tackling “Get It Sexy” in front of an LED screen depicting the White House and dancers dressed like the Secret Service.

The show took a tonal shift when VanVan and Heiress Harris, two child rappers, their empowerment anthem “Be You” in a school room set. Harris is the daughter of rapper T.I. and singer Tiny Harris.

Best female R&B/pop artist went to SZA and best actress to Regina King, both of whom were not in attendance; the BET HER award went to Monét for “On My Mama.” She brought her mother up to accept it.

Country musician Tanner Adell brought her “Buckle Bunny” and her new song, “Cowboy Break My Heart.” GloRilla emerged from above, descending to join her dancers for “Yeah Glo!” and “Wanna Be” - the latter of which saw a surprise appearance from Megan Thee Stallion. Shaboozey kept the country coming with “A Bar Song (Tipsy)” and was joined by rapper J-Kwon, who appears on the track, creating an unexpected and rewarding collaboration across genres.

Lauryn Hill closed the night, beginning with “The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill” going into “Lost Ones,” before introducing her son YG Marley for his reggae tracks “Survival” and “Praise Jah In The Moonlight.” Best of all: Wyclef Jean appeared, and the trio - in front of a full-band - performed Fugees’ “Fu-Gee-La.” Pras, the third member of Fugees, was not present. The rapper, who was accused in multimillion-dollar political conspiracies spanning two presidencies, was convicted in April.

TIRANA, Albania: Renowned Albanian novelist **Ismail Kadare** has died after being rushed to a hospital in Tirana, his publishing editor said on Monday. He was 88.

Kadare has long been mentioned as a possible contender for the Nobel Literature Prize.

Onufri Publishing House editor **Bujar Hudhri** said the noted author died Monday morning. A nurse at the hospital, who spoke on condition of anonymity because she was not authorized to talk to the press, said he was taken to the emergency room after suffering a cardiac arrest.

Kadare became internationally recognized after his novel “The General of the Dead Army” was published in 1963 when Albania was still governed by the communist government of late dictator **Enver Hoxha**.

Kadare fled Albania to **France** in the fall of 1990, just a few months before the fall of the communist regime following student protests the previous December. He lived in **Paris** and had recently returned to **Tirana**. (AP)

□ □ □

LOS ANGELES: Killer Mike is expected to avoid charges over a physical altercation that led to his arrest at the Grammys earlier this year after the rapper recently completed community service.

The Los Angeles City Attorney’s Office said in a statement Thursday that Mike “successfully completed the office’s hearing process, including a community service requirement that was imposed.” The rapper was escorted in handcuffs by police at Crypto.com Arena in February and detained on suspicion of a misdemeanor offense.

Court documents shows Mike, whose real name is **Michael Render**, was never charged over the incident. His representatives did not immediately return a message seeking comment.

In some instances, Los Angeles city prosecutors can opt to resolve an incident without filing misdemeanor charges if a person completes certain conditions.

Mike said an “over-zealous” security guard contributed to the altercation that occurred in the joyous moments after he won

three awards at the Grammys’ Premiere Ceremony. (AP)

□ □ □

SHANGHAI: The sensational French musical “Mozart-L’opéra Rock” made its dazzling return at the Shanghai Culture Square on Thursday night.

The show’s new Shanghai run began with the premiere’s

curtain call, delighting audiences with its unique fusion of classical and contemporary music.

Since its inception in 2009, “Mozart-L’opéra Rock” has captivated audiences with its innovative portrayal of the life of the legendary composer **Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart**. The musical masterfully intertwines his classical compositions with original



Kadare



Mike

pop-rock music, creating a timeless narrative that resonated with audiences in **Paris, France**, at its debut and continues to enchant viewers worldwide.

In 2018, the musical made its Chinese mainland debut at Shanghai Culture Square, receiving a warm reception that led to a successful tour across Chinese cities like **Tianjin**

and **Xi’an**. The anticipation for its return to Shanghai is palpable, not only among the audience but also within the cast. In preparation for the new tour, the cast and crew have meticulously selected a mix of original cast members and fresh talents, aiming to elevate the viewing experience for audiences. (Xinhua)

People & Places

Film

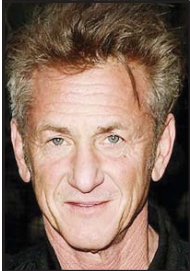
Johnson connection

Penn regains movie magic with ‘Daddio’

SANTA MONICA, Calif., July 1, (AP): **Sean Penn** says he hadn’t felt joy making a movie in 15 years. At the time, the actor couldn’t quite put his finger on why, but he at one point became so disillusioned that he resigned himself to the reality that his love for the craft may never return.

“I’d felt misery in making movies,” the two-time Oscar winner recalled during a recent interview. “At first you’re putting it off to, ‘Well, this script is a problem, and this director is a problem.’ But then I caught myself a few times working on great things with great people and just as miserable.”

That is until his neighbor, Dakota Johnson, knocked on his door with a script and an invitation to be her co-star. “No reservations at all. I felt like you would



Penn

Part of what Penn appreciated about the script was its characters’ unfiltered frankness, something he thinks is missing in a lot of contemporary art and broader societal conversations.

“I think we’re stripping whole generations of diversity of behavior and diversity of personality,” he said, conceding that he understands concerns about sensitivity, but only to a point. “Changing one’s vocabulary or altering it in certain circumstances becomes the full-time job and reflective thought is left behind.”

“Daddio” follows Girlie (Johnson), a woman who is returning to New York after a trip out of state. The film begins with her getting in a cab at JFK airport and ends with her getting dropped off at home. The 90 minutes in between are filled with ostensibly mundane but revealing conversations between Girlie and her cab driver, Clark (Penn).

Feature

“Daddio” is the feature debut of writer-director Christy Hall, who, perhaps unsurprisingly given that the film is driven by dialogue, has a background in theater. Hall began working on the script in 2014, inspired in part by her nostalgia for the reality series, “TaxiCab Confessions.”

Penn, like he does in many of his roles, brings a masculine energy that gives life to a brash and foul-mouthed cabbie, but one who ultimately proves to have a tenderness. Similarly, Johnson’s Girlie is a savvy, successful software engineer who appears to have it all together, but whose relationship with her father - or lack thereof - ultimately leads her to seek that love elsewhere.

“This movie is about the human condition, that there’s two sides to all of us. We’re always contending with our greater angels and our darkest demons. And I’m interested in characters that are always contending with both, because that’s actually the truth,” Hall said.

“Daddio” will undoubtedly test some viewers’ attention spans, but others will find themselves drawn in by the candid and compelling conversation between these strangers about sex, daddy issues and being the “other woman.”

Penn and Johnson have more in common than their neighborhood. Both are vocal about their frustrations with Hollywood and said this project was, coincidentally, a kind of epiphany for each of them.

“I just want to be really in love with what I’m working on and inspired,” Johnson said.

It’s only been a few months since she came off her press tour for “Madame Web,” which was a critical and commercial flop. Shortly after the film’s debut, Johnson affirmed criticism of the movie, saying she doesn’t anticipate doing another one like it.

“This notion of executives, not necessarily creative people, deciding what is going to work in an artistic sense doesn’t actually make sense to me at all,” she said. “I think that a lot of the studios, well streaming platforms mostly, are run by people who don’t even really like movies or watch them.”

Johnson said she “attacked” the script for “Daddio” when she first read it because she loved it so much, and spent years through TeaTime, her production company, working with Hall to get the film financed. After years in limbo and studio execs asking why people would find a movie so devoid of action and drama entertaining, it was eventually picked up by Sony Pictures Classics.

Johnson hopes to savor the joy she feels coming off of this film, and to remember it the next time she’s fighting for a project.

“I think that humans are craving human connection,” Johnson said. “Maybe it’s because of social media or what we have been sort of dealt in terms of entertainment in the last 5, 10 years. I think algorithms have really (expletive) us in that way. It doesn’t give us the content that I think we subconsciously crave.”

Also:

LOS ANGELES: When **Veronika Slowikowska** graduated from college in 2015, she did what conventional wisdom says aspiring actors should do: Work odd jobs to pay the bills while auditioning for commercials and background roles, hoping you eventually make it.

And although the Canadian actor and comedian has had a host of affirmations from **Hollywood** that have kept her going, including a recurring role in the FX series “What We Do in the Shadows,” Slowikowska inadvertently took a kind of back door to augment her fame when she began regularly posting filmed skits on social media last year.

It didn’t take long for her to go viral, and her videos have since caught the attention of fellow comedians like **Jack Black**, as well as other celebrities including **Justin Bieber**. “You don’t have quite the stamp of approval from the industry,” she said during a recent interview with The Associated Press as she reflected on the weirdness of internet fame.

But the attention has opened doors for the 28-year-old, including a spot in this year’s star-studded Netflix is a Joke Festival lineup in Los Angeles, which she did amid a live comedy show tour.

Often improvised and missing an obvious punch line, her videos encapsulate an absurdist, internet-saturated millennial and Gen Z humor that surely leave many viewers scratching their heads in confusion. But her chops and training as an actor and comedian, including from The Second City improv school in Toronto, set her apart from many content creators.



Laurn Hill performs during the BET Awards on Sunday, June 30, at the Peacock Theater in Los Angeles. (AP)



Usher accepts the Lifetime Achievement award during the BET Awards on Sunday, June 30, at the Peacock Theater in Los Angeles. Babyface, (rear left), and L.A. Reid, (rear center), look on. (AP)



Shaboozey, (left), and J-Kwon perform during the BET Awards. (AP)



Donald Glover performs during the BET Awards. (AP)



Latto performs during the BET Awards on Sunday. (AP)



Kirk Franklin performs during the BET Awards. (AP) — Details Page 11



English singer-songwriter Marsha Ambrosius poses for a portrait in New York on June 18, 2024. (AP)

Variety

VIENNA: A main UN building in Vienna -- the B Tower -- has been adorned with a huge mural depicting objectives of the 2030 sustainable development and the Summit of the Future Action Days, scheduled in **New York** Sept 20-21.

The famous mural painter, **Fintan Magee** (Australian), said in remarks to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that he intended through this work to shed light on the UN’s role in achieving peace worldwide.

This colossal artistic work coincides with the upcoming 45th anniversary of inaugurating the Vienna International Center (VIC) on August 23, 1979. (KUNA)

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MADRID: A combination of music, dance and drama of Wu Opera by a troupe from east **China’s Zhejiang Province** amazed an enthusiastic audience in the Spanish capital Madrid over the weekend.

Some 2,000 people attended two packed Wu Opera performances by China’s Zhejiang Wu Opera Research Center on Friday and Saturday. A lot of the audience praised the versatility, drama, agility, colors, and poetry of this local operatic genre, which has a history of more than 500 years.

“I found it very interesting. The

Music

Soulful ‘CASABLANCO’ revives career

Ambrosius, Dre collaboration delivers

NEW YORK, July 1, (AP): Marsha Ambrosius was done with the demands required of a successful R&B star, including the wear-and-tear of touring and fickle music industry politics. She was at peace working behind the scenes and writing for other artists. But Dr. Dre had a prescription to rejuvenate her on-stage desire.

“I didn’t want to do a project,” said the Grammy-nominated artist. “I’ve checked off my bucket list, everything that I’ve wanted to do. And Dre said, ‘I just want to keep you inspired. Let’s just create and see where this goes.’”

Their musical travels carried them to her new album, “CASABLANCO,” available now. The combination of Ambrosius’ writing and singing prowess with one of this generation’s greatest producers have made it a highly anticipated project after years of teasing.

“I haven’t had the opportunity to not only create, but have no limits, no boundaries. Dre was very much, ‘Whatever you want to do can be done,’” said the Britain-born singer who has writing and producing credits on every song. “It breathed new life into me creatively, knowing that I hadn’t really done everything I was capable of doing until we created this.”

The 11-track project is a sonically-opulent collage, masterfully fusing jazz and hip-hop - a compound only the Dr. could mix. “CASABLANCO” - a play off the luxurious lifestyle of the iconic “Casablanca” film and Moroccan city,

marks the singer’s fourth solo studio album, following 2018’s “NYLA.” (The “A” in the title was replaced by Dre to represent the grit of hip-hop sound.)

Entirely produced and mixed by “The Chronic” architect with support from Erik “Blu2th” Griggs, Focus... and Dem Jointz, the album was recorded during a two-week span in 2021 while much of the world was still held captive by the COVID-19 pandemic and as Dre recovered from a brain aneurysm. Signed to Dre’s Aftermath label via Interscope Records, the pair have a lengthy collaborative history, last officially joining forces on his 2015 album, “Compton.”

Creative

“CASABLANCO” separates itself from today’s trap-beat, atmospheric R&B in both sound and construction. Eight of the 11 songs are more than four minutes, with three tracks exceeding five minutes, including substantial instrumental breaks and creative, non-traditional verse and chorus arrangements. Jazzy instrumentation precede many of the tracks before switching to Dre’s unmistakable hip-hop sound, referring to the combination as “tux and Chucks.”

But the project, backed by a 27-piece live orchestra and filled with intricately woven samples from many artists including Michael Jackson, Duke Ellington, George Benson, The Wu-Tang Clan and Nas - and even Ambrosius herself - took more than a year for clear-

ances. Singles from “CASABLANCO” include “The Greatest.”

“Greedy,” and the “One Night Stand” which samples “All Night Long” by Mary Jane Girls.

“I was like, ‘what if it was ‘one night’ instead of ‘all night long?’” said Ambrosius. “It still goes to the reason why we created the record: It was like if we have one more album to make, what would that be? So, it felt like a one night-only moment which ultimately could turn into forever. And mine did.”

While “Best I Could Find” is reminiscent of Stevie Wonder’s “Innervisions,” “Cloudy With A Chance Of ...Real” is a dramatic longing for her lover, as she sings, “Feels like this is somebody else’s, living this pain right through me/And I carry the weight of this rain falling down, and it’s oh so lonely.”

Referring to the song written during the pandemic, she said: “That was that fog, that haze, that uncertainty, that: What’s going to happen if I can’t love you the way I want to love you, or you’re unwilling to receive what my love looks like because of where we are in the world right now.”

Despite a solid solo career with songs like “Far Away” and “Late Nights & Early Mornings,” singing hooks for major artists like Kanye West, Nas and Nipsey Hussle, and writing for H.E.R. and Alicia Keys, many fans still associate her with the duo Floetry.



Mortensen



Magee

Mortensen, a three-time nominee for the Academy Award for best actor, received the Festival President’s Award at Friday’s opening ceremony and present the second movie he directed, “The Dead Don’t Hurt.”

The Karlovy Vary International Film Festival runs through July 6. The grand jury, which includes Australian Oscar-winning actor **Geoffrey Rush**, will consider 12 movies for the top prize, the Crystal Globe. (AP)

combination of music is so unfamiliar to us: the acrobatics, the gestures, and the movements. I thought it was very colorful, very unique,” **Patricia Garcia**, a music teacher, told Xinhua after watching the show on Saturday. (Xinhua)

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PRAGUE: An international film festival in the western Czech resort city of **Karlovy Vary** kicked off with an honor for US actor and director **Viggo Mortensen**.

Comprehensive medical tests urged before weight loss injections

Expert warns on risks of self-administering Ozempic and Mounjaro

KUWAIT CITY, July 1: In recent years, the popularity of weight loss drugs such as "Ozempic" and "Mounjaro" has sparked what is now dubbed the "injection fashion" trend. These medications, readily available online and through medical pharmacies, have led some individuals to self-administer them without proper medical guidance, relying solely on package recommendations or online advice for desired results, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Dr. Muhammad Ibrahim, a consultant bariatric surgeon at Wara Hospital, cautions that while these injections generally have a good safety profile and rare health complications, they are potent medical

treatments with potential side effects and risks if not managed under medical supervision.

"It's crucial for anyone considering these injections to consult a specialized doctor rather than risk self-administration. These medications are typically prescribed for individuals with overweight or mild obesity, but comprehensive health evaluations are



Dr. Ibrahim

essential beforehand," Dr. Ibrahim emphasized in an interview with Al-Qabas.

Before initiating treatment with injections like "Mounjaro" or "Ozempic," Dr. Ibrahim stresses the necessity of undergoing several medical tests, including comprehensive blood tests, liver function evaluations, and assessments for thyroid and vitamin deficiencies. Routine monitoring every six months is also advised to manage any emerging health issues and nutritional deficiencies.

Understanding Ozempic vs. Mounjaro

Dr. Ibrahim delineates the distinctions between "Ozempic" and

"Mounjaro" injections:

Mounjaro injection: Contains GLP-1 and GIP hormones, impacting blood sugar levels and appetite suppression.

Ozempic injection: Contains GLP-1, primarily regulating insulin secretion and aiding in blood sugar control, with additional benefits for cardiovascular health.

Efficacy and costs

In terms of effectiveness, "Mounjaro" injections are expected to induce a more pronounced weight loss of 20-25% compared to 15-20% with "Ozempic," albeit at a higher cost ranging from 150 to 300 dinars monthly for "Mongaro" versus 35 to 50 dinars for "Ozempic."

Potential side effects and contraindications

Both types of injections may cause nausea, fatigue, and gastrointestinal discomfort. Rare complications include pancreatitis, gallstones, severe allergic reactions, and depression, necessitating immediate medical attention.

Long-term commitment and comparisons with bariatric surgery

Dr. Ibrahim underscores the importance of long-term adherence to injection regimens for sustained weight management. While injections are suitable for modest weight loss goals, bariatric surgery remains a more effective and enduring option for severe

obesity cases, yielding weight loss of 35-50% with minimal risks.

"Injections are recommended for overweight individuals, whereas surgical interventions offer faster and more substantial weight loss for severe obesity," Dr. Ibrahim clarified. He highlighted the safety and efficacy of modern bariatric procedures, making them viable even for individuals with chronic conditions or older adults.

As the debate between injections and surgery continues, Dr. Ibrahim advocates for informed decision-making guided by individual health needs and goals, ensuring sustainable weight management and overall well-being.

Climate change heating weather

Extreme heat waves across globe are not 'just summer'

By Mathew Barlow and Jeffrey Basara
UMass Lowell

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

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The heat wave that left more than 100 million people sweating across the eastern US in June 2024 hit so fast and was so extreme that forecasters warned a flash drought could follow across wide parts of the region.

Prolonged high temperatures can quickly dry soils, triggering a rapid onset drought that can affect agriculture, water resources and energy supplies. Many regions under the June heat dome quickly developed abnormally dry conditions.

The human impacts of the heat wave have also been widespread. In Ohio and Pennsylvania, emergency room visits for heat-related illnesses surged. Several Massachusetts schools without air conditioning closed to protect kids and teachers. In New York and New Jersey, electric wires sagged in the heat, shutting down trains into and out of New York City and leaving commuters stranded.

Outbreak

We study weather patterns involving heat. The June 2024 heat wave was unusually early and long-lasting compared with typical patterns for the Northeast US.

It was caused by a large high-pressure system called a heat dome that extended from the ground more than 10 miles up through the atmosphere. A heat dome is both a cause and an effect of extreme heat. Very large and strong heat domes, like the Northeast event - which reached higher into the atmosphere than any previous June event - have a greater potential for higher temperatures impacting more people.

It was also part of a global outbreak of early season heat that put lives at risk in many countries around the world.

Record heat has hit several countries across the Americas, Europe and Asia in 2024. In Mexico and Central America, weeks of persistent heat, with temperatures as high as 125 degrees Fahrenheit (51.8 Celsius), combined with prolonged drought have led to severe water shortages and dozens of deaths.

Extreme heat turned into tragedy in Saudi Arabia as over 1,000 people on the Hajj, a Muslim pilgrimage to Makkah, collapsed and died. Temperatures reached 125 F (51.8 C) at the Grand Mosque in Makkah on June 17.

In Greece, where temperatures were over 100 F (38 C) for several

straight days in June, at least several tourists died or were feared dead after going hiking in dangerous heat and humidity.

India also faced temperatures around 120 F (49 C) for days in April and May that affected millions of people, many of them without air conditioning.

Although heat waves are a natural part of the climate, the severity and extent of the heat waves so far this year are not "just summer."

A scientific assessment of the US heat wave estimates that heat this severe and long-lasting was two to four times more likely to occur today because of human-caused climate change than it would have been without it. This conclusion is consistent with the rapid increase over the past several decades in the number of US heat waves and their occurrence outside the peak of summer.

Vulnerable

These record heat waves are happening in a climate that's globally about 2.2 F (1.2 C) warmer than it was before the industrial revolution, when humans began releasing large amounts of greenhouse gas emissions that warm the climate.

While a temperature difference of a degree or two when you walk into a different room might not even be noticeable, even fractions of a degree make a large difference in the global climate.

At the peak of the last ice age, some 20,000 years ago, when the Northeast US was under thousands of feet of ice, the globally averaged temperature was only 10.8 F (6 C) cooler than now. So, it is not surprising that 2.2 F (1.2 C) of warming so far is already rapidly changing the climate.

Countries promised in 2015 as part of the Paris Agreement to keep warming well under 2 C, but current government policies around the world won't meet those goals. Temperatures are on pace to continue rising, with the increase likely to more than double again by the end of the century.

While this summer is likely to be one of the hottest on record, it is important to realize that it may also be one of the coldest summers of the future.

For populations that are especially vulnerable to heat, including young children, older adults and outdoor workers, the risks are even higher. People in lower-income neighborhoods where air conditioning may be unaffordable and renters who often don't have the same protections for cooling as heating will face increasingly dangerous conditions. (AP)



Japan's H3 rocket with satellite Daichi 4 lifts off the launch pad in Tanegashima Space Center, Tanegashima, Kagoshima prefecture, southern Japan, Monday, July 1. (AP)

China's FY-3F begins operations

Japan launches advanced Earth observation satellite

TOKYO, July 1, (AP): Japan successfully deployed an upgraded Earth observation satellite for disaster response and security after it was launched on a new flagship H3 rocket Monday.

The H3 No. 3 rocket lifted off from the Tanegashima Space Center on a southwestern Japanese island and released its payload about 16 minutes later, putting it into a targeted orbit as planned, the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency, or JAXA, said during a livestream.

The Advanced Land Observation Satellite, or ALOS-4, is tasked primarily with Earth observation and data collection for disaster response and mapping, including for volcanic and seismic activity and other land movements. It's also capable of monitoring military activity, such as missile launches, with an infrared sensor developed by the Defense Ministry.

JAXA President Hiroshi Yamakawa praised Monday's successful launch as "a big first step" toward ensuring Japan's access to space and international competitiveness. "I believe the two successful flights in a row would help gain trust from in and outside the country."

The ALOS-4 is a successor to the current ALOS-2 and can observe a much wider area. Japan will operate both for the time being.

The launch was the third of the H3 system, after the successful one on Feb 17, and the shocking failed debut flight a year earlier when the rocket had to be destroyed with its payload - a satellite that was supposed to be the ALOS-3.

Japan sees a stable, commercially competitive space transport capability as key to its space program and national security.

JAXA and its main contractor Mitsubishi Heavy Industries have been developing the H3 launch system as a successor to its current mainstay, H-2A, which is set to retire after two more flights. MHI will eventually take over H3 production and launches from JAXA and hopes to make it commercially viable by cutting the launch cost to about half of the H-2A.

Also:

BEIJING: The Fengyun-3F (FY-3F) satellite officially commenced operational services on Monday following ground and application system in-orbit testing reviews and operational trial runs, according to its ground application system operator, China Meteorological Administration (CMA).

The FY-3F satellite will take over the in-orbit duties of the FY-3C satellite and provide services in areas such as weather forecasting, climate prediction, disaster monitoring, and environmental monitoring.

Equipped with 10 operational instruments, the satellite is able to conduct full-spectrum, high-spectral, and quantitative observations. These capabilities significantly enhance the precision of observing global atmospheric and surface environmental conditions, including atmospheric temperature and humidity profile information, trace gases, and Earth's radiation balance.

Warning labels spark debate

Over 3-hr social media use doubles mental health risk

By Emily Hemendinger

University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus

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

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Amid growing concerns over the effects of social media on teen mental health, on June 17, 2024, US Surgeon General Vivek Murthy called for warning labels to be added to social media platforms, similar to surgeon general warnings on cigarettes and alcohol.

Murthy's warning cited research showing that teens who use more than three hours of social media a day face double the risk of mental health problems.

This comes a year after Murthy issued a major public advisory over the links between social media and youth mental health.

As a specialist in eating disorders and anxiety, I regularly work with clients who experience eating disorder symptoms, self-esteem issues and anxiety related to social media.

I also have firsthand experience with this topic: I am 16 years post-recovery from an eating disorder, and as a teenager, I grew up when people were beginning to widely use social media. In my view, the impact of social media on mental health, especially on diet and exercise patterns, cannot simply be mitigated with a warning label. However, it is an important starting point for raising awareness of the harms of social media.

Warnings

Experts have long suspected that social media may be playing a role in the growing mental health crisis in young people. However, the surgeon general's 2023 warning was one of the first government warnings supported by robust research.

Critics of the call for warning labels argue that it oversimplifies a complex issue and that limiting social media access in any way would do more harm than good. Some supporters feel that it is a step in the right direction and far less restrictive than trying to start with more widespread privacy regulations.

And so far, calls for action over regulating social media have fallen flat.

Researchers are limited to only studying associations, which make causal links difficult to establish. But there are numerous studies that do show a relationship between viewing media and worsened self-esteem, body image and mental health.

Additionally, there is scientific data that has shown the effectiveness of including warning labels to deter use of substances such as tobacco and alcohol.

However, the strategy of warning labels has been used for eating disorder content and digitally altered images on the internet, with mixed results. These studies showed that the warning labels do not reduce the negative impact of the media on body image. Some of the research even found that the warning labels might increase body and appearance comparisons, which are thought to be key reasons why social media can be harmful to self-esteem.

Research shows that images of beauty as depicted in movies, social media, television and magazines can lead to mental illness, issues with disordered eating and body image dissatisfaction.

Body dissatisfaction among children and adolescents is commonplace and has been linked to decreased quality of life, worsened mood and unhealthy eating habits.

Development

The mental health of adolescents and teens has been declining for the past decade, and the COVID-19 pandemic contributed to worsening youth mental health and brought it into the spotlight. As the mental health crisis surges, researchers have been taking a close look at the role of social media in these increasing mental health concerns.

About 95% of children and adolescents in the U.S. between the ages of 10 and 17 are using social media almost constantly. A 2023 study found that teens spend about five hours per day on social media.

Research has shown that social media can be beneficial for finding community support. However, studies have also shown that the use of social media contributes to social comparisons, unrealistic expectations and negative mental health effects.

In addition, those who have preexisting mental health conditions tend to spend more time on social media. People in that category are more likely to self-objectify and internalize the thin body ideal. Women and people with preexisting body image concerns are more likely than others to feel worse about their bodies and themselves after they spend time on social media.

A recent review found that, as with mass media, the use of social media is a risk factor for the development of an eating disorder, body image dissatisfaction and disordered eating. In this review, social media use was shown to contribute to negative self-esteem, social comparisons, decreased emotional regulation and idealized self-presentation that negatively influenced body image. (AP)

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Cam Davis celebrates winning the Rocket Mortgage Classic golf tournament at Detroit Country Club in Detroit. (AP)

Akshay Bhatia 3-putts 18th hole

Davis wins Rocket Mortgage Classic for 2nd time

DETROIT, July 1, (AP): Cam Davis was preparing for a playoff when Akshay Bhatia’s 4-foot putt started left, went right, touched the edge of the cup and rolled away.

Joy and pain.

Davis won the Rocket Mortgage Classic for the second time, closing

GOLF

with a 2-under 70 on Sunday that gave him a one-shot victory when Bhatia three-putted from 32 feet on the final hole.

“I wouldn’t wish what happened to Akshay on anyone,” Davis said. “But I’ve done a lot of grinding to kind of get myself out of a hole and just all of a sudden to do that, it’s pretty good.”

Davis, who won his only other

PGA Tour title three years ago at Detroit Golf Club, had not finished better than 38th in sixth starts since he tied for 12th at the Masters in April, his best result of the season.

“I started working with a hypnotherapist a few weeks ago just to take another angle into trying to get myself sorted out,” he said. “I saw a little bit of a spark last week, but nothing to show this (was) coming.”

“This is crazy.”

The 29-year-old Australian pulled into a tie with Bhatia with a birdie on the par-5 17th hole.

That proved to be enough when the left-handed Bhatia, who uses a long putter, watched his short par attempt on the 18th miss low and right for his first three-putt of the week.

“Just a little bit of nerves, honestly,” Bhatia said. “I’m human.”

Davis finished at 18-under 270 on a day of missed opportunities for

Egypt on top of medal table

Pentathlon Junior World Championships conclude

ALEXANDRIA, Egypt, July 1, (Xinhua): France spoiled Egypt’s farewell party as Louison Cazaly and Diego Lavillat won gold in the Mixed Relay on the final day of the Union Internationale de Pentathlon Moderne (UIPM) 2024 Pentathlon Junior World Championships held in Alexandria, Egypt.

Although France managed to snatch the gold medal in the Mixed Relay, Egypt finished on top of the competition medal table, thanks to three gold medals, a silver, and two bronze.

Cazaly and Lavillat trailed behind Farida Khalil and Mazen Shaban of Egypt in the first three disciplines, but a strong performance in the laser run secured them the world title.

Poor shooting from the Egyptians in the final lap allowed Esther Fernandez Donda and Tim Leh of Germany to overtake them for silver, leaving the host nation with bronze.

Like last year’s competition, South Korea missed out on a Mixed Relay medal, finishing 4th, while Hungary came 5th and Italy 6th.

This victory capped a successful week for Cazaly, who also secured her second gold as part of the Women’s Team champions 24 hours earlier.

On Saturday, Pentathlon athletes Individual Neutral Athlete Viktoriia Sazonova and Moutaz Mohamed of Egypt made lifetime memories by winning their first junior individual gold medals in the Junior World Championships.



Liu Zhenfeng (left) of China competes in obstacle race during the men’s final of the UIPM 2024 Pentathlon Junior World Championships in Alexandria, Egypt. (Xinhua)

Sazonova and 13-year-old sensation Farida Khalil of Egypt set world records on their way to a duel at the top of the Women’s Final leaderboard. Sazonova broke the Junior Fencing record with 30 victories, while Khalil set a new Obstacle record and became the youngest medallist in Junior World Championships history, taking bronze. Individual Neutral Athlete Elizaveta Skudnyakova secured silver behind her teammate.

France won the Women’s Team gold medal, with three of their athletes finishing in the top 20, ahead of silver medallists Switzerland and bronze medallists Poland.

In the men’s competition, Mohamed of Egypt earned 1,544 points to win gold. He earned six bonus points in his second-place Fencing performance and maintained a strong position in swimming, with obstacle being his only discipline outside the top five. Egypt’s consistent high performance throughout the day secured them the Men’s Team gold, with silver medallists Ukraine and bronze medallists Germany trailing behind.

“I’m really happy to win a gold medal in my home country in the presence of my family,” Mohamed told Xinhua after the contest. He noted that the competition was

challenging due to the high caliber of athletes, adding that he prepared well to win a medal in this championship.

Meanwhile, Sherif El-Erian, UIPM Vice President and Head of the Egyptian Modern Pentathlon Federation, praised the hard work of Egyptian athletes in securing the maximum number of medals in this championship. “We have also exerted great efforts to host this championship and are glad that the contest was a great success... we are now going to prepare for the Paris 2024 Olympics with hopes and determination to get more medals,” he told Xinhua.

Asian Junior Championships

Young Chinese shuttler dies after collapsing on the court

YOGYAKARTA, Indonesia, July 1, (AP): A 17-year-old Chinese player died after collapsing on court during an Asian tournament in Indonesia’s Yogyakarta province, Indonesia’s Badminton Association said Monday.

Zhang Zhijie was playing against Kazuma Kawano of Japan at the Badminton Asia Junior Championships on Sunday when he collapsed and had seizures.

Badminton officials said medical teams treated Zhang on court and he was rushed

by ambulance to a nearby hospital. He was later taken to the Dr. Sardjito General Hospital, a main government hospital in Yogyakarta.

“The conclusion of the examination and treatment of the victim at both hospitals showed the same results, namely that the victim experienced sudden cardiac arrest,” Broto Happy, spokesperson of Badminton Association of Indonesia, told reporters at a news conference.

Badminton players and officials in Yogyakarta paid tribute to Zhang by holding a minute of silence on the court Monday morning before the quarterfinals.

Badminton Asia said it was “immensely saddened” and expressed its condolences to Zhang’s parents and family, adding: “The world of badminton has lost a talented player.”

The Chinese Badminton Association offered its condolences and support to Zhang’s family, and described him as a player who “loved badminton and was an outstanding athlete of the national youth badminton team.”

The Chinese association said its team’s leader, coach, doctor, translator and the tournament medical staff acted quickly after Zhang appeared to faint on the court.

“We feel deeply distressed over the unfortunate death of Zhang Zhijie from a sudden illness while competing in an international competition,” the statement said. “We express our sincere gratitude to all sectors of the society for the concern and help given to Zhang Zhijie. We will do our best to provide help to Zhang Zhijie’s family.”



In this photo released by Indonesian Badminton Association (PBSI), Chinese badminton players and officials observe a moment of silence for their compatriot Zhang Zhi Jie who died after collapsing while playing at Asia Junior Championships Sunday night, at Amongrogo Stadium in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. (AP)

Spurs bag CP3, sources say

George heading to 76ers, Caldwell-Pope to Magic

WASHINGTON, July 1, (AP): Paul George is going back to the Eastern Conference, and surely has made Joel Embiid very happy in the process.

George will sign a four-year, \$212 million contract with the Philadelphia 76ers, a person with knowledge of the move told The Associated Press early Monday. The person spoke on condition of anonymity because the deal cannot be finalized until July 6 by NBA rule.

The move was finalized a few hours into the start of NBA free agency, but Embiid - Philadelphia’s center and the 2022-23 NBA MVP - began planting the seeds for this at least a couple weeks ago. He and

George made a television appearance together during the NBA Finals, one where the Philadelphia center suggested he’d like to see the veteran wing join him with the 76ers.

And it happened. The Los Angeles Clippers, now George’s former team, said earlier Sunday night that he would not be back with them going forward - and from there, it was just a matter of the nine-time All-Star working out terms with the 76ers.

“Paul has informed us that he is signing his next contract with another team,” the Clippers said in a release.

The team added: “We negotiated for months with

Paul and his representative on a contract that would make sense for both sides, and we were left far apart. The gap was significant. We understand and respect Paul’s decision to look elsewhere for his next contract.”

George had a \$48.8 million option for this coming season but did not exercise it, entering free agency - which opened Sunday night - instead. It was believed there was a chance that George and the Clippers could have still gotten something done, but the team made clear that those hopes are gone.

“We will miss Paul,” the Clippers said.

At 34, George is still elite - averaging 22.6 points this past season, the ninth consecutive season in which he has averaged at least 20 points per game.

Meanwhile, James Harden is staying with the Clippers on a two-year contract that includes a player option, a person with knowledge of that decision told AP earlier Sunday.

Harden’s deal - which could be worth up to \$70 million if he opts into 2025-26 - was agreed upon in principle before free agency technically started, said the person who spoke to AP on condition of anonymity because neither Harden nor the Clippers had announced the agreement.

Harden, a 10-time NBA All-Star, averaged 16.6 points and 8.5 assists last season for the Clippers, who will move into their new In-

tuit Dome home when this coming season starts.

Elsewhere, veteran guard Chris Paul is going to team up with rookie of the year Victor Wembanyama in San Antonio on a one-year deal, a person with knowledge of that agreement said.

Paul was waived earlier Sunday by the Golden State Warriors, who would have had to pay him \$30 million for the coming season otherwise. ESPN reported the Spurs will pay Paul around \$11 million. The 39-year-old Paul averaged 9.2 points and 6.8 assists in 58 games with the Warriors last season.

And Kentavious Caldwell-Pope is going to bring his championship experience to the Orlando Magic, a team that made a big jump this past season and now is trying to become an even stronger contender in the East.

Caldwell-Pope - a two-time champion guard - was finalizing a three-year, \$66 million deal with the Magic, a person with knowledge of the decision said. The person spoke on condition of anonymity to AP because the deal cannot be finalized until the league’s offseason moratorium is lifted on July 6.

It’s a big get for the rising Magic, who won 47 games - their most in 13 years - and got back to the playoffs this past season. Caldwell-Pope was part of title-winning teams with the Los Angeles Lakers in 2020 and the Denver Nuggets in 2023. He averaged 10.1 points for the Nuggets this past season while shooting nearly 41% from 3-point range.

Logano wins at Nashville in record 5th OT for 1st NASCAR Cup Series victory of year

LEBANON, July 1, (AP): Joey Logano won the rain-delayed race at Nashville Superspeedway in a NASCAR Cup Series-record fifth overtime Sunday night, stretching his fuel enough to hold off a group of pursuers at the finish line.

Logano held off a charge by Tyler Reddick, then beat Zane Smith, Reddick, Ryan Preece and Chris Buescher to the line in the race that started nearly six hours earlier and went 31 laps longer than the 300 that were scheduled.

The fuel light in Logano’s Ford came on going into Turn 3, and Logano - who ran the last 110 laps without stopping on the 1.33-mile concrete oval - said it stumbled across the line.

“It’s a much-needed win for sure,” a smiling and relieved Logano said of about his first victory this year and 33rd of his career.

If the finish wasn’t thrilling enough, the mayhem continued as Logano yelled and celebrated with just enough gas left for a burnout. Chase Briscoe ran out of fuel. Daniel Suarez and Martin Truex Jr. made contact, spinning Truex into the wall. Chase Elliott spun off Turn 4 and into the grass.

Smith wasn’t happy at finishing second, though he said he wouldn’t do anything different after the rookie’s best Cup finish.

“I felt like I chose the right lane, and it’s crazy how much different these cars drive with cleaner air,” Smith said. “Just proud of our strategy there.”

Reddick was upset with himself on pit road, convinced he let his second victory of the year slip through his fingers.

“All the good cars ran out of fuel, and we were in position to pass the 22,” Reddick said about Logano. “He hadn’t been good all day long, and I didn’t get the job done.”

Denny Hamlin, who started on the pole and took the lead with seven laps left in regulation, was two laps from winning when Austin Cindric’s crash set up the chaotic finish. Hamlin finished 12th after pitting in overtime to avoid running out of fuel.

“It certainly stinks,” Hamlin said.

A thunderstorm that forced NASCAR to halt the race at 137 laps for 1 hour, 21 minutes washed off the traction that had built up. As a result, several cars got loose and crashed into the wall or slid into the grass.

That helped set up a thrilling race after Christopher Bell won the first two stages before crashing.

Hamlin took the lead going high into Turn 1, and Chastain went to the apron trying to hold him off and wobbled. That was enough for Hamlin to pass Chastain’s Chevrolet in what turned out to be only the first late lead change of a race that seemed like it would never end with repeated crashes on restarts.

“I had a shot to win,” said Chastain, who led 45 laps while

seeking his first win since the 2023 season finale at Phoenix.

Cindric set up the repeating overtimes when he made contact with Noah Gragson with two laps left. On the restart, points leader Kyle Larson caught the apron and slid with the right corner of his Chevrolet sending Chastain into the wall in Turn 1 for the 12th caution.

Larson then ran out of gas on another restart, causing Kyle Busch to crash into him. That forced Hamlin to go to the pits for more gas, scrambling the field for another try at a finish.

Bell, who won last week at New Hampshire, won the first two stages before hitting the wall on lap 228.

“Just put myself in a bad spot and lost my cool,” Bell said. “Got back in traffic with all those yellow flags. Had a bad restart.”

Drivers tried to run as many laps as possible before an incoming thunderstorm on a steamy, humid Tennessee afternoon.

Lightning brought out the red flag, stopping the race after 137 laps with clouds in Turn 4 so heavy that it looked like a funnel was trying to form before heavy rain. The storm moved through quickly and dryers hit the track about 25 minutes after racing stopped.

Barely a half-hour after the race stopped, a rainbow could be seen. NASCAR sent drivers back to their cars about 70 minutes after the red flag, and the stoppage lasted 81 minutes with 143 laps remaining.


As cars hit the track under yellow, NASCAR sent Cindric to the rear as a penalty for his crew having a fan on the pit wall pointed at his car during the red flag that was ruled as possibly cooling the vehicle for an extra edge.

John Hunter Nemechek raced to his second Xfinity Series victory of the year Saturday, then made his first Cup start at this track Sunday. The experience didn’t carry over. Nemechek spun into the grass off Turn 4 of lap 117 to bring out the second caution of the race.

The Chicago street race is July 7.



Joey Logano celebrates after winning a NASCAR Cup Series auto race in Gladeville, Tenn. (AP)



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Sabalenka and Azarenka withdraw with injuries

Alcaraz opens Wimbledon with straight-set victory

Venezuela stay perfect

WIMBLEDON, England, July 1, (AP): Defending champion Carlos Alcaraz had goosebumps walking onto Centre Court before his opening match at Wimbledon on Monday, a 7-6 (3), 7-5, 6-2 win over qualifier Mark Lajal.

Lajal proved to be something of a speedbump for Alcaraz, who acknowledged that his 269th-ranked Estonian opponent “surprised me a little bit” on Day 1 at the All England Club.

Alcaraz, who won his third major championship at the French Open three weeks ago, defeated Novak Djokovic in last year’s final on the grass at Wimbledon but said he was still nervous before Monday’s match.

“When I walk into the court, I got goosebumps. I remembered last year. It was a great feeling,” the 21-year-old Spaniard said in his on-court interview. “But I try not to think about it. It’s a new year - totally different tournament. I have to be focused on my game just to play at the same level as last year if I want to repeat the same (success) as last year.”

Earlier, Aryna Sabalenka and Victoria Azarenka both pulled out of the tournament because of respective shoulder injuries.

Sabalenka, a two-time Australian Open champion, said she was “heartbroken” to announce her withdrawal after it became clear in a practice session that she wasn’t ready.

The No. 3 seed was seen as top contender at the All England Club, which has had seven different women win the title in the last seven years.

Azarenka is also a two-time champion at Melbourne Park.

Ninth-seeded Maria Sakkari was among the early winners on Monday, and said after beating McCartney Kessler 6-3, 6-1 that the women’s draw is wide open.

“We could name like 20, 25 girls

that could win the tournament right now,” Sakkari said.

Seventh-seeded Jasmine Paolini, the French Open runner-up last month, got past the first round at Wimbledon for the first time on her fourth try. The Italian beat Sara Sorribes Tormo 7-5, 6-3.

On the men’s side, fifth-seeded Daniil Medvedev beat Aleksander Kovacevic 6-3, 6-4, 6-2, and eighth-seeded Casper Ruud defeated Alex Bolt 7-6 (2), 6-4, 6-4. Unseeded Canadian Denis Shapovalov eliminated No. 19 Nicolas Jarry 6-1, 7-5, 6-4.

Also Monday, former Grand Slam champions Coco Gauff and Emma Raducanu were set to play matches at Centre Court.

Raducanu won the 2021 U.S. Open at age 18, but she has been dealing with various injuries since then. Her scheduled opponent - 22nd-seeded Ekaterina Alexandrova - withdrew Monday because of illness. Alexandrova was replaced by Renata Zarazua, a “lucky loser” from the qualifying tournament.

Gauff, who won the U.S. Open last

TENNIS

September, closes out the day’s schedule in the main stadium against Caroline Dolehide in an all-American matchup.

Meanwhile, Novak Djokovic’s right knee has responded so well after surgery to repair a torn meniscus less than a month ago that he said Saturday he considers himself ready to contend at Wimbledon, where he has won seven of his 24 Grand Slam trophies.

And, no, he will not adjust how he plays to protect the knee.

“I don’t see myself holding back. I don’t see myself calculating or being a bit more cautious in the movement. I don’t see that happening,” Djokovic said at a pre-tournament news conference Saturday. “Really, I go all in. I go full out. I mean, that’s the way I’ve been playing my entire career.”

When a reporter asked Djokovic why he would risk getting back on court at all so soon after the surgery, the player said his wife posed the very same question.

Djokovic, who has yet to reach a final at any event in 2024, described what he called an “incredible desire to play, just to compete” and added that Wimbledon, in particular, has held a special place in his heart since he was a kid.

So, Djokovic continued, merely “the thought of me missing Wimbledon was just not correct; I didn’t want to deal with that.”



Mexico's Johan Vazquez, (left), and Ecuador's Kevin Rodriguez go for a header during a Copa America Group B soccer match in Glendale, Ariz. (AP)

Ecuador reach last eight, Mexico eliminated

Cockrell settles for silver

McLaughlin-Levrone breaks world 400m hurdles record again at US Olympic trials

EUGENE, July 1, (AP): McLaughlin-Levrone lowered her world record once again, running the 400-meter hurdles in 50.65 seconds Sunday to win the U.S. Olympic trials.

In only her fourth long hurdles race of the season, the 24-year-old defending Olympic champion cleared all 10 barriers with ease, then went on a dead sprint to the line to break the record for the fifth time. Four of those marks have now come on track at University of Oregon’s Hayward Field.

She held her hand over her mouth and stared in amazement when she saw the time come up. The mark was .03 seconds better than her run at Hayward in the 2022 world championships.

“My husband asked me yesterday, ‘What do you think you can do?’ and I told him ‘I don’t know,’” McLaughlin-Levrone said in an interview over the stadium PA system. “Then today, I crossed the line and I’m like, ‘Oh, snap. I’m blessed and happy to be here.’”

In an event that used to be decided by steps or slivers, McLaughlin-Levrone’s victory was by 1.99 seconds over Anna Cockrell and 2.12 over Jasmine Jones.

It doesn’t so much reset the storyline for the Olympics - McLaughlin-Levrone would’ve been the big-time favorite either way - as it makes track rethink what’s possible.

From 2003-19, the world record in this event stayed stuck at 52.34. American Dalilah Muhammad broke it twice in 2019 - the second time at world championships in a race that demoral-



Sydney McLaughlin-Levrone poses for a photo after winning the women’s 400-meter hurdles final during the U.S. Track and Field Olympic Team Trials in Eugene, Ore. (AP)

ized McLaughlin-Levrone and sparked a move over to coach Bobby Kersee.

Kersee changed everything for her. One of the biggest adjustments was dropping her to 14 strides between the early hurdles. It was a game-changer

growing as an athlete” with Kersee in charge, McLaughlin-Levrone said. “He challenges me and pushes me in ways I didn’t think were possible.”

Now, instead of a much-anticipated showdown with Femke Bol of the Netherlands, the conversation might turn to when the 50-second mark might come tumbling down in this race. Maybe as soon as Aug. 8, which is the date of the Olympic final in Paris.

“It could happen,” hurdling great Edwin Moses told The Associated Press. “She might need a couple more races, but that’s about it.”

ATHLETICS

that has put her in a class by herself since she first set the record in 2021 - on the final day of trials on the track in Eugene, just like this time.

“I’ve been growing as a person and

Farm Stadium.

Ahead on goal differential, Ecuador weathered a second-half push by Mexico at State Farm Stadium to finish second in Group B behind Venezuela. Ecuador will face Group A winner

Argentina in the quarterfinals Thursday in Houston.

Mexico failed to get out of the group stage for the fourth time in its last five Copa America appearances, which could put coach Jaime Lozano’s job in

Al-Qadisiya complete the transfer of Moroccan star Mahdi Barhama



A file photo of Al-Mahdi Barhama in action.

By Hassan Musa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 1: Al-Qadisiya has successfully finalized the signing of Moroccan professional Mahdi Rahma, marking its first major deal at the professional level in preparation for the upcoming 2024-2025 season.

Rahma, aged 32, spent three years with a Kuwait Club, achieving numerous accolades and championships during his tenure.

SOCCER

The club officially announced Rahma’s transfer via its website, revealing that Bahraini club Al-Khalidiya had also pursued the player, but financial terms favored Al-Qadisiya.

Vice Chairman Sheikh Fahad Talal expressed gratitude to Abdulaziz Fawaz Al-Hassawi for sponsoring Rahma’s contract advance, highlight-

ing his family’s support in ensuring the success of Al-Qadisiya Club.

Reports suggest that Rahma’s signing may facilitate the loan or release of Nigerian player Daniel Guibola, as Al-Qadisiya aims to strengthen its attacking and defensive lines.

Additionally, Al-Qadisiya has renewed contracts with Libyan Mohamed Sula and Djibula, while negotiations are ongoing to acquire Moroccan playmaker and striker Ismail Khafi.

In other news, Kuwait Club secured the international transfer of Bahraini professional Mohammed Al-Marhoon from Al-Riffa. Al-Marhoon played a pivotal role in Al-Abyad’s recent successes, solidifying his place in the starting lineup and contributing significantly to championship victories.

Furthermore, the club extended contracts with local talents Meshari Ghanem and Youssef Al-Khubaizi, recognizing their outstanding performances in recent seasons.

Volleyball new season to start in Sept

By Khaled El Anzi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 1: Dr. Jaber Al Marri, President of the Volleyball Federation, announced that the upcoming season of volleyball will commence at the end of September. He emphasized continuity in the local competitions for the 2024-2025 season, maintaining the format from the previous season without changes.

“We are focusing on enhancing



Dr. Al Marri

the performance of our top volleyball team in upcoming competitions, alongside developing and preparing our youth and junior teams for future international events,” Dr. Al Marri stated. “These teams are pivotal for our future success, as they comprise talented players who will play significant roles.”

VOLLEYBALL

In related news, the National Coaches Course, conducted by the Volleyball Federation in collaboration with the Leadership Development Center, concluded from June 23 to 27. Dr. Jaber Al Marri, presenting graduation certificates, marked the successful completion of the course by the participants.

The Kuwait Chapter of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (KCICAI) organised a united run as part of ICAI’s 75th year of celebration of Chartered Accountants Day.

The run was officially flagged off by CA Aditya Vikram Dhanuka, Chairperson of KCICAI.

The event saw enthusiastic participation of the members along

with their families. Mr. Davinder Punj, Second Secretary, Indian Embassy, Kuwait graced the occasion by his presence. Athlete Mr. Youmni Elhimer, who has been winners of 5K, 10 Km and 21 Km marathons in Kuwait, was also present to motivate.

The event was successfully concluded with great enthusiasm and



Left-right: Participants pose for a photo after the run.

KCICAI hosts the CA Run to celebrate Chartered Accountants Day



was wrapped up with a raffle draw won by CA Harish Thakur, who received an air ticket sponsored by Jazeera Airways. Refreshments were distributed to all participants.

The annual sponsors, NBK & Al Mulla Exchange provided unwavering support for this KCICAI event.

This run showcased the unity, strength and contribution of the

Chartered Accountants in India and across the globe in 50 Foreign Chapters and embodied their commitment to the vision of a developed India by 2047, inspired by Prime Minister, Mr. Narendra Modi.

For more information about KCICAI and upcoming events, visit icaikw.org (<http://icaikw.org>)



Kuwait Football Association President Abdullah Al-Shaheen speaks during the press conference.

Sports

Latest sports scores at — <http://sports.arabtimesonline.com>



Members of the General Assembly after approving the financial and administrative reports.

Technical committee is evaluating candidates for the team's new coach

KFA has achieved the most important goals of 2030 strategy: Al-Shaheen

By Hassan Musa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 1: During the regular general assembly meeting at the Kuwait Football Association's headquarters in Jaber Al-Ahmad International Stadium, President Abdullah Al-Shaheen confirmed that the association had successfully achieved the main objectives of the 2030 strategy. These objectives include qualifying for the 2027 Asian Cup finals and reaching the decisive round of qualifiers for the 2026 World Cup. The meeting was chaired by Al-Shaheen and attended by Vice-Chairmen Ahmed Oqla and Hayef Al-Mutairi, Board Member Fatima Hayat, Secretary-General Salah Al-Qenaei, representatives from clubs, members of the General Assembly, and representatives from the International and Asian associations.

In a press conference following the association's regular general assembly, Al-Shaheen stated, "The KFA continues to achieve its goals through concerted efforts, both governmental and in partnership with the private sector."

He elaborated that Kuwait is preparing for the decisive World Cup qualifiers, which necessitates raising the administrative and technical levels to match the Asian teams. The team is in Group B, which includes South Korea, Iraq, Oman, Jordan, and Palestine.

He remarked, "The Blue group is challenging, featuring the second and third best Asian teams and the Gulf champion."

He added, "Anyone who does

SOCCER

not see the team's qualification for the Asian Cup after 20 years as an achievement should reconsider."

He also mentioned that the technical committee is evaluating candidates for the team's new coach, and that the team's plan and preparation programs will be different after qualifying for the decisive World Cup qualifiers. An announcement regarding this plan will be made within 10 days.

Regarding the exclusion of Badr Al-Mutawa and Khaled Al-Rashidi from the national team, Al-Shaheen explained that it was a "purely technical" decision aimed at lowering the average age of players from 32 to 26 to infuse young blood.

He emphasized that the decision to increase the number of professionals in clubs and change names benefits the national teams and strengthens the professional system.

He highlighted the association's focus on young players, organizing the Blue League for local players, which involves eight local players and three professionals, along with the potential use of players under 15 to increase experience.

Al-Shaheen called on national companies to support the team in the upcoming elections and foster a partnership between the public and private sectors to elevate Kuwait's status in international forums.

He added, "We are building a young team that competed in the recent West Asian Championship, forming the nucleus for the future of Kuwaiti football. We are preparing the players to participate with the first team in 2027, 2028, and 2030."

While he did not promise to qualify

Spain ease past Georgia book quarter-final berth

England secure dramatic comeback win over Slovakia

BERLIN, July 1, (Xinhua): Spain recovered from one goal down to overpower stubborn Georgia 4-1 in Euro 2024 round of 16 at Cologne's sold-out Rhein-Energie Stadium.

Spain started on the front foot and created several chances in the opening stage, but Georgia goalkeeper Giorgi Mamardashvili was equal to the efforts from Daniel Carvajal and Pedri, while Nico Williams pulled wide from the edge of the box.

The opener was scored at the end of the pitch though and with great assistance of Spain defender Robin Le Normand, who cleared Otar Kakabadze's cross into the wrong goal giving Georgia the 1-0 lead in the 18th minute.

Spain responded with furious attacks and had to wait as Fabian Ruiz, Pedri and Marc Cucurella couldn't beat Mamardashvili, who had his hands full of work.

Luis de la Fuente's men got eventually rewarded for their power play just before the half time as Williams teed up for Rodri, whose left-footed shot into the bottom right corner left Mamardashvili chanceless in the 39th minute.

Georgia remained dangerous after the break as Khvicha Kvaratskhelia tried to catch Spain custodian Unai Simon flat-footed with a shot from the distance.

Spain went in search of the lead and made it 2-1 with 51 minutes gone as Lamine Yamal's pinpoint cross found Ruiz, who nodded home from close range.

Georgia went all in and got caught off-guard following a counterattack as Fabian's long ball allowed Williams to finish the job with a solo run and hammer into the roof of the net in the 75th minute.

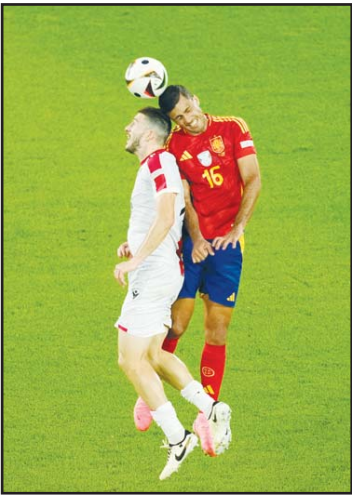
The relentless Spaniards weren't done with the scoring and made it four in the closing stage after Dani Olmo's low strike beat Mamardashvili into the bottom left corner.

With the victory, three-time Euro champion Spain clashes with tournament host Germany in Stuttgart's MHP Arena on Friday.

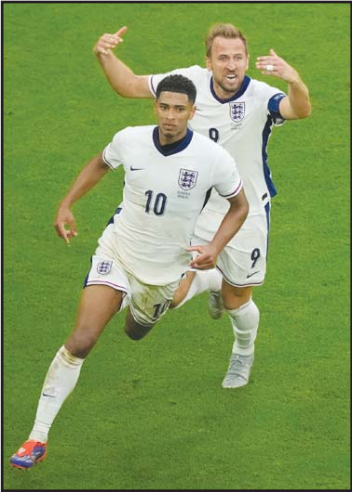
"It was as expected, a tough match for us. We knew that, but we made our own life difficult in the first half.

for the Asian Cup finals, he affirmed the team's intent to compete in the Asian Cup.

He also expressed the association's



Georgia's Luka Lochoshvili, (left), competes for the ball with Spain's Rodri during a round of sixteen match at the Euro 2024 soccer tournament in Cologne, Germany. (AP)



England's Jude Bellingham, (left), celebrates with Harry Kane after scoring his side's first goal during a round of sixteen match between England and Slovakia at the Euro 2024 soccer tournament in Gelsenkirchen, Germany. (AP)

We were also nervous after we conceded the goal but responded well with the equalizer before halftime. We must show our best football against tournament hosts Germany now," said Spain's player of the match Rodri. Enditem Jude Bellingham's stoppage time equalizer forced Slovakia into overtime and allowed Harry Kane to head the 2-1 decider in Euro 2024 last 16 at Gelsenkirchen's Arena AufSchalke .

commitment to playing in the Palestinian territories as a show of support for the cause.

Al-Shaheen confirmed Kuwait's

Offensively-minded Slovakia surprised England with a powerful opening period and came close twice but neither David Hanzko nor Lukas Haraslin was able to break the deadlock despite promising chances.

Slovakia's efforts eventually paid off as David Strelec's good build-up work and assist helped Ivan Schranz to break the deadlock with 25 minutes into the game. It was Schranz's third goal of the tournament.

The Three Lions tried to increase the pressure but failed to turn their 77 percent of possession into a tangible reward in the first half.

SOCCER

Things changed after the restart as Gareth Southgate's men thought they had leveled the scores with just five minutes into the second half. However, Phil Foden's goal was ruled offside.

England was lucky that Slovakia didn't double its lead as Strelec's long-range shot missed the empty net just wide moments later.

As the match progressed, England lacked in ideas to overcome Slovakia's compact defence albeit Declan Rice rattled the woodwork from a distance in the 81st minute.

Francesco Calzona's boys tried to protect their narrow lead to the end but got punished late in the dying seconds as Bellingham drilled the stoppage time equalizer with an overhead kick into the top right corner to stun resilient Slovakia.

Things went from bad to worse for Slovakia as the Three Lions completed their comeback with the kick-off of the overtime, as Kane headed home his 65th goal for England to seal the quarterfinal encounter against Switzerland.

"It is a massive moment, but it's a long tournament and we will only know it if we go on to win the cup. We will decide in the next two weeks how important it is," said Bellingham.

"I feel proud, we played a great game against a world-class team and one of the favorites. We allowed England very little, we almost advanced. Unfortunately, we didn't make it," said Slovakia coach Calzona.

England will now face Switzerland in the quarterfinal in Dusseldorf on July 6.

readiness to host the "Khaleeji" on December 26 and hinted at a surprise announcement regarding the hosting.

He concluded by asserting that the

Kuwait Shooting Sports Club 'mourns' the loss of Al-Tarqi



KUNA photo

A file photo of former national team shooter Tami Al-Tarqi.

KUWAIT CITY, July 1: The Kuwaiti Shooting Sports Club mourns with great sadness the passing of former national team player Tami Al-Tarqi, who died the day before yesterday after a battle with illness.

Club Secretary Obaid Al-Osaimi stated in a press release that the Kuwaiti shooting community "has lost one of its loyal sons, known for his good reputation and significant achievements with the national shooting team."

On behalf of himself, the president, the members of the club's board of di-

rectors, and all members of the Kuwaiti shooting sport, Al-Osaimi expressed his sincere condolences and sympathy to the family of the deceased. He prayed to God Almighty to bestow His vast mercy upon him, grant him a place in spacious gardens, and inspire his family and loved ones with patience and solace.

It was announced that the Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Olympic Shooting Complex will be closed for a period of three days in mourning for the deceased.

Girmay makes Tour history

TURIN, Italy, July 1, (AP): Eritrean rider Biniam Girmay became the first Black African rider to win a Tour de France stage Monday when he sprinted to victory in the third stage.

Meanwhile, Mark Cavendish's pursuit of a record-breaking 35th stage win was postponed, and Olympic champion Richard Carapaz took the yellow jersey from Tadej Pogacar.

CYCLING

Girmay also made history in Italy two years ago when he won a stage at the Giro d'Italia to become the first Black African to take a victory in a Grand Tour, the term that encompasses the three major three-week races: the Giro, the Tour and the Spanish Vuelta.

But Girmay's Giro victory was marred when he was rushed to a hospital after getting hit in the left eye by a prosecco cork he popped open during the podium celebration - forcing him to abandon the race.

The 39-year-old Cavendish has been tied with Eddy Merckx on 34 wins for three years and put off retirement to try again this year to break the record. But Cavendish appeared to get slowed by a crash in the finale, although it didn't appear that the British rider went down.

The mostly flat 231-kilometer (144-mile) leg from Piacenza to Turin - the longest stage of this year's Tour - provided the first chance for a mass sprint. But there will be at least a handful of other opportunities for sprinters after the race crosses back into France following the first four stages in Italy.

Girmay finished just ahead of Fernando Gaviria and Arnaud De Lie.

Cavendish crossed 113th but was given the same finishing time as Girmay as per rules that neutralize the times in case of crashes in the final five kilometers.

Pogacar dropped to second overall, with the same time as Carapaz, who is the first Ecuadorian rider to wear the yellow jersey.

The General Assembly approved the financial and administrative reports, the agenda, and the formation of judicial committees within the federation.