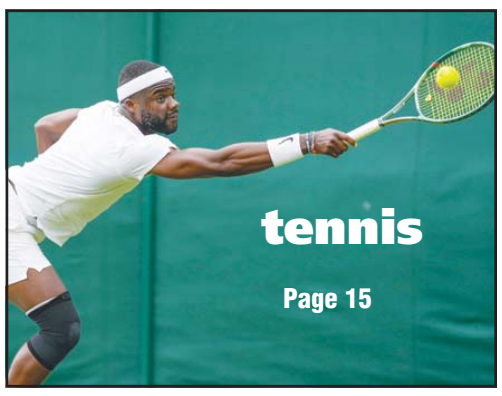

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CABINET BANS FOREIGN FLAGS, ANTHEMS AT PUBLIC AND STATE EVENTS

Kuwait sets July 7 official holiday

Government enforces strict work hour compliance

PM Diwan photo

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah chairs the Cabinet's weekly meeting on Tuesday, July 2.

KUWAIT CITY, July 3, (KUNA): The Kuwait Cabinet, in its weekly meeting on Tuesday, July 2, endorsed several draft decree-laws, which have been referred to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for final approval. The meeting, held at Bayan Palace, was chaired by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

Following the meeting, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Shereeda Abdullah Al-Mousharji said that the Cabinet also sent cable of congratulations to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, and to the people of Kuwait, on the occasion of the upcoming Islamic (Hijri) New Year 1446 AH.

In this regard, the Cabinet has been informed of the Civil Service Commission's decision on the Hijri New Year holiday. Work will be suspended in all ministries, government entities, authorities, and public institutions on Sunday, July 7, 2024, and resumes on Monday, July 8, 2024.

Accordingly, the Civil Service Commission declared on Wednesday that all ministries, government and public institutions would observe an official holiday on Sunday (July 7) on advent of the new Hijri Year 1446.

The CSC said in a press release on X that apparatuses and authorities of a special work nature could determine the timing of the holiday.

The Cabinet discussed the recommendation included in the minutes of the Ministerial Legal Affairs Committee meeting regarding the draft decree-law on approving the unified system for voluntary work in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member states.

The Cabinet approved the draft decree-law and referred it to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for the final approval.

The Cabinet reviewed the recommendations included in the minutes of the Ministerial Economic Affairs Committee meeting regarding the draft decree-laws linking the budgets of ministries, government departments, attached authorities, and independent institutions for the year 2024/2025.

Continued on Page 5

Newswatch

KUWAIT CITY: His Highness the Amir Sheikh **Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah** on Wednesday received a letter from President **Xi Jinping** of **China** on the sturdy bilateral relations between the two nations, and modes of developing strategic partnership across a variety of fields.

The letter also included issues of common interest and latest developments on international and regional fronts, mentioned a statement issued by the Foreign Ministry. (KUNA)

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CAIRO: The Arab League announced on Wednesday that it will be holding an emergency meeting for permanent envoys on Thursday, requested by Palestine to find a solution to end the genocide and settlement expansion.

The Arab League's Assistant Secretary General Ambassador **Hussam Zaki** said in a press statement that the meeting was set after discussions with the Secretariat General of the Arab League, Mauritania which is heading the council, Palestine that requested the meeting which was approved by member states.

The meeting was set based on the ongoing war on Palestine by the Israeli occupation forces since October 7th. (KUNA)

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WASHINGTON: US Secretary of State **Antony Blinken** on Tuesday held phone talks with his **UAE** counterpart Sheikh **Abdullah bin Zayed** on the current diplomatic efforts to reach a cease-fire in Gaza Strip.

The department spokesperson, **Matthew Miller**, said in a press statement that **Washington** believes that a cease-fire agreement in **Gaza** would lead to releasing the prisoners and substantially increase humanitarian aid reaching the enclave.

Miller added that Blinekn and Sheikh Abdullah discussed the post-strife period, means of restoring rule, security and reconstruction for paving the way to establish viable peace and security for both the Palestinians and Israelis. (KUNA)

Worker shortage strikes as crackdown intensifies

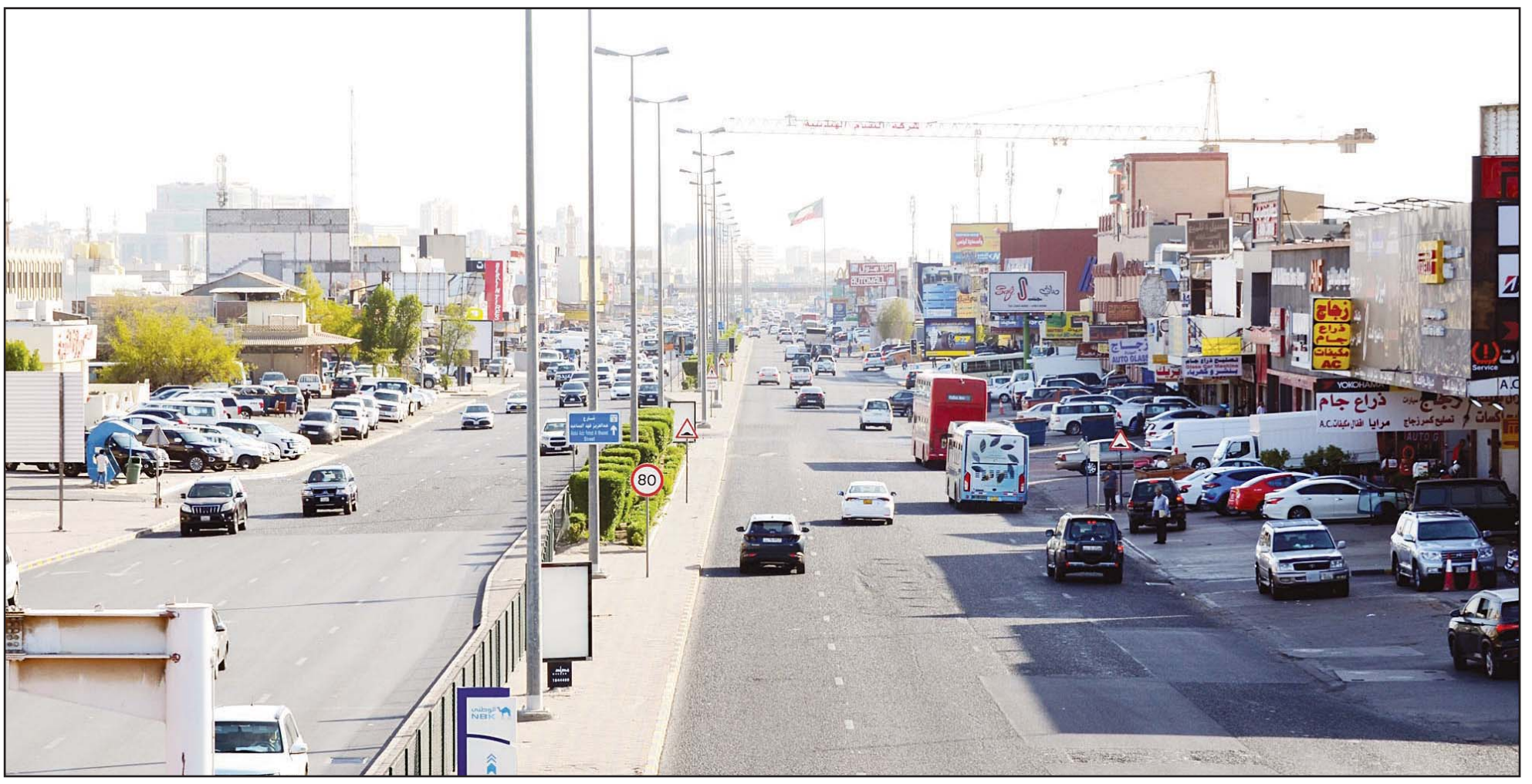

Photo by Samer Shiker

Canada Dry Street in Shuwaikh, lined with commercial establishments, experienced subdued business activity as worker absenteeism grows amid fears of security crackdown on illegal residents.

Security measures prompt illegal expats to vanish from public view

By Munif Naif
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 3: The Residency Affairs Investigation General Department at the Interior Ministry is currently conducting a massive security campaign in various parts of the country to arrest Residency Law violators.

On its official 'X' account, the ministry affirmed on Wednesday that as part of the intensified security efforts to arrest violators who did not take advantage of the grace period granted to them to either leave the country or legalize their status, the department carried out a security inspection campaign throughout the country. The campaign resulted in the arrest of a number of violators who were referred to the competent authority to take the necessary legal measures including deportation.

Meanwhile, the Public Relations and Security Media General Department confirmed that security campaigns are continuing all over the country, calling on everyone to cooperate with the securitymen, and report violators and outlaws by calling the emergency phone number (112).

On Tuesday, as authorities intensified their crackdown on residency law violators who missed the grace period to adjust status or exit the country, numerous commercial, artisanal, and industrial shops across Kuwait faced worker shortages.

At some of these establishments absenteeism was crystal clean, with most workers opting to stay home out of fear of being caught by the security authorities during a crackdown on the illegal residents.

Al-Seyassah observed citizens documenting the sluggish activity in these shops through videos shared on social media.

Areas such as Mutla'a, Shuwaikh, Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh, Khaitan and Farwaniya witnessed a near-absence of technicians, while workers (daily wage workers) who typically gather at roundabouts and street corners were entirely absent.

The prevailing sentiment among these workers was fear that they might be caught during the sudden inspection checks organized by the Ministry of Interior.

Continued on Page 5

MoFA photo

Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya met with US Ambassador to Kuwait Karen Sasahara at the ministry Wednesday. During the meeting, they reviewed bilateral ties, ways to develop them in all fields and strategic cooperation between the two countries.

Failaka Island returns to Kuwait's tourism agenda

By Inaas Awadh
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 3: Reports about the development of Kuwait's tourism and entertainment sector has resurfaced and this time around the spotlight is on the Failaka Island, about 18 years after the last master plan study was done on May 30, 2006.

The government has included the island in its current plan within its work program for 2023-2027.

One of the program's main pillars emphasizes the development and strengthening of priority sectors, particularly the tourism and entertainment sector. The Failaka Island project is highlighted as a key initiative to be completed by 2027, aiming to transform the island into an attractive cultural and tourist destination.

The economic reports indicate that Failaka Island has the potential to host various tourism projects, including resorts, shopping centers, archaeological museums, and a yacht port, with an estimated cost of about $4 billion.

This development is expected to significantly boost domestic tourism. The project is also projected to positively impact the country's GDP, provide job opportunities,

Continued on Page 5

Other Voices

Money laundering via exchange companies: An escalating crisis

By Dr. Fawaz AlKhateeb
Assistant Professor of Criminal Law at Kuwait International Law School and practising lawyer

This article is an adaptation of a top investigation by Najeh Bilal, originally published in Al-Seyassah daily on July 2, 2024, on pages 1 and 7. The investigation includes insights from myself and two former ministers – Dr. Ahmed Al-Mulaifi, former Minister of Education and member of the National Assembly, and businessman and former Minister of Housing Yahya Al-Sumait. Together, we delve into the dynamics of money laundering and the critical need for robust legal and regulatory measures. I intend to recap my statements from Al-Seyassah to raise legal awareness on this important topic.

AlKhateeb

The Mechanics of Money Laundering

Money laundering involves the process of making illegally-gained proceeds appear legal. Criminals employ various strategies to accomplish this, ranging from simple methods such as using ATM cards of deceased individuals to sophisticated schemes involving luxury cars and real estate.

One common tactic is the structuring of deposits. Offenders break down large sums of illicit money into smaller amounts, which are then deposited into bank accounts to avoid detection. Additionally, they might establish shell companies to disguise the origins of the funds. These shell companies generate false invoices and engage in fictitious trade, facilitating the transfer of dirty money across borders under the guise of legitimate business transactions.

Luxury Goods and Currency Exchange

A notable indicator of money laundering is the purchase of high-value items, such as luxury cars and watches. Criminals buy these assets with illicit funds and subsequently sell them, effectively laundering the funds and making them appear clean. Another method involves frequent currency exchanges, which can obscure the money's origins and make it harder for authorities to trace.

Legal and Regulatory Gaps

Despite stringent regulations, the existence of legal loopholes continues to undermine efforts to combat money laundering. Small exchange companies, in particular, often escape rigorous oversight. While larger, well-established firms are usually subject to stringent controls and oversight by the Central Bank, smaller entities can sometimes slip through the cracks.

It is crucial to close these gaps through robust legislation and consistent enforcement. This includes amending existing

Continued on Page 5

Ministry targets forged diplomas

KUWAIT CITY, July 3, (KUNA): The Minister of Education and Higher Education and Scientific Research Dr. Adel Al-Adwani has referred high school diplomas from Gulf, Arab, and other countries to the Public Prosecution, revoking their fake certificates and contacted relevant authorities to correct the procedure, aiming to combat the phenomenon of forged certificates.

In a press statement on Wednesday, Dr. Al-Adwani explained that this action follows the recommendations of the Ministry of Education's investigation committee regarding high

Continued on Page 5

KUNA photo

Kuwait Assistant Foreign Minister for Asian Affairs Ambassador Sameeh Hayat and Singapore Deputy Secretary of the Asia-Pacific Department Kev in Cheok during the first round of bilateral consultations. – See Page 2

Prayer Timings

Fajr	03:18	Asr	15:26
Sunrise	04:53	Maghrib	18:51
Zohr	11:52	Isha	20:23

Local

Weather

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:
By Day: Very hot with light to moderate freshening at times northwesterly wind, with speeds of 12-45 km/h with a chance for rising dust over open areas.
By Night: Hot to rather hot with light to moderate freshening at times over coastal areas northwesterly wind, with speeds of 12-42 km/h.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	47	34
Kuwait Airport	48	34
Abdaly	47	29
Jahra	48	31
Salmiyah	44	34
Nuwaisib	46	29
Wafra	48	27

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

His Highness sends National Day greetings to president of Belarus

HH the Amir congratulates Mauritania president on re-election

KUWAIT CITY, July 3, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent on Wednesday a cable of congratulations to the President of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania Mohamed Ghazouani on his re-election.

In the cable, His Highness the Amir wished President Ghazouani success and long-lasting health, and hoped his country would witness more progress and prosperity.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent a cable of congratulations to the President of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania Mohamed Ghazouani on his re-election, wishing the president success.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah also sent a cable of congratulations to President Mohamed Ghazouani on his re-election.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad sent on Wednesday a cable of congratulations to President of Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko on his country's National Day.

His Highness the Amir wished the president lasting good health, his country and people optimal progress and prosperity.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled sent a cable of congratulations to President Aleksandr Lukashenko on his country's National Day.

His Highness the Crown Prince wished the president lasting good health.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah sent a cable of congratulations to President Aleksandr Lukashenko on his country's National Day.

KUNA photo
Kuwait's Ambassador Hayat meeting with Singapore's Minister-designate, Dr Osman and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Education.

Kuwait envoy discusses ties with Singapore minister in PM Office

Officials preparing for ministerial meetings

KUALA LUMPUR, July 3, (KUNA): Kuwait's Assistant Foreign Minister for Asian Affairs Ambassador Samih Hayat discussed Wednesday bilateral cooperation with Singaporean Minister in the Prime Minister's Office, Second Minister for Education and Foreign Affairs Dr Mohammad Maliki Osman.

A statement by Kuwait Embassy in Singapore stated that a meeting was held after the first round of bilateral consultations at the level of senior officials in the ministries of Foreign Affairs of both countries.

Ambassador Hayat conveyed greetings of Kuwait Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Ali Al-Yahya and his aspiration for the visit of Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Singapore, Vivian Balakrishnan, to Kuwait next year, the statement added.

Ways to strengthen and develop relations in all areas and issues of common interest were also reviewed in the meeting, in addition to developments at regional and international levels, it said.

Kuwait and Singapore held on Wednesday the first round of bilateral consultations at the level of senior officials in the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the two countries in the Republic of Singapore.

In a statement, the Kuwait Embassy in Singapore announced Kuwait Assistant Foreign Minister for Asian Affairs Ambassador Samih Hayat, and the Singapore Deputy Secretary of the Asia-Pacific Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Kevin Cheok headed the sessions.

During the consultations, the two countries reviewed the bilateral relations between them, highlighting the myriad of ways to strengthen and bolster mutual interests, the statement added.

The two countries discussed the most important developments at both the regional and international levels, underscoring the coming together of mutual visions regarding communication, cooperation and coordination on issues mentioned.

During the meeting, the two countries stressed the importance of holding joint committees at the level of Foreign Ministers in the near future, emboldening the bilateral relations of Kuwait and Singapore.

The year 2025 marks the 40th anniversary of establishing diplomatic bilateral relations between the two countries, witnessing great achievements since 1985, and having a cause to celebrate the ties.

Ambassador Hayat delivered a handwritten letter from Kuwait Foreign Affairs Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya to his Singaporean counterpart Minister Vivian Balakrishna, inviting him on an official state visit to Kuwait. The sessions were attended by Kuwait Ambassador to Singapore Ahmad Al-Shuraim, Singapore Non-Resident Ambassador to Kuwait Zainul Abidin Rasheed, and other officials from both sides.

KUNA photo
High-level meeting to discuss the final draft of the Arab roadmap for preparedness and response to nuclear and radiological emergencies.

Kuwait participates in Arab meeting on facing N-emergencies

The Arab League's high-level meeting to discuss the final draft on a roadmap to face nuclear and radiation emergencies kicked off on Wednesday, with the participation of Kuwait.

The meeting is key in Arab joint cooperation to prepare or face any nuclear emergency that may occur and protect people against its impact, said head of the Arab coordination plan to limit disaster impact and Bahrain's representative Major Hamad Al-Sawar in a speech at the event.

He noted the importance of developing an Arab infrastructure that is ready to deal with any kind of nuclear or radiation related incidents. He added that the roadmap is a step to create a system specialized with disaster impact that spreads beyond geographic borders, which requires coordinating regional efforts to contain the impact.

On his part, Director General of the Arab Atomic Energy Agency (AAEA) Dr. Salem Al-Hamdi said the agency had set up an early warning system to detect radiation levels to protect the lives of people.

The agency holds an annual meeting to study the possible effects of nuclear powerplants located close to Arab countries, he said. (KUNA)

Photo by Noufal Ibrahim
Photo showing students being received in the office.

'Union members fully prepared to answer all student queries'

US branch of NUKS receives students for 'enrollment' in various universities

KUWAIT CITY, July 3: The National Union of Kuwait Students, USA branch, announced the opening of its office to receive students wishing to enroll in various universities recognized by the National Bureau for Academic Accreditation and Quality of Education, indicating that the doors of the union are open to all students, reports Al-Jarida daily.

President of the union, Fahd Al-Otaibi, said that the union is the official and only body that provides assistance to students without any financial return, indicating that the members of the union are fully prepared to answer all students' inquiries and assist them in applying to language institutes and universities and completing visa procedures.

Fahd Al-Otaibi told the daily that the union allocated its headquarters in the Crystal Tower to receive new recruits, explaining that the office's working hours are divided into two periods; It starts from 10 am until 1 pm, and from 4 pm until 8 pm throughout the week, except Friday.

For his part, the union member, Muhammad Al-Abad, indicated that the union receives complaints amounting to more than 50 cases about high housing rents in some states and weak means of communication from external offices, indicating that the union looked into these complaints and an office is provided without anything in exchange for helping students choose their places of study and the states and universities they desire.

Al-Abad added the union has prioritized all the students' requirements, from choosing the study location, then arriving to the mission headquarters and choosing housing, and working to provide the students' needs in a remarkable manner.

He warned against dealing with commercial offices, and going to the union office, which is the only official body for students.

Foreign missions union member, Turki Al-Khalidi, said that the union is fully prepared to assist students in providing universities, language institutes, and foreign missions for continuing and new students, pointing out that the union begins its journey with students from their graduation in high school until their graduation in universities.

Entertainment City project moves forward

Land for Al-Shagaya renewable energy complex reallocated from KISR to MEW

By Inaas Awadh
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 3: The Technical Committee of the Municipal Council, in its third meeting of the third session, chaired by Munira Al-Amir, agreed to reallocate the land of the Al-Shagaya Renewable Energy Complex from the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research to the Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy.

Additionally, the Ministry of Finance got the nod for its request to transfer the allocation of the Entertainment City project site from the Amiri Diwan to the Public Investment Authority.

The committee referred three items out of seven on its agenda to the executive body for further study and response updates.

These items include a letter from mobile cart project owners requesting locations for mobile carts, a proposal by member Alia Al Farsi to prevent delivery bikes from stopping and driving on sidewalks, and a proposal by members Sharifa Al Shalfan and Abdul Latif Al Da'i to identify medium-density housing sites in existing urban areas.

Meanwhile, the committee did not approve a proposal submitted by a citizen to provide power supply upon the completion of one residential floor.

Additionally, the committee reserved judgment on a proposal by member Abdul Latif Al Da'i to develop the main coastal road in Kuwait to make it more attractive and suitable for pedestrians and bicycle riders.

EU Special Rep. Di Maio on official visit to Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, July 3: The European Union Special Representative for the Gulf region, Luigi Di Maio, is scheduled to arrive in Kuwait today, July 3, for an official visit marking the fifth anniversary of the opening of the European Union delegation to Kuwait, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Di Maio

During his visit, Di Maio plans to hold meetings with Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya, Deputy Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, and other senior Kuwaiti officials. Di Maio expressed his honor at celebrating the EU Delegation's anniversary and anticipates productive discussions with Kuwaiti counterparts on regional issues, aiming to bolster EU-Kuwait relations.

He also looks forward to engaging with young Kuwaiti diplomats at the Saud Al Nasser Al Sabah Diplomatic Institute during his visit. Ann Koistinen, the European Union Ambassador to Kuwait, welcomed Di Maio's visit, highlighting the significance of the EU Mission's establishment in 2019 and the strengthening of EU-Kuwait relations since then. She emphasized the EU's commitment to continued collaboration with the Kuwaiti government and society to further enhance their bilateral ties.

'Hot Gemini season begins'

Astronomer Al-Saadoun details 'phases' and weather patterns

KUWAIT CITY, July 3: According to Astronomer Adel Al-Saadoun, the hot Gemini season in Kuwait begins today and spans 26 days, consisting of two phases -- the first and second Gemini.

Al-Saadoun explained to Al-Jarida that the "first" Gemini starts on July 3 annually, associated with the star "Haqaa," which denotes a spot of opposite color on a horse's neck or body.

Al-Saadoun

This phase lasts for 13 days until July 15. Following this, the "second" Gemini begins on July 16 with its sign "Al-Hana'a," signifying a turning point in the road.

This phase also lasts for 13 days, ending on July 28, after which the second Al-Marzam season begins.

The Gemini period is characterized by hot weather, marking the end of the heat that commences with the sun directly overhead on June 22.

During these phases, winds intensify, causing dust to rise, though not in the same manner as during the summer quadrangle that began on June 7.

Additionally, the Samoum winds blow, which are hot northwestern winds, their heat perceptible even at sunset. The onset of the second Gemini phase is noted as the hottest period, typically recording the highest temperatures during this season.

PAMA 'launches' new services on Sahel app

KUWAIT CITY, July 3: Director General of the Public Authority for Minors Affairs (PAMA) Eng. Hamad Al-Barjas has announced that the authority recently launched new services on Sahel platform and its website, such as the increase in living allowances, expenses for summer activities, expenses for sports activities and family visa expenses, reports Al-Rai daily.

In a press statement, Al-Barjas revealed that the number of PAMA services on Sahel has increased to 40 and 50 on its website. He affirmed this is in line with the authority's commitment to contribute to the digital transformation plan adopted by the government.

He said the authority is keen on keeping pace with technological developments for the advancement of its facilities and services. He disclosed the authority continues to exert tremendous to add more services on Sahel for the speedy completion of transactions and to totally eliminate manual procedures.

Applications accepted from July 5-12

Abdullah Al-Salem University announces admission timeline for 1st semester '24/25

KUWAIT CITY, July 3: Abdullah Al-Salem University has announced the application timeline for admission to the first semester of the academic year 2024/2025 for Kuwaiti high school graduates and children of Kuwaiti women who meet the admission criteria, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The daily, quoting university sources said the applications will be accepted electronically from July 5 to 12.

According to a press release from the Deanship of Admission and Registration, prospective students were able to access the electronic registration system at https://aasu.edu.kw/admissions-fall-2024/ from Tuesday.

Admission to all academic programs will be based on the differential average, calculated using specific weights that vary across colleges. This average considers the student's secondary school certificate results and national test scores.

Prospective students are urged to review the admission rules outlined in the university's admission guide on their website, verify their information, and upload required documents.

For Kuwaiti students and children of Kuwaiti women, the selection of preferences on the system will take place during the specified period.

English school students expecting to graduate in August must submit their original certificates to the university within two working days of their results announcement to determine their preferences.

Applications for non-Kuwaitis who meet the admission criteria will open from the 16th to the 18th of this month. Electronic applications will be accepted for citizens of the Gulf Cooperation Council countries and illegal residents who are not children of Kuwaiti women and graduates of the unified system.

Other categories of applicants must visit the Admissions and Registration Department at the Khalidiya site with their original certificates on designated days.

For students wishing to study at their own expense, applications will be received in person at the Admissions and Registration Department at the Khaldiya site from July 22 to 25.

Graduates of the unified system should bring their original certificates, while graduates of private schools must provide their original certificates and private education equivalency during official university working hours.

diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

'When will the government end nightmare of fake certificates?'

"THE issue of forged certificates is not something new. I vividly recall the media uproar in 2018 when cases of university certificate forgery were uncovered and referred to the Public Prosecution by the then Minister of Education, Dr. Hamed Al-Azmi. Employees from the Ministry of Higher Education were also implicated and referred to the competent authorities," columnist **Asrar Jowhar Hayat** wrote for Al-Qabas daily.

"Due to unstable and changing governments, the pursuit of forgers waned as soon as the government changed, and then we entered the Corona crisis. Despite this, the issue remained significant, with fake and forged certificates deeply entrenched in state institutions.

Asrar Hayat

"Recently, there was an announcement about forming a committee to examine the certificates of state employees in both the public and private sectors, which was a long-standing demand of ours. What applies to government employees should also apply to private sector employees.

"Reports indicate that the private sector has already begun reviewing employee certificates, especially for foreigners, by linking work permit renewals to higher educational qualifications.

"This is a commendable step we've been anticipating, as the examination should not be limited to Kuwaitis. We hope the government, which seems committed to fighting educational corruption, ensures that this initiative doesn't stop here but continues until the state's administrative apparatus is purged of forgers.

"Past work decisions, such as linking promotions to obtaining qualifications, have tempted some employees to acquire easy certificates.

"We hope the committee's work will be transparent, with its reports published through reliable media outlets rather than remaining confined to a narrow circle.

"Additionally, while examining certificates, the government should foster the youth's ambition to study and raise their academic levels by expanding the accreditation of universities with good education, opening opportunities for studying in new countries with quality education, and reviewing some decisions related to certificate accreditation to align with education quality policies.

"Ultimately, we hope this effort will persist, with the committee continuing its work until the issue of fake and forged certificates in both governmental and private sectors is eradicated, and that all concerned institutions collaborate in this regard."

Also:

"When one wanders around the State of Kuwait and reflects on the achievements this nation has made in a short period, both domestically and internationally, it is evident that this small country has accomplished great civilizational progress comparable to that achieved by others over a much longer period," columnist **Mohammed Salem Al-Balhan** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

"Despite its small territory and population, Kuwait stands at the forefront of leadership and political influence on the global stage. The world has recognized that Kuwait's international voice is meaningful and deserving of respect.

"This esteemed global presence is rooted in Kuwait's sincere commitment to addressing global issues, participating in their resolution, and supporting fellow nations as needed.

"Domestically, Kuwait has made rapid urban and social progress. The country boasts an extensive network of highways built to modern standards, long bridges that shorten distances, and a robust education system with universities, schools, institutes, and cultural centers. These institutions have produced an educated workforce that has significantly contributed to Kuwait's civilizational journey.

"Young Kuwaitis have played a vital role in fields such as human and veterinary medicine, architectural engineering, road and bridge construction, and the development of modern cities.

"We must also acknowledge the contributions of agricultural engineers who have transformed the Kuwaiti desert into green paradises, showcasing the country's rapid progress compared to older civilizations.

"Kuwait is blessed with security, safety, prosperity, stability, cohesion, and cooperation among all its people. This is a divine blessing not found in many other nations.

"Kuwait's general policy is one of non-aggression and contentment with its own resources. Any aggressor against Kuwait is destined to fail, by God's command.

"'If Allah helps you, none can overcome you'."

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"Gulf integration, our strategic depth … Gulf economic integration is a popular demand among the citizens of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. However, the integration process is so slow despite the public support behind it, the agreements approved by GCC countries -- most notably the Unified Economic Agreement of Gulf States, and measures taken in this context. Therefore, we hardly see results on the ground," **M. Adel Al-Jarallah Al-Kharafi** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"The experience of regional blocs in economic integration like the European Union, Southeast Asia and others are the best evidence of the importance and benefits of integration in growth and development. We can benefit from their experience, practice and methods.

"It goes without saying that Gulf integration, especially economic integration, is considered a strategic depth for the GCC countries, as it guarantees their economic stability, contributes to their economic growth, and provides the elements for food security.

"Although the GCC countries have succeeded in electrical interconnection, and this has had beneficial and important results, integration in the field of food security is also necessary, as well as the implementation of projects, and joint investments that ensure the protection of consumers from external inflation and its impact on food commodities in GCC countries.

"One of the important matters is cooperation on the issue of water and development of a unified strategy on Gulf water security for the GCC countries. A number of GCC countries use their financial resources on desalination plants for Gulf water. Perhaps, all of us are aware that the Gulf is a major corridor for oil tankers, military battleships and other sources. It leads to water pollution as manifested in the frequent fish deaths.

"Without a doubt, the GCC countries are aware of this. They have discussed jointly and through committees and working groups the need to reach a strategic formula that guarantees a high level of water security. However, due to its great importance, efforts must be intensified to implement joint water projects which guarantee water security and safety.

"The point here is that Gulf integration in all fields is in the interest of GCC countries and their peoples, and it is their strategic depth. All of us have realized and emphasized this. It is another important goal that leaders of GCC countries must focus on. They must intensify their efforts to translate it into reality and build on it.

"Our Gulf is one and our people are one."

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"What is the use of inspection? Thankfully, the inspection campaigns organized by the Ministry of Interior in the six governorates will be of no use in arresting residency violators! These campaigns may succeed in imposing the prestige of the State and eliminating the phenomenon of disregard for its laws, but they will be of no benefit and will not help in the matter of arresting violators of the Residency Law who monitor the street well and hide until the inspection is over!" **Talal Al-Saeed** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"The correct solution is to cordon off the areas at dawn and search where there are a lot of violators after taking permission from the prosecution. It is given that only those who take the initiative win, so hasten to their places of residence and remove them from those dens in which they breed and hide. Do not have mercy on them.

"They consider themselves a State within a State. They follow well-thought police methods to avoid inspection. They even set up surveillance eyes and agree among themselves on certain signals to warn each other, and they exchange roles. You are fine with a thieves' market, such as when the Interior Ministry and the Municipality attack it only to find it empty of sellers and there is nothing wrong with it. You find only the goods, so how did these people know about the information?

"It is very clear that the issue is extremely serious. The issue is not just a matter of violating the Residency Law. There are major crimes that cannot be tolerated! Whoever looks into apartments and courtyards with iron doors that cannot be opened easily knows what is behind those doors!

"There is an important note: As soon as a new leader is transferred to those areas, you hear good news about him and major seizures, but after the third month, you do not hear any news about him, so what is the secret behind?

"Whoever wants to implement the law must be firm, strong and not afraid of reprimanding anyone. We are facing national security needed by the country's highest interests. The time for compassion and complacency has passed, as well as the phrases 'this is heartbreaking' and 'this is poor.'

"By Allah, we are the ones who break our hearts when we see this huge number of violators. We live in the midst of the chaos of arrivals. We suffer from imbalance in the demographic structure. We feel that our country is occupied, and at the same time, we are required to adapt to this situation ... Haram ... Zayn."

— Compiled by PFX Fernandes & Mahmoud Ateyieh

Photos by Rizk Taufiq

Two of the shops being sealed by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry officials.

Three shops shut down for violating commercial laws

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

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry has announced the closure and sealing of three commercial shops in the Ahmadi area with red wax.

The Al-Seyassah daily said those found guilty of violating the commercial laws have been referred to the Commercial Prosecution.

The incident was first published by the Al-Seyassah daily under the title 'Closing 3 shops with red wax in Ahmadi'.

The sources said two of the violating shops were caught possessing and selling counterfeit women's bags and shoes bearing international brand names while the third establishment was punished for displaying and selling used tires.

She emphasized that this campaign is part of the ministry's ongoing efforts to enhance compliance with laws and protect consumers from illegal and unsafe products.

Female employee gets 5 years jail over bribery in residency transfer

Court upholds 19-year-old's acquitted of drug trafficking

By Jaber Al-Hamoud
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and **Agencies**

KUWAIT CITY, July 3: The Criminal Court has sentenced a female Citizen Service Center (CSC) employee to five years in prison for bribery, with temporary suspension of the implementation of the decision until the final ruling is issued.

The court imposed KD500 bail amount and ordered the dismissal of the employee who forged the transfer of an expatriate's residency without the knowledge of the sponsor in exchange for KD700 bribe.

The court imposed the same prison sentence on the broker and the briber, as well as fined the employee and the broker KD1,400.

Case files indicate that the investigation document showed the forgery was carried out with the knowledge of the accused, and that the document in question, after changing it, was valid.

The second defendant (briber) admitted the crime, indicating he paid the bribe to the broker who had a relationship with the employee in order to transfer his residency, indicating the employee amended the document without the presence of the sponsor and went ahead in processing the transfer of the other defendant.

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Acquittal upheld: The Court of Appeals upheld the ruling of a lower court that acquitted a 19-year-old Kuwaiti of drug trafficking and abstained from pronouncing punishment on the drug charge.

According to the case files, the investigation officer said the accused was in possession of narcotic substances for the purpose of trafficking and personal consumption, so he obtained permission from the Public Prosecution to arrest and search the suspect and his car. The officer instructed his informant to buy an undisclosed quantity of a psychotropic substance from the suspect.

The accused reached an agreement with the secret agent regarding the place and time of delivery. Once the operation was completed, the accused felt the presence of the detectives, so he got into his car and fled until he reached his residence. The accused got out of the car on foot and fled, so the officer searched the car and found a bag containing psychotropic pills.

The court affirmed the innocence of the accused, stating that the results of investigations were inconclusive and insufficient to obtain a warrant from the prosecution to arrest and search the accused, making all of the incident officer's procedures invalid.

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Former Kuwaiti ambassador fined KD500 for insulting ministry official

KUWAIT CITY, July 3: The Court of First Instance imposed KD500 fine on a former Kuwaiti ambassador to Cuba, and ordered referral of the civil case in which the amount involved is KD5,001 to the concerned civil court in response to the complaint of an advisor in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that the ambassador insulted and threatened him on WhatsApp.

According to the case files, the complaint was submitted by the victim through his lawyer, Attorney Mahmoud Al-Qattan, who confirmed that he works in the ministry as first secretary at the Kuwaiti Embassy in Havana.

On Nov 6, 2021, he was abused by the accused, who works in the ministry as ambassador of the State of Kuwait to the Republic of Cuba who sent a voice message to the witness containing insulting words addressed to the complainant, which prompted the witness to send this message to the complainant.

When the witness was questioned, he affirmed that he works in the ministry as second secretary at the Embassy of the State of Kuwait in Cuba, and that he received a voice message through WhatsApp from the accused, including the words that the complainant mentioned.

It was proven in the police investigation report dated April 8, 2021 that the accused had left the country. By conducting further investigations and listening to the audio recording that the complainant attached to his complaint, it was found that the accused slandered the complainant.

By reviewing the storage memory stick attached to the documents, the court found out it included an audio file lasting three minutes and 50 seconds. It was an audio message addressed to a person, including the words mentioned in the complainant's statements.

Waste removal drive: The Public Hygiene Team in Hawally Municipality branch has conducted a campaign to remove waste in Hawally, Shaab, Jabriya, Salwa, Maidan Hawally, South Sura and Salmiya, reports Al-Anba daily.

Meanwhile, a similar team in Mubarak Al-Kabeer Municipality branch carried out a campaign during which a huge amount of waste and neglected cars were lifted.

❑ ❑ ❑

Power outage reported: The Ministry of Electricity and Water has reported that two main feeders from the main power transfer station, Mina Abdullah A, have been disconnected, resulting in a power outage affecting specific areas within the Mina Abdullah region, reports Al-Qabas daily.

In response, emergency teams were deployed to the site to address the situation promptly and restore power to the affected areas.

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July 12 deadline to apply: The Saad Al Abdullah Academy for Security Sciences has officially commenced the registration and admission process for the officer cadet course specializing in Maritime Coast Guard at the Mohammed bin Ghanem Al Ghanim Maritime Academy in Qatar, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Interested candidates have until Friday, July 12 to apply for the course.

Applicants are required to submit their applications through the 'Sahel' application platform. It is crucial that all necessary documents for enrollment are included with the application to ensure compliance with both general and specific admission criteria.

This opportunity marks an important step for individuals aspiring to pursue a career in maritime security and is part of the ongoing efforts to strengthen capabilities in safeguarding maritime interests and enhancing security measures in the region.

Al-Ajmi heads team

Bid to prevent human smuggling

KUWAIT CITY, July 3: The team tasked to execute the strategy on preventing human trafficking and people smuggling, headed by acting Undersecretary of the Social Affairs Ministry Khalid Al-Ajmi, will soon start visiting shelters for victims of human trafficking in the country, reports Al-Jarida daily quoting sources.

Sources revealed such visits are aimed at providing psychological support to the victims and to inform them about their rights, in coordination with the concerned charities and civil society organizations.

Al-Ajmi

Sources said the team, which was formed three months ago, consists of the director of the Charities and Civil Society Organizations Department at the ministry, as well as representatives of the Family Care and Social Development departments; in accordance with the recommendation of the concerned committee.

Sources added the strategy is implemented in six phases – starting with identifying the victims, conducting investigations, taking judicial procedures, providing protection and support for the victims, helping them to return home and assisting them to merge with their societies.

Sources affirmed that Kuwait is taking these measures in line with the international criteria, pointing out that the implementation of the national strategy helps in developing the skills of national employees dealing with human trafficking which is rejected as per the religious teachings and laws.

Meanwhile, Minister of Social Affairs Amthal Al-Huwaila, along with Al-Ajmi and acting Assistant Undersecretary for the Social Care Sector Jassem Al-Kandari, recently toured the new headquarters of the Minors Care Complex in Sulaibiya.

Al-Hewaila considers this a positive step towards improving the quality of life of minors residing in the complex, rehabilitating them and merging them with society. She confirmed that these minors enjoy a supportive environment, which strengthens their faith and patriotism.

She also stressed the need to establish more shelters for minors involved in criminal acts and organize worthwhile activities for them like vocational training, education and sports.

Al-Mashaan emphasizes KU graduates' contributions to Kuwait's development

Exhibition showcases university's role in shaping future engineers

KUWAIT CITY, July 3, (KUNA): Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs, Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan emphasized, on Wednesday, the importance of Kuwait's University's graduates and their significant contribution to Kuwait's development.

In her speech at the opening of the 46th Engineering Design Exhibition at the Collage of Engineering and Petroleum, Minister Al-Mashaan states that Kuwait continuously supported national cadre.

She mentioned that the exhibition, which has been held by the collage since 1966, supplies the labor market with qualified youth in various engineering fields and represents a valuable opportunity to showcase the skills of engineers and the latest developments in engineering design.

She stressed the importance of highlighting and supporting engineering innovations to enhance this sector and motivate professionals to achieve further progress and development in Kuwait.

Dr. Mashaan noted that government institutions' support for this exhibition reflected an interest in developing the engineering sector and enhancing the role of innovation and creativity in this field.

She encouraged the students and graduates by adding that Kuwait has provided all necessary financial resources to create a suitable environment for academic achievement and competition in the labor market, and to contribute to driving development and enhancing Kuwait Vision 2035.

The College of Engineering and Petroleum organized the 46th Engineering Design Exhibition with the support of the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Science (KFAS), involving 279 engineers from various specialties in the college with 69 engineering projects.

KUNA photo

Minister of Public Works Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan during the opening of the 46th Engineering Design Exhibition.

PM backs Kuwaiti nurses' advancement

KUWAIT CITY, July 3: Chairman of the Board of Directors of Kuwait Nursing Association Mohammad Al-Assaf has affirmed that His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah is keen on supporting Kuwaiti nurses, indicating that the association received an invitation from the Council of Ministers to work together towards the advancement of the profession, reports Al-Rai daily.

In a press statement, Al-Assaf revealed that "the board met with Advisor of HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Basil Al-Sabah who listened with open arms to the association's points of view and aspirations regarding technical or administrative matters in order to lay down an action plan in line with Kuwait's development vision for 2030 and keep pace with global developments in terms advancing the health system. The association presented a memorandum on the action plan for developing the profession during the meeting.

"The dialogue that took place was rich, as it focused on serious work to develop the profession and facilitate procedures for all workers in this vital sector, which constitutes the largest part of the health system. This is aimed at achieving stability and a healthy environment in the work place.

Council preps for environmental meet

Kuwait Municipality rejects Indian school's request for HQ relocation

By Inaas Awadh
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 3: The Environmental Affairs Committee at the Municipal Council, headed by Alia Al-Farsi, will hold its second meeting for the third round on Thursday to discuss the following:

- Two proposals submitted by council member Architect Sherifa Al-Shalfan to maintain the cleanliness of the marine environment and the aerobic composting project,
- Letter of the Health Ministry regarding the sanitary control of landfills,
- Letter of Kuwait Green Wall Society on its cooperation with the Municipal Council,
- Response of the executive branch (Kuwait Municipality) to the question of Al-Farsi about the treatment of municipal solid waste and construction waste,
- Approval of the minutes of the first workshop of the Environmental Affairs Committee for the second round held on Sept 21, 2023.

In a related development, the Municipality has informed the council about its disapproval of the request of the Indian Public School to relocate its headquarters from Salmiya, Block 12, Plot 11 to Block 10, Plot 28 as the request violates the building regulations.

The newspaper obtained a copy of the technical opinion of the transaction approved by Director General of the Municipality Saud Al-Dabbous, stating that Plot 28 is classified for use as investment housing. It measures 2,090 square meters and it is located in Block 10, Salmiya.

Ultra gasoline price reduced to 205 fils

KUWAIT CITY, July 3: The committee tasked to review fuel subsidies decided to reduce the price of Ultra gasoline from 225 fils to 205 fils per liter from July 1 to Sept 30, reports Al-Shahed daily.

The committee retained the prices of Octane 91 at 85 fils per liter, Octane 95 at 105 fils per liter, and Diesel and Kerosene at 115 fils per liter within the same period.

Ministry preps for academic year as new schools set to open in suburbs

KUWAIT CITY, July 3: The Ministry of Education has completed preparations to open new schools in the suburbs of Sabah Al-Nasser and West Abdullah Al-Mubarak, while the Farwaniya Educational District affirmed the opening of the door for the academic and administrative staff who wish to transfer to these schools, reports Al-Anba daily.

The daily obtained a copy of the circular issued by the district; stating that the new schools include Tariq Bin Ziyad Secondary School for Boys in West Abdullah Mubarak suburb, Moudi Barjas Al-Soor Middle School for Girls in Sabah Al-Nasser suburb, and Qais Bin Obada Intermediate School for Boys in Sabah Al-Nasser suburb.

The district advised the concerned staff who wish to transfer to the aforementioned schools in the next academic year 2024/2025 to submit a transfer request using the code stated in the circular for the middle and secondary stages.

Kuwait University mandates ID for entry to enhance campus security

KUWAIT CITY, July 3: Dr. Fayez Al-Dhafiri, the Acting Secretary General of Kuwait University, has issued a circular mandating the presentation of university identification cards for entry into university buildings and facilities, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The circular, a copy of which has been obtained by the daily, outlines the requirement for all individuals to show their university ID to the Security and Safety Department's supervisory staff upon entering the Sabah Al-Salem University City buildings and colleges.

Additionally, the circular specifies that visitors must provide proof of identity and obtain a visitor card for the duration of their stay within university premises.

This measure aims to enhance security and safety for students and university personnel by restricting access to authorized individuals only.

Dr Al-Dhafiri

It is designed to regulate the flow of entry and exit from the university campus and mitigate potential issues associated with unauthorized access.

This proactive step underscores Kuwait University's commitment to maintaining a secure environment while facilitating orderly operations within its educational facilities.

Bilateral agreements progress

Kuwait and Ethiopia set to enhance partnership across multiple sectors

KUWAIT CITY, July 3: Ethiopian Ambassador to Kuwait Dr. Saeed Jibril said the Kuwaiti-African relations, particularly Ethiopia, are strong, developed and based on mutual respect and interests; while affirming the commitment of both countries to strengthen their partnership and cooperation in various fields, reports Al-Qabas daily.

In his first press interview since assuming his post in Kuwait, Jibril told the daily that his country's foreign policy towards Kuwait has never changed. "We have very good economic and diplomatic relations at the level of leaders and peoples. Both sides are committed to strengthen this relationship and expand its scope to include all fields," he stated.

He praised the pioneering role played by Kuwait in the development of the African continent in terms of supporting and financing humanitarian and infrastructure projects through the Kuwait Fund for Economic Development. He expects the joint political committee between the two countries to hold a meeting soon.

He hinted that the recruitment of Ethiopian domestic workers will resume soon, especially since the two sides already signed the memorandum of understanding on such recruitment in Addis Ababa. "We now expect to proceed with the next step to begin implementing this agreement within a short period. It is very important that better workers will come to Kuwait soon," he added.

He said the Ethiopians have been working in Kuwait for years. "However, a few years ago in 2013 or 2014, the first agreement became outdated. Since then, the two governments have been working closely to renew the agreement," he explained.

He stressed that his country takes stringent measures before sending Ethiopian workers abroad, indicating these measures will apply to new domestic workers who will be sent to Kuwait. "All workers must undergo language and various skills training. A very strict policy was not followed in terms of conducting mental and psychological tests for domestic workers before sending them abroad. We also train them on the Kuwaiti culture, so they will not be shocked when they come here. Now, we are taking these steps before sending them to Kuwait," he elaborated.

He continued saying: "On our part, this agreement must be approved by the Ministry of Labor and then by the Ethiopian Parliament. We expect it will be approved in the near future. Once these procedures are completed, we will resume sending workers to Kuwait.

All our workers, including the domestic workers, must undergo training at the care center in Ethiopia for them to be qualified to enter the labor market. As for the new domestic workers, they will be trained at the center to cook, manage the house and perform other related tasks. Anyone who is not certified cannot come to this country, and there will be periodic follow up by the Ministry of Labor and Skills in Ethiopia."

He added the Kuwaiti and Ethiopian sides are ready to cooperate to improve procedures and monitor and evaluate every step. "According to the memorandum of understanding, a joint technical committee will be formed to review, evaluate and follow up the implementation of the memorandum. This is in addition to holding annual meetings or as needed alternately in the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and Kuwait, provided that the date for holding the meetings of the Joint Working Committee is agreed on through diplomatic channels," he said.

He expressed his gratitude to the Kuwaiti government for providing scholarships annually to three Ethiopian students through Kuwait University, which gives them the opportunity to work in the country after graduation. He praised the level of cultural diplomacy in Kuwait.

Collaborative efforts propel university to new heights in global education

KU celebrates achievements in global academic rankings and accreditation

KUWAIT CITY, July 3, (KUNA): Leaders at Kuwait University (KU) recently expressed pride in the institution's achievements, which serve as an incentive to exert more effort and continue striving for success. These sentiments were conveyed during a press conference held by KU to celebrate its advancements in the global academic classification (QS), the academic accreditation of the College of Pharmacy, and the achievements of the Medical Sciences Center.

Acting President of KU, Dr. Nawaf Al-Mutairi, highlighted KU's rise in the QS index and noted that the College of Pharmacy achieved academic accreditation for its Doctor of Pharmacy program from the Canadian Academic Accreditation for Pharmacy Programs. He also mentioned that the Medical and Pharmaceutical Professions (MPP) journal, first issued at KU in 1989, received top international recognition among medical journals.

Dr. Fayez Al-Dhufairi, Acting Secretary-General and University Spokesperson, attributed these achievements to collaborative teamwork aimed at advancing Kuwait University regionally and globally. He expressed gratitude to everyone involved and congratulated the university community on their remarkable progress across various fields.

KUNA photo

Leaders during the press conference at Kuwait University.

Dr. Asaad Al-Rashed, Deputy Director of the Planning Sector at Kuwait University, highlighted the university's significant advancements in the latest QS and Times Higher Education rankings, emphasizing their alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

He reiterated the College of Pharmacy's accreditation and Kuwait University's improved ranking among Arab universities.

Acting Deputy Director of the University for Research, Dr. Nasser Al-Tannak, emphasized the university's commitment to scientific research and partnerships, particularly with the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences, to enhance Kuwait University's research capabilities.

Dr. Osama Al-Saeed, Acting Vice President of Kuwait University for Medical Sciences, underscored the Medical Sciences Center's pivotal role and expressed pride in the recent academic accreditations achieved by the Colleges of Medicine and Pharmacy.

Acting Deans Dr. Maitham Khajah (College of Pharmacy), Dr. Mona Suleiman (College of Medicine), Dr. Rashed Al-Azmi (College of Dentistry), and Dr. Muhammad Shaban (College of Allied Medical Sciences) each highlighted their respective colleges' contributions to medical research and their ongoing efforts towards academic accreditation and international recognition.

These statements reflect Kuwait University's dedication to excellence in education, research, and global academic recognition.

Money laundering

Continued from Page 1

laws to eliminate ambiguities and ensure they are sufficiently deterrent. Additionally, there must be a concerted effort to educate customers about their rights and responsibilities, enabling them to recognize and report suspicious activities.

International Cooperation and Specialized Courts

Combatting money laundering is not a task that can be undertaken in isolation. It requires a high degree of international cooperation, given the cross-border nature of many financial crimes. Bilateral and multilateral agreements can play a pivotal role in tracking, freezing, and recovering stolen funds, especially those siphoned off through cyber fraud and other electronic means.

Moreover, the establishment of specialized financial courts could significantly enhance the efficacy of anti-money laundering efforts. These courts would be equipped with the necessary expertise to handle complex financial crimes, ensuring swift and just adjudication.

Strengthening Compliance and Supervision

Effective anti-money laundering strategies necessitate a strong compliance framework within both public and private sectors. This includes rigorous training for employees of financial institutions and continuous enhancement of compliance practices. Regular audits and inspections by regulatory bodies can help identify and mitigate risks before they escalate.

The Role of Public Awareness

Public awareness campaigns can also play a critical role in the fight against money laundering. By educating the populace on the dangers and signs of money laundering, individuals can become more vigilant and proactive in reporting suspicious activities.

Conclusion

Money laundering is a dynamic and evolving threat that demands a multifaceted response. By closing legal loopholes, enhancing international cooperation, establishing specialized courts, and fostering a culture of compliance and vigilance, we can tighten the noose around this pernicious practice. As a nation, Kuwait must remain resolute in its efforts to safeguard its financial integrity and uphold the rule of law.

Call to Action

The fight against money laundering is ongoing and requires the concerted efforts of all stakeholders. Regulatory authorities, financial institutions, and the general public must work together to identify, report, and prevent illicit financial activities. Only through a unified and comprehensive approach can we hope to eradicate this scourge and protect our economy from its detrimental effects.

Kuwait sets

Continued from Page 1

Minister of Finance and Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investment, Dr. Anwar Ali Al-Mudhaf, along with the leadership of the Ministry of Finance, made a presentation to the Cabinet on this matter.

After deliberations, the Cabinet approved these draft decree-laws and referred them to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

The Cabinet assigned the Ministry of Finance to present its perspectives on financial and economic reforms to ensure the financial sustainability of the state and maximize non-oil revenues, and present a quarterly report to the Cabinet on the implementation of the state budget for the FY 2024/2025.

It also instructed the Ministry to inform all state bodies about any public funds squandering practices or actions and the measures they must take to address these practices.

The Cabinet assigned a committee, headed by the Minister of Finance and including the Minister of Public Works, the Minister of Commerce and Industry, and the Minister of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy, to prepare a draft government plan of action and set priorities and review the key initiatives of the plan to be implemented according to a clear timetable.

The formation of the committee comes in light of the government's commitment to implementing the directives of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, to achieve national aspirations, and sustainable development for the country and its people.

As part of the government's commitment to ensuring that employees adherence to official working hours in ministries and government entities, the Cabinet has tasked the Civil Service Commission with taking the necessary measures to monitor and verify the presence of employees at their workplaces during official working hours.

Minister of Justice and Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Dr. Mohammed Ibrahim Al-Wasmi updated the Cabinet on the Ministry of Justice's efforts to draft legislation aimed at abolishing statutes of limitations on the debt collection by the State, from both public and private entities, in order to safeguard public funds. Regular updates on this initiative will be provided to the Cabinet.

Furthermore, the Cabinet also barred all public and governmental institutions from raising any foreign flags or playing foreign national anthems at official occasions, stressing the importance of compliance by official delegations.

Ministry targets

Continued from Page 1

school diplomas from Arab countries, which had been approved by the Private Education Department, consequently revoked.

He underscored the implementation of actual measures in enforcing the law and stated his commitment to combating violations and continuing the reform process for the nation's future.

Additionally, the minister adopted the legal sector's recommendation in the Ministry of Higher Education to refer post-secondary certificates to Public Prosecution, as this referral is for presenting false documents and altering data in academic certificates to obtain accreditation.

Dr. Al-Adwani asserted his full commitment to fighting the phenomenon of forged certificates, referring these fake certificates to Public Prosecution is the first phase, with more referrals to follow to completely eliminate this issue, which poses a threat to the education system and job market.

He added that this is to uphold integrity and transparency in society by enforcing regulations, ensuring that unqualified individuals do not take opportunities from those who deserve them.

Dr. Al-Adwani pointed out the importance of maintaining the integrity, quality, and productivity of work, which positively impacts the job market and national economy.

Failaka Island

Continued from Page 1

and attract numerous visitors and tourists. By 2035, the island development project is expected to create over 3,000 jobs and generate $60 to $80 million for the state treasury by 2030.

A detailed master plan for Failaka Island, obtained by Al-Seyassah, outlines the island's development and planning, starting from 2000 when the Kuwait Municipality, in collaboration with a specialized consulting office, created the plan.

The development includes various land uses such as tourist villages, housing, chalets, therapeutic tourist villages, government uses, archaeological and historical areas, camps, a future science complex, reserved areas, future extensions, cemeteries, a treatment plant, roads, facilities, and public services.

Worker shortage

Continued from Page 1

In response to the crackdown, some regular workers faked their absence saying they have either travelled or are on leave, while others were candid about their fear of the security campaigns due to expired or residency permits or of their illegal stay.

Meanwhile, the sources reported that illegal workers in areas like Mutla'a have fled the area. This situation contributed to an increase in wages for legally employed workers in compliant companies.

In places like Khaitan, workers who frequented roundabouts were conspicuously absent following the crackdown on laws violators in Farwaniya, Fahaheel, and Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh.

In the Jahra Governorate, illegal workers previously visible on the streets offering construction, cleaning, electrical, and plumbing services also vanished due to the intensified security measures.

Municipal Legal and Financial Committee reviews 'new advertisement' regulations

West Mishref's diplomatic area gets new name

By Inaas Awadh
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 3: Head of the Legal and Financial Committee Fahad Al-Abduljader said the committee reviewed the Kuwait Municipality's response to the proposal of the Municipal Council chairman, his deputy and members Khaled Al-Mutairi, Abdullatif Al-Daei, Alia Al-Farsi, Munira Al-Amir and Farah Al-Roumi to add Paragraph B to Clause 5 of Article 20 of the Advertisements Regulations.

Photo during the Municipal Council's Legal and Financial Committee meeting.

The Municipality reported that Ministerial Resolution No. 223/2024 was issued on June 2, requiring the advertisement box to be at least three meters above the ground and not to exceed five to eight meters, and an annual fee will be collected for each square meter per face of electronic billboards and the like, indicating the committee's recommendation to save the transaction.

In a press statement, Al-Abduljader revealed that the Municipality informed the committee there was no update to respond to the proposal it submitted regarding canceling the council's decision to allow comprehensive and specialized sports clubs, sports federations, and the Olympics Committee to invest spaces within their sites.

He recommended not to allow investment in clubs and federations unless approved by the Municipality, so the commercial ratio does not increase as stated in the structural plan of the country according to the law. He stressed the need to implement an agreed-upon mechanism for the Municipality to develop investment alternatives outside residential areas.

He stated that the committee reviewed the Municipality's response to the proposal of member Sharifa Al-Shalfan to lay down a regulation for the demolition of buildings based on a field study on the types of buildings and the market.

The Municipality confirmed that its Projects Sector Department has taken the necessary measures to present a study on consulting services for construction waste treatment projects. This will include the consulting offices conducting an integrated technical study on the project, covering all engineering and technical aspects related to its implementation and management, with the committee taking a decision to keep the topic on its agenda.

Meanwhile, Deputy Chairman of the council Khaled Mufleh Al-Mutairi proposed adding a clause to the building regulations regarding the requirements and specifications for investment buildings in and outside Kuwait City.

He cited the Municipality's approval of the proposal and the addition of Clause 19 regarding the existing buildings, in addition to Mayor Resolution No. 30/1985 regarding the organization of construction work, to continue allowing the use of the ground floor only for licensed commercial activities existing therein until the demolition of those buildings as follows: "It is permissible for the property owner to use the first floor for activities permitted in accordance with this system, while the commercial licenses for the ground floor will be canceled if the owner wishes to use the first and second floors for commercial activities permitted in this system."

Moreover, the Legal and Financial Committee has approved the proposal to change the name of the diplomatic area in West Mishref, Block 7 to 'Diplomatic District', as well as the letter of Kuwait Insurance Federation on adding new activities to the list of public stores that disturb public comfort and are harmful to health (traditional insurance - Takaful insurance - all types of insurance).

The committee referred to the executive branch the proposal to name Street Two in Surra Block 4, after the late Abdul Hamid Al-Qattan.

The committee set aside the grievance submitted by the Modern English School against the council's decision regarding private schools established in private residential areas, because it is being discussed in the judiciary.

KNETCO, Johnson Controls forge partnership to revolutionize smart building solutions in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, July 3: KNETCO, A leader and trusted partner in transforming businesses visions into digital reality in Kuwait, and Johnson Controls, a global leader in smart, healthy and sustainable buildings, announced a strategic partnership agreement today. The ceremony, held at the Courtyard Marriott Hotel in Kuwait City, marks a significant milestone in the collaboration between these two leading companies. This partnership is expected to bring about revolutionary changes in the smart building sector in Kuwait.

A New Era of Smart Building Solutions

The partnership aims to leverage Johnson Controls'"OpenBlue"the blueprint of the future for smart buildings, transforming buildings from static entities into smart, strategic assets. OpenBlue is a comprehensive system of connected technologies that integrate data from multiple sources to provide a unified view of building operational technology status. This platform not only tracks and analyzes operations but also offers actionable recommendations and executes commands automatically to ensure optimal building performance.

Vision of Riham Al-Ghanim Riham Fouad Al-Ghanim, Chairperson of KNETCO

Al-Ghanim Expressed her enthusiasm for this partnership, affirming its alignment with KNETCO's strategic goals. "This collaboration underscores our commitment to delivering advanced digital and technological solutions. Through our partnership with Johnson Controls, we are poised to transform the smart building industry in Kuwait. Our focus on developing smart infrastructure and integrating cutting-edge technologies will lead to significant progress, benefiting our clients and the community as a whole."

She added that KNETCO is the first company in the region to enter into this agreement with Johnson Controls to distribute and export smart building and city technology services to the region, meeting urban development needs and transitioning to a sustainable green economy that protects the climate and environment. The new services will accelerate this transition in Kuwait, offering smart solutions to manage and optimize energy usage in buildings and cities.

Photo taken during the signing ceremony.

Al-Ghanim continued: "KNETCO is committed to providing the latest digital and technological solutions, focusing on developing smart infrastructure and smart communication services across all sectors of the state, strengthening business relationships with key partners and establishing new strategic partnerships in both the government and private sectors."

> **Riham Al-Ghanim:** Partnership A collaboration that introduces "OpenBlue" service for urban and building infrastructure development in the Gulf region for the first time.
>
> **Khaled Samy:** New services mark a breakthrough in energy efficiency and building management.
>
> **Mohammed Khalid:** "OpenBlue"creates a new class of smart buildings that are secure, healthy and sustainable.

Commitment of Khaled Samy, CEO of KNETCO, emphasized operational and strategic alignment between the two companies. "We are excited to partner with Johnson Controls, a global leader known for its innovative solutions. Together, we will develop and implement smart infrastructure solutions that enhance operational efficiency, sustainability, and the comprehensive user experience. This partnership is a significant step toward realizing our vision of transforming traditional buildings into smart, efficient, and sustainable environments.

Transforming to Smart Buildings and Cities can we delete this as it looks like a repetition?

Khaled Samy, CEO of KNETCO, echoed these sentiments, highlighting the operational and strategic synergies between the two companies. "We are excited to partner with Johnson Controls, a global leader known for its innovative solutions. Together, we will develop and implement smart infrastructure solutions that enhance operational efficiency, sustainability, and the overall user experience. This partnership is a significant step towards realizing our vision of transforming traditional buildings into smart, efficient, and sustainable environments that revolutionize building and city management through smart infrastructure solutions and IoT technologies, enhancing smart control to save and optimize energy."

Johnson Controls' Technological Expertise

Mohammad Khalid, Vice President and General Manager for the Middle East and North Africa at Johnson Controls, on the partnership, stating, "Our collaboration with KNETCO empowers us to deliver the award-winning OpenBlue platform to the Middle East. Through data-driven insights and advanced technological solutions, we're transforming the region's built environment by creating smarter, healthier, and more sustainable buildings. This partnership represents another significant step towards a greener future."

Regional Impact and Expansion

KNETCO, part of the Fouad Alghanim & Sons Group of Companies, has a strong regional presence with operations in the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt. This strategic partnership will enhance KNETCO's ability to deliver innovative solutions across these markets, further solidifying its leadership position in the region.

Riham Alghanim noted, "Our extensive regional presence enables us to reach a wide audience and deliver tailored solutions that meet the unique needs of each market. This partnership with Johnson Controls will allow us to set new benchmarks in the smart building sector, driving growth and innovation across Kuwait."

Commitment to Sustainability

Both KNETCO and Johnson Controls are deeply committed to sustainability. By integrating smart technologies and data-driven insights, the partnership aims to create buildings that are not only efficient and high-performing but also environmentally sustainable. This focus on sustainability is in line with both companies' long-term strategic goals and their commitment to making a positive impact on the environment.

Looking Ahead

The strategic partnership between KNETCO and Johnson Controls represents a bold step forward in the field of smart building solutions. With a shared vision of innovation, sustainability, and excellence, the companies are poised to lead the way in transforming the built environment in the Kuwait.

World News Roundup

Europe

British PM Sunak battles to the end: Rishi Sunak has covered thousands of miles in the past few weeks, but he hasn't outrun the expectation that his time as Britain's prime minister is in its final hours.

United Kingdom voters will cast ballots in a national election Thursday, passing judgment on Sunak's 20 months in office, and on the four Conservative prime ministers before him. They are widely expected to do something they have not done since 2005: Elect a Labour Party government.

During a hectic final two days of campaigning that saw him visit a food distribution warehouse, a supermarket, a farm and more, Sunak insisted "the outcome of this election is not a foregone conclusion."

"People can see that we have turned a corner," said the Conservative leader, who has been in office since October 2022. "It has been a difficult few years, but undeniably things are in a better place now than they were."

Starmer

But even a last-minute pep talk at a Conservative rally Tuesday night by former Prime Minister Boris Johnson - who led the party to a thumping election victory in 2019 - did little to lift the party's mood. Conservative Cabinet minister Mel Stride said Wednesday it looked like Labour was heading for an "extraordinary landslide."

Labour warned against taking the election result for granted, imploring supporters not to grow complacent about polls that have given the party a solid double-digit lead since before the campaign began. Labour leader **Keir Starmer** has spent the six-week campaign urging voters to take a chance on his center-left party and vote for change. Most people, including analysts and politicians, expect they will. (AP)

❑ ❑ ❑

Leaders of Poland and Germany meet: Government leaders of Poland and Germany held consultations Tuesday aimed at giving a new impulse to bilateral relations that sagged under Poland's previous government and to jointly declare responsibility for Europe's security in turbulent times.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz traveled with 12 ministers and government officials, including Defense Minister Boris Pistorius, for the meeting in Warsaw.

"We bring a very clear message: Germany and Poland are good neighbors, close partners and reliable friends. And we want to create a new dynamic for our cooperation," Scholz told a joint news conference with Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk.

He stressed that "close partnership between Germany and Poland is very important to us." (AP)

❑ ❑ ❑

'US to provide $2.3b in aid to Ukraine': US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said Tuesday that the US will soon announce an additional $2.3 billion in security assistance for Ukraine, to include anti-tank weapons, interceptors and munitions for Patriot and other air defense systems.

Austin's remarks came as Ukrainian Defense Minister Rustem Umerov met with him at the Pentagon. And they mark a strong response to pleas from Kyiv for help in battling Russian forces in the Donetsk region.

Of that total, $150 million of the aid will come from presidential drawdown authority (PDA) and the remainder will be provided by Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative (USAI). PDA allows the Pentagon to take the weapons from its stocks and send them more quickly to Ukraine; USAI puts weapons on longer-term contracts. (AP)

❑ ❑ ❑

French candidates make hurried deals: French opposition parties made hurried deals Tuesday to try to block a landslide victory for Marine Le Pen's far-right National Rally in Sunday's second round of legislative elections, as she said her party would lead the government only if it wins an absolute majority - or close to it.

The National Rally, under party president Jordan Bardella, secured the most votes in the first round of the early legislative elections on June 30 but not enough to claim an overall victory that would allow the formation of France's first far-right government since World War II.

"We cannot accept going into government if we cannot act," Le Pen said in an interview with public broadcaster France Inter. "It would be the worst betrayal of our voters." However, "if we have, say, 270 lawmakers, we need 19 more, we will go to others and ask them if they are ready to participate with us in a new majority." (AP)

❑ ❑ ❑

French citizen pleads guilty to 'charges': A French citizen arrested in Russia has pleaded guilty to criminal charges involving illegally collecting information on military issues in the country, state news agency Tass said Wednesday.

Laurent Vinatier was arrested in the Russian capital in June as tensions flared between Moscow and Paris following French President Emmanuel Macron's comments about the possibility of deploying French troops in Ukraine.

Russian authorities accused Vinatier of failing to register as a "foreign agent" while collecting information about Russia's "military and military-technical activities" which could be used to the detriment of the country's security. Under Russian law, the offense is punishable by up to five years in prison. (AP)

❑ ❑ ❑

7 arrested in Germany and Sweden: At least seven people have been arrested in Germany and Sweden on suspicion of committing crimes against humanity and war crimes in Syria in 2012-2014, authorities in the two countries said Wednesday.

In a coordinated effort that also involved the European Union judicial cooperation agency Eurojust, the EU police agency Europol, and several other unnamed European countries, four were arrested in Germany and three in Sweden.

The German federal prosecutor said that those arrested in Germany were "strongly suspected of killing and attempting to kill civilians." Some of those arrested also were suspected of torture. (AP)

❑ ❑ ❑

'Russia violated international law': United Nations human rights experts say Russia violated international law by imprisoning Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich and should release him "immediately."

The Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, made up of independent experts convened by the U.N.'s top human rights body, said there was a "striking lack of any factual or legal substantiation" for spying charges leveled against Gershkovich, 32.

The five-member group said Gershkovich's United States nationality has been a factor in his detention, and as a result the case against him was discriminatory.

Matthew Gillett, the working group's chair, said its opinion was grounded in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which was adopted in 1966 and nearly all UN member countries have ratified. (AP)

❑ ❑ ❑

Russian missile kills 5 in Dnipro: A Russian missile and drone attack on the eastern Ukrainian city of Dnipro on Wednesday killed five civilians and injured 47 others, including a 14-year-old girl, authorities said.

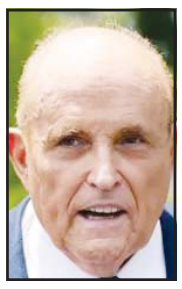
Blasts blew out some windows of a shopping mall, raining shards onto the street, photos published by local officials showed. Mayor Borys Filatov said the daytime attack also shattered windows in two schools and three kindergartens. Debris struck the intensive care unit of a children's hospital, and a fire broke out in another hospital.

A video posted on social media by President Volodymyr Zelenskyy showed a missile with a fiery trail streaking over buildings in Ukraine's fourth-largest city.

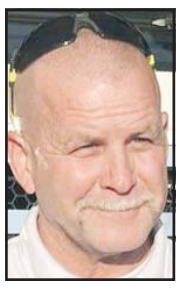
The war, now in its third year , has killed more than 10,000 civilians and wounded around 20,000 others, United Nations says. (AP)

Britain's Prime Minister and Conservative Party leader, Rishi Sunak, delivers a speech at a Conservative Party campaign event at the National Army Museum in London, on July 2. (AP)

Firefighters battle the Thompson Fire burning in Oroville, Calif. on July 2. An extended heatwave blanketing Northern California has resulted in red flag fire warnings and power shutoffs. (AP)



Giuliani



Eichmann

America

Giuliani disbarred in NY: **Rudy Giuliani**, the former New York City mayor, federal prosecutor and legal adviser to Donald Trump, was disbarred in New York on Tuesday after a court found he repeatedly made false statements about Trump's 2020 election loss.

The Manhattan appeals court ruled Giuliani, who had his New York law license suspended in 2021 for making false statements around the election, is no longer allowed to practice law in the state, effective immediately.

"The seriousness of respondent's misconduct cannot be overstated," the decision reads. Giuliani "flagrantly misused" his position and "baselessly attacked and undermined the integrity of this country's electoral process."

"In so doing, respondent not only deliberately violated some of the most fundamental tenets of the legal profession, but he also actively contributed to the national strife that has followed the 2020 Presidential election, for which he is entirely unrepentant," the court wrote. (AP)

❑ ❑ ❑

High heat builds in Calif: Swaths of California sweltered Tuesday and things were only expected to get worse during the Fourth of July holiday week for parts of the United States, with nearly 90 million people under heat alerts.

The torrid conditions were being caused by a ridge of high pressure just off the West Coast and a separate ridge that spawned heat warnings and advisories from Kansas and Missouri to the Gulf Coast states, according to the National Weather Service.

California's capital, Sacramento, was under an excessive heat warning expected to last until Sunday night, with temperatures forecasted to reach between 105 degrees and 115 degrees (40.5 and 46 Celsius).

John Mendoza, 35, called it a "firehose of heat" as he walked around the Capitol on Tuesday with an iced coffee in his hand. By 9 am he had already been in a pool once - and planned to go back later in the day.

About 70 miles (113 kilometers) north of Sacramento, crews working in scorching conditions were battling a wildfire in Butte County that prompted evacuation orders for some 13,000 people in and around Oroville along with the power plant at the Oroville Dam. (AP)

❑ ❑ ❑

Tucson man gets 16-month: A Tucson man was sentenced Tuesday to 16 months in federal prison for threatening a mass shooting at the University of Arizona last year.

Prosecutors said 27-year-old Michael Pengchung Lee, who was not a student at the university in Tucson, pleaded guilty in April to transmitting threats through interstate communications.

According to a criminal complaint, Lee made the threats to campus fraternities and sororities on Oct. 22 while in an online group chat. In the online threats, Lee cited "incel" ideology, language, and motivations, according to a statement issued by the US Attorney's Office.

"Incels," or "involuntary celibates," refers to a misogynistic online subculture whose members sometimes call for violence against women.

Lee was arrested three days after sending the threats.

As part of his sentence, authorities said Lee must serve three years of supervised release and won't be permitted on campus or allowed to contact university officials during that span. (AP)

❑ ❑ ❑

Home explosion injures 1: A house in southeastern Wisconsin exploded Tuesday, injuring one man who was found trapped in rubble in the basement, authorities said.

Calls to 911 reported the explosion about 2:15 pm in Lafayette, the Walworth County Sheriff's Office said. Deputies arrived about 15 minutes later and saw that the house was completely destroyed, the office said.

First responders made contact with a man in rubble in the basement, Elkhorn Area Fire Chief **Trent Eichmann** told reporters. It took them more than 30 minutes to reach the man, who was flown by helicopter to a hospital. His condition was not immediately available.

"It looked like when the house exploded, most of it laid down into one side of the basement and that's where the gentleman was found," Eichmann said. "Right now, he is the only one that we think was in the structure at this time." (AP)

Politics

Biden plans public events blitz

Dems grapple with debate aftermath

WASHINGTON, July 3, (AP): US President Joe Biden's disastrous debate performance has reverberated across the Democratic Party, forcing lawmakers to grapple with a crisis that could upend the presidential election and change the course of American history.

The Democratic president has signaled he has no intention of dropping out of the race against Donald Trump despite the halting and uneven debate delivery that threw a spotlight on questions about Biden's age and capacity to be president. But as Democrats make the case that the stakes of the election are momentous - challenging no less than the foundations of American democracy itself - they are wrestling with how to approach the 81-year-old who is supposed to be leading the charge for their party.

Withdraw

Rep Lloyd Doggett, a Democrat from Texas, on Tuesday became the first sitting Democrat in Congress to call for Biden to withdraw from the race. In a statement, he praised Biden but said he "has the opportunity to encourage a new generation of leaders from whom a nominee can be chosen to unite our country through an open, democratic process."

"Recognizing that, unlike Trump, President Biden's first commitment has always been to our country, not himself, I am hopeful that he will make the painful and difficult decision to withdraw. I respectfully call on him to do so," Doggett said.

A number of other congressional Democrats have tip-toed in recent days toward outspoken concern not just over Biden's performance during the 90-minute debate on Thursday night, but also the level of transparency that Biden's team has offered about his mental fitness.

Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse, D-R.I., told a local CBS-affiliated television station this week that he was "horrified" by both Biden's performance and Trump's falsehoods during the debate.

"People want to make sure that this is a campaign that's ready to go and win," Whitehouse said. "That the president and his team are being candid with us about his condition - that this was a real anomaly."

Rep. Jamie Raskin, a prominent Democrat from Maryland, said on MSNBC, "There are very honest and serious and rigorous conversations taking place at every level of our party."

Raskin said Democrats needed Biden at the "very center" of their campaign to make the argument that the Republican Party is slipping towards authoritarianism under Trump, but also raised the possibility that Biden would not continue as the presidential candidate.

Also:

WASHINGTON: The White House announced Tuesday that President **Joe Biden** will meet with congressional leaders and Democratic governors, sit for a network TV interview and hold a press conference in the coming days, a blitz designed to push back against growing pressure for the 81-year-old president to step aside in the 2024 race after his disastrous performance in last week's debate with Republican **Donald Trump**.

"We really want to turn the page on this," White House press secretary **Karine Jean-Pierre** said of the intensifying calls for Biden to bow out of the race. She added that the president had no intention of stepping aside, characterizing his debate failings as simply evidence of "a bad night" when he had a cold.

During a campaign event later Tuesday, Biden blamed it on jet lag after two back-to-back European trips. "I wasn't very smart. I decided to travel around the world a couple of times," he said. The president added that he "didn't listen to my staff" about travel and joked that he "fell asleep on stage" during the debate.

Judge delays Trump's 'hush money' sentencing until at least September

WASHINGTON, July 3, (AP): In a major reprieve for former President Donald Trump, sentencing for his hush money convictions was postponed Tuesday until at least September - if ever - as the judge agreed to weigh the possible impact of a new Supreme Court ruling on presidential immunity.

Trump had been scheduled to face sentencing July 11, just before the Republicans' nominating convention, on his New York convictions on felony charges of falsifying business records. He denies any wrongdoing.

The postponement sets the sentencing for Sept. 18 at the earliest - if it happens at all, since Trump's lawyers are arguing that the Supreme Court ruling merits not only delaying the sentencing but tossing out his conviction.

"The impact of the Immunity Ruling is a loud and clear signal for Justice in the United States," Trump crowed on his Truth Social media site after the sentencing was delayed.

Using all capital letters, he claimed the Supreme Court's decision netted him "total exoneration" in this and other criminal cases he faces.

There was no immediate comment on the sentencing postponement from Manhattan prosecutors, who brought the hush money case.

Though the Sept. 18 date is well after this month's Republican National Convention, where Trump is set formally to accept the party's nomination for president in this year's race, it is far closer to Election Day, which could put the issue top-of-mind for voters just as they seriously tune into the race. Because of absentee voting timelines in certain states, some voters may already have cast ballots before anyone knows whether the former president will have to spend time in jail or on home confinement.

Britain's Prince William, (left), arrives for the Order of the Thistle Service at St Giles' Cathedral for the installation to the Order of the Queen, the Duke of Edinburgh, Baroness Black of Strome LT, Baroness Kennedy of The Shaws LT and Sir Geoff Palmer KT, in in Edinburgh, Scotland on July 3. (AP)

A woman injured in a stampede receives treatment at Hathras district hospital, Uttar Pradesh, India on July 3. Inset: Police officers stand guard outside Hathras district hospital where bodies of stampede victims have been brought, in Uttar Pradesh state, India on Wednesday. (AP)

Severe overcrowding, lack of exits, mud contributed to deadly stampede in India

Severe overcrowding and a lack of exits contributed to a stampede at a religious festival in northern India, authorities said Wednesday, leaving at least 121 people dead as the faithful surged toward the preacher to touch him and chaos ensued.

Five of those died on Wednesday morning, local official Manish Chaudhry said, and 28 people were still being treated in a hospital.

Deadly stampedes are relatively common at Indian religious festivals, where large crowds gather in small areas with shoddy infrastructure and few safety measures.

Some quarter of a million people turned up for the event Tuesday that was permitted to accommodate 80,000. It's not clear how many made it inside the giant tent set up in a muddy field in a village in Hathras district in Uttar Pradesh state.

It was also not clear what sparked the panic. But the state's chief minister, Yogi Adityanath, told reporters that a crowd rushed toward the preacher to touch him as he was descending from the stage, and volunteers struggled to intervene.

An initial report from the police suggested that thousands of people then thronged the exits, and many slipped on the muddy ground, causing them to fall and be crushed in the crowd. Most of the dead were women. (AP)

Africa

Workers dead in Congo

Protests continue in Kenya's capital

NAIROBI, Kenya, July 3, (AP): Protests continued in Kenya's capital and elsewhere Tuesday over a finance bill that would raise the cost of living, even after the president said he would not sign it in the wake of the storming of parliament last week.

Police fired tear gas at protesters in Nairobi as many businesses remained closed for fear of looting. The main highway to Kenya's second-largest city, Mombasa, was closed as protesters lit bonfires.

In Mombasa, five vehicles were burnt by protesters outside a hotel whose owner is alleged to have shot at protesters who were looting.

While there are concerns that President **William Ruto** might change his mind and sign the finance bill before next week's deadline, some protesters are also calling on Ruto to resign and accusing him of bad governance.

Ruto

But some members of the youth-led protests have expressed worries that other Kenyans are using the unrest as an excuse to cause violence. "Goons have infiltrated," one organizer, Hanifa Farsafi, wrote on social media platform X on Tuesday.

Interior minister Kithure Kindiki on Tuesday said "criminals" were taking advantage of planned protests to "commit arson" and "terrorize" Kenyans. He warned that they were planning more violence on Thursday and Sunday and said the government was determined to stop them at "whatever cost".

Deadly

Last week's protests were deadly as police opened fire. The two weeks of protests have left 39 people dead, according to the Kenya National Human Rights Commission. Ruto on Sunday put that number at 19.

The president has offered to have dialogue with Kenyan youth and has promised budget cuts on travel and hospitality for his office in line with some protesters' demands. As unemployment remains high and prices rise, there has been outrage over the luxurious lives of the president and other senior officials.

Members of the youthful but leaderless protest movement have said they do not trust the president to implement his new austerity plans.

Kenya's main opposition party on Tuesday called on Ruto's government to take responsibility for the deaths that occurred last week.

Economist Ken Gichinga told The Associated Press that the government should undertake a different approach to tax reforms that will allow the economy to thrive.

"The Gen Zs are the most affected by the unemployment," Gichinga said.

The Kenya National Human Rights Commission chairperson Roseline Odede told journalists the protests were infiltrated and the "demographics had changed" and turned violent.

Also:

NOUAKCHOTT, Mauritania: Clashes in Mauritania between security forces and protesters rallying against the reelection of President **Mohamed Ould Ghazouani** left three people dead, authorities said Tuesday. An unspecified number of people were reported injured.

Following the clashes, mobile internet access was blocked Tuesday as authorities vowed to arrest those behind the violence.

The protests broke out late Monday in parts of the northwestern African country after Ghazouani was declared winner of the presidential election.

His main rival, **Biram Dah Abeid,** a renowned anti-slavery activist, rejected the outcome and claimed the result was falsified.

Authorities said security forces in the southern city of **Kaedi** - the country's largest and an opposition stronghold with an overwhelming Black majority - confronted the demonstrators, the Ministry of Interior said, and several arrests were made. The ministry did not identify the three people killed in the violence or elaborate on the circumstances of their deaths.

Demonstrations also broke out in the towns of **Nouadhibou, Rosso Zoueirat** and **Boghe,** all also Abeid strongholds.

"Kaedi last night saw violent acts of vandalism and sabotage of public and private property, scenes of looting and a general climate of fear which led the security forces to confront it and arrest several demonstrators," the ministry said in a statement.

"The prosecutor's office will open an investigation to determine the circumstances of these events and the death of the demonstrators," the ministry added.

Ghazouani, who had campaigned on a pledge of providing security and economic growth, won 56% of the votes while Abeid received 22%, the electoral commission said Monday. Abeid promptly called for "peaceful demonstrations and peaceful gatherings."

The commission - which includes representatives of political parties - dismissed the opposition claims about voting irregularities.

❑ ❑ ❑

GOMA, Congo: Two staff members of the foreign aid group Tearfund were killed when their convoy was attacked in eastern Congo, the organization said, the latest in a series of attacks targeting aid groups and residents in the region.

The aid workers were killed on Sunday after their convoy had arrived in Butembo city in North Kivu province, where armed rebels have been fighting Congolese security forces, the organization said in a statement late Monday.

It wasn't immediately clear which group was behind the attack. More than 120 armed groups in eastern Congo have been carrying out attacks, often involving bombs targeting residents, as they seek a share of the region's gold and other resources.

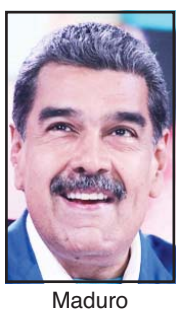
More than 170 such security incidents have targeted humanitarian workers, causing at least four deaths and the abduction of more than a dozen people, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Congo said Tuesday in a statement that called for the protection of aid workers.

"At a time of immense humanitarian need, it is unacceptable that those working to help affected people are being attacked and killed," said **Bruno Lemarquis,** the humanitarian coordinator for Congo.

Violence in the province has worsened in recent months as security forces battle the rebels. Two people were killed last week in the region when mortar shelling targeted a base operated by South Africa's military, which is part of a regional peacekeeping mission. The rebels have also taken over more villages in recent weeks.

Kenya ant-riot police beat a protester in downtown Nairobi, Kenya on July 2. Protests have continued to rock several towns in Kenya including the capital Nairobi, despite the president saying he will not sign a controversial finance bill that sparked deadly protests last week. (AP)

Blinken



Maduro

Lat/Am

US renews support for Haiti: The United States has renewed its commitments toward the Haitian people and the multinational peace-keeping force that had been dispatched to the Caribbean island country to help local authorities maintain order.

The re-affirmed US stand was expressed during a meeting that grouped Secretary of State **Antony Blinken** with the visiting Haitian Prime Minister Garry Conille and Foreign Minister Dominique Dupuy in Washington on Tuesday, according to a statement released by the State Department.

Blinken, Conille and Dupuy discussed the crisis in Haiti and the recent arrival of the United Nations-authorized Multinational Security Support mission.

The Secretary reaffirmed the US commitment to the mission and the Haitian people. In addition to improved security, the parties reinforced the importance of good governance, including the facilitation of free and fair elections, inclusive growth, and the provision of humanitarian assistance. (KUNA)

❑ ❑ ❑

2 Russia ships dock in Venezuela: Two Russian naval ships docked Tuesday in the Venezuelan port of La Guaira after exercises in the Atlantic Ocean that Moscow said were to "show the flag" in remote, important regions, and an initial stopover in Cuba.

The frigate Admiral Gorshkov and the oil tanker Akademik Pashin are part of Russia's Northern Fleet, which since May 17 has been carrying out tasks that include "guaranteeing the Russian naval presence" in "remote areas of the oceans," Russian news agency Tass cited Russia's Ministry of Defense as saying.

The stopover was to last several days and highlight the close ties between Moscow and Venezuelan President **Nicolás Maduro's** government.

Like his predecessor, the late President Hugo Chávez, Maduro has forged a close relationship with Russia. The visit comes before Maduro seeks reelection in July 28 elections. (AP)

❑ ❑ ❑

Asia

Najib loses bid to serve sentence in house arrest

Xi, Putin to meet in Central Asian summit

BEIJING, July 3, (AP): Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping will be meeting for the second time in as many months as they visit Kazakhstan for a session of an international group founded to counter Western alliances.

Putin and Xi last got together in May when the Kremlin leader visited Beijing to underscore their close partnership that opposes the U.S.-led democratic order and seeks to promote a more "multipolar" world.

Now they'll be holding meetings amid the annual session of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization on Wednesday and Thursday in the Kazakh capital of Astana.

Discuss

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization was established in 2001 by China and Russia to discuss security concerns in Central Asia and the wider region, Other members are Iran, India, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Observer states and dialogue partners include Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Egypt.

Besides Putin and Xi, and summit host President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, other leaders there will be Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif of Pakistan, President Shavkat Mirziyoyev of Uzbekistan, President Emomali Rakhmon of Tajikistan, and President Sadyr Zhaparov of Kyrgyzstan. President Alexander Lukashenko of Belarus will attend because his nation is becoming a full member.

Iran is still choosing a successor to President Ebrahim Raisi, killed in a helicopter crash in May, with a runoff election Friday, so acting President Mohammad Mokhbar will attend.

Other guests of the SCO include President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey and President Ilham Aliyev of Azerbaijan.

Also present will be UN Secretary-General António Guterres, who is visiting Central Asia. Guterres wants "to position the U.N. as an inclusive organization that's talking to all the big clubs," said Alexander Gabuev, director of the Carnegie Russia Eurasia Center.

Also:

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia: A Malaysian court on Wednesday dismissed a bid by imprisoned former Prime Minister **Najib Razak** to serve his remaining corruption sentence under house arrest.

In an April application, Najib said he had clear information that then-King Sultan **Abdullah Sultan Ahmad Shah** issued an addendum order allowing him to finish his sentence under house arrest. Najib claimed the addendum was issued during a Jan. 29 pardons board meeting chaired by Sultan Abdullah, which also cut his 12-year jail sentence by half and sharply reduced a fine.

Najib's counsel, **Mohamed Shafee Abdullah,** said it was disappointing for the High Court to rule Wednesday that the government has "no legal duty" to verify if such an order existed. He said they would file an appeal.

"The court said there is no legal duty but in terms of ethics, the government should have answered," Shafee told a news conference at the court building.

In his application, Najib has accused the pardons board, home minister, attorney-general and four others of concealing the sultan's order "in bad faith." Sultan Abdullah hails from Najib's hometown in Pahang.

Taiwan says it was warned by China to not interfere in detention of crew

TAIPEI, Taiwan, July 3, (AP): Taiwan said Wednesday that China warned Taiwan's coast guard against interfering in the detention of a Taiwanese fishing boat, in what is seen as Beijing's latest attempt to encroach on Taiwanese territory.

The incident comes amid heightened political tensions following the election of President William Lai Ching-te, whose party rejects unification with the mainland, and an apparent threat by Beijing to execute supporters of Taiwanese independence.

Taiwan's coast guard repeated its call for the release of the boat and its crew members who were taken from waters off the Taiwanese-controlled island of Kinmen just off the Chinese coast on Tuesday night. That call is complicated by China's refusal to communicate with Taiwan's government.

A spokesperson for Taiwan's coast guard, Hsieh Ching-chin, said the boat was not in Chinese waters when it was boarded by Chinese agents and steered to a port in the Chinese province of Fujian.

"First, we call on the (Chinese side) to provide an explanation, and second to release the boat and its crew," Hsieh said.

Also:

MELBOURNE, Australia: A state government minister said on Wednesday a 14-year-old boy accused of stabbing a student at the University of **Sydney** has faced charges that were dismissed by a court, while newspapers reported he was accused of threatening to shoot fellow students.

The boy is the third Australian child to be accused of a stabbing attack linked to online radicalization since April, prompting authorities to warn parents to beware of internet dangers.

The boy remained at a Sydney hospital for a mental health assessment the day after the early Tuesday attack, New South Wales Police Minister **Yasmin Catley** said.

Over 30 suspects under probe: More than 30 civilian and military suspects are under investigation for their alleged role in the failed coup attempt against Bolivian President Luis Arce on June 26, the Prosecutor's Office said Tuesday.

"We must stress that in general it is quite a complex case," Prosecutor Franklin Alborta told reporters, adding: "Preliminarily, we are reporting that more than 30 people are already formally under investigation."

One of the suspects most lately arrested on Monday was Vladimir Lupa Salamanca, the commander of F10, an elite group of the armed forces. He is scheduled to give testimony to prosecutors in La Paz.

Among the main defendants are former army commander and coup leader General Juan Jose Zuniga, former navy commander Juan Arnez, and former air force commander Marcelo Zegarra. (Xinhua)

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Ex-mayoral candidate killed: A former mayoral candidate for the Ecuadorian city of Portoviejo, in western Manabi province, was murdered in the north of the city on Tuesday, police said.

A motorcycle with two people on board opened fire on the victim inside a vehicle which was parked in front of a security company, and the victim was identified as 41-year-old Jose Mendoza, Manabi police chief Fabary Montalvo said.

Mendoza, an expert lawyer in procedural law, was a leading figure in the "Gente Nueva" ("New People") political movement of the 2023 local elections in Manabi, in which he came in second place.

The crime comes two months after two suspects were arrested for planning an attack against the mayor of Portoviejo, Javier Pincay. (Xinhua)

Chinese Premier Li Qiang, also a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, communicates with local emergency-response staff at a dike in Jiujiang, east China's Jiangxi Province on July 1. Li inspected flood-prevention and control work in the city of Jiujiang, Jiangxi Province, from Monday to Tuesday. (Xinhua)

oil surges

Kuwait crude oil rose USD 1.33 during Tuesday's trading sessions to reach USD 88.89 per barrel compared with USD 87.56 pb the day before, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) said Wednesday.

Brent futures lost 36 cents to USD 86.24 pb and West Texas Intermediate dropped 57 cents to USD 82.81 pb. (KUNA)

Kuwait aims to double natural gas production, eyes export opportunities

Kuwait is set to continue its upward trajectory in free gas production to achieve its production targets for 2023-2024 after surpassing the milestone of 600 million cubic feet per day, reports Al-Qabas daily quoting reliable sources.

This increase supports Kuwait's efforts to meet its domestic demand for natural gas, particularly in the chemical industry, thereby reducing the need for imports.

According to the sources, Kuwait's production of free gas is expected to further increase to 780 million cubic feet per day in 2024-2025, followed by a projected rise to 900 million cubic feet per day by 2025-2026, and potentially reaching about one billion cubic feet thereafter.

It was highlighted that Kuwait's stake in the Dorra gas field will reach half a billion cubic feet following the commencement of production activities from this field shared with Saudi Arabia.

The sources emphasized Kuwait's strong commitment to ramping up its gas production, aiming to transition from being a net importer to an exporter.

They noted that Kuwait's efforts in this direction are progressing at an accelerated pace compared to previous years, positioning it to achieve its gas production goals and compete effectively within the region.

Furthermore, Kuwait possesses substantial capabilities and infrastructure in the gas sector, with significant reserves estimated at 63 trillion cubic feet. The country is also preparing to emerge as a major player in the liquefied natural gas (LNG) market.

The sources underscored Kuwait Petroleum Corporation's plans to double its production of natural gas, including shale gas, to meet local demand and potentially export surplus quantities. This strategic move is expected to yield substantial economic benefits, helping Kuwait overcome current economic challenges.

Highlighting global demand for gas, especially amplified by geopolitical events like the Ukrainian conflict and subsequent sanctions on Russia, the sources noted that European countries are increasingly turning to regional suppliers for energy imports. Kuwait aims to capitalize on this demand surge to bolster its economy through increased gas exports.

Moreover, Kuwait boasts the largest LNG import facility in the Middle East, capable of handling 22 million tons annually, equivalent to double the Arab region's entire consumption.

Market Movements 3-07-2024

			Change	Closing pts
DUBAI	-	DFMGI	+15.96	4,079.21
JAPAN	-	Nikkei 225	+506.07	40,580.76
PHILIPPINES	-	PSEi	+91.07	6,450.03
EGYPT	-	EGX 30	+175.28	28,161.17
PAKISTAN	-	KSE 100	+788.27	80,332.50

			Change	Closing pts
SAUDI	-	TASI	-10.89	11,595.20

Business

Volume of orders amounted to $1.4 billion

Warba successfully closes Arada Developments' $400 mln sukuk offering

KUWAIT CITY, July 3: Warba Bank announced the closing of Arada Developments LLC's USD 400 million sukuk offering, which found both regional and global success. Warba Bank was appointed as Joint Lead manager and Book Runner alongside Abu Dhabi Commercial Bank, Arab Bank, Dubai Islamic Bank, Emirates NBD Capital, Kamco Investment Company, Mashreq, RAK Bank, Sharjah Islamic Bank and Standard Chartered. The issuance, which opened its books on Tuesday, June 11th, 2024, and closed on the same day, received great interest from regional and international market participants, as the order book reached USD 1.4 billion and 3.5x the issuance size.

The Bank said in a press statement that this issuance is the second under the Arada Sukuk Programme denominated in US dollars, valued at USD 1 billion. The sukuk will be listed in the International Securities Market (ISM) and Nasdaq Dubai.

In this context, Thuwaini Khaled Al-Thuwaini, Chief Investment Banking Officer at Warba Bank, said, "With the confidence of the market in hand, we succeeded in closing the sukuk issuance amid excellent market participation and reaction, which is a testament to Warba Bank's strategic foresight and collaboration. It is a victory that reflects not only the strength of the offering but also the pulse of the market's confidence and enthusiasm."

Thuwaini Al-Thuwaini

Al-Thuwaini:

- The high turnout reflects investors' confidence in debt capital market capabilities.
- Warba's expertise in Sukuk has drawn global attention and is swiftly becoming the go-to institution for Islamic debt instruments for investor and issuers, alike.

Al-Thuwaini pointed out the importance of Islamic financing tools and their role in strengthening global financial markets, which is evidenced by the level of demand and interest of global investors in recent sukuk issued by regional corporates and banking institutions. He underscored Warba Bank's path to remain a significant player in the debt capital markets for years to come by continuing to focus on growth and expansion as Warba Bank aims to extend its reach and services to both institutional and individual investors through its commitment to ethical banking and innovative strategies.

First Kuwaiti bank to reduce staff's carbon emissions

Warba Bank partners with Climate Partner to pioneer carbon reduction in employee travel

KUWAIT CITY, July 3: As part of its unwavering commitment to environmental sustainability, Warba Bank is proud to announce a significant reduction in carbon emissions resulting from its employees' travel. Partnering with Climate Partner, Warba Bank has become the first Kuwaiti bank to offset carbon emissions from employee commutes. This initiative aims to raise awareness about emissions from Scope Three, which includes indirect emissions not directly controlled by the bank but related to its operations.

Maali Abdullah AlRasheed, Chief Human Resources & General Services Officer at Warba Bank, emphasized the bank's dedication to mitigating the environmental impact of its operations. "Warba Bank recognizes its responsibility in addressing any negative impacts arising from its activities. Our commitment to global environmental sustainability supports Kuwait's vision for comprehensive sustainability, aligning with the national development plan," AlRasheed stated.

As part of its sustainability strategy, Warba Bank focuses on reducing net emissions and increasing reliance on renewable and clean energy. In line with this strategy, the bank has offset 45,000 kilograms of carbon emissions by financing various solar and wind energy projects in Africa. These projects not only harness Africa's vast potential for sustainable energy but also contribute to achieving several United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including affordable clean energy, decent work and economic growth, and climate action.

Maali AlRasheed

By reducing the carbon emissions from its employees' travel, Warba Bank continues to lead the way towards a sustainable, low-carbon economy, reinforcing its role as a pioneer in environmental stewardship.

AlRasheed stressed that the primary goal of this initiative is to reduce the bank's carbon footprint, aligning with its strategy for sustainable transformation and raising awareness about Scope Three greenhouse gas emissions. As part of the bank's social responsibility, Warba Bank is committed to supporting the global transition to a low-carbon economy and mitigating the risks of climate change, recognizing that this journey is long and challenging.

AlRasheed further highlighted that Warba Bank has set specific goals for sustainable business practices and formulated internal standards to ensure that efforts to combat climate change play a crucial role in its future business model.

It is worth 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.

Kuwait sees 88.3% drop in real estate contracts

Al-Ahmadi governorate leads in real estate contracts

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

KUWAIT CITY, July 3: Real estate transactions experienced a significant decline in both the number of contracts and their total value, according to the latest weekly report from the Kuwaiti Ministry of Justice. From June 13 to 20, the number of traded contracts plummeted by 88.3% compared to the previous week, with only 14 contracts registered compared to 120 the week before, marking a decrease of 106 contracts.

The total value of these real estate contracts also saw a sharp drop, amounting to approximately 18.08 million dinars, an 85.7% decrease from the previous week's total of 126.290 million dinars, reflecting a decline of 108.210 million dinars.

In terms of contract types, private real estate dominated with 11 properties worth 4.950 million dinars. This was followed by two investment real estate contracts worth 1.530 million dinars and one commercial contract valued at 11.6 million dinars. There was no activity in craft, industrial, exhibition, warehouse, or coastal real estate sectors this week.

Among the governorates, Al-Ahmadi led with six contracts valued at 7.915 million dinars. Hawalli Governorate followed with four contracts, including two for private real estate, one for investment real estate, and one commercial contract, totaling 3.980 million dinars. The Capital Governorate registered three private real estate contracts worth 1.735 million dinars, and Farwaniya Governorate had only one contract for private real estate valued at 450,000 dinars.

UAE leads solar energy expansion

Middle East faces power outage crisis amid record temperatures

KUWAIT CITY, July 3: The recent report on the power outage crisis in the Middle East highlights several critical issues and potential solutions, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The daily added, the old and inefficient power generation systems in the region are struggling to meet the increasing demand exacerbated by record-breaking temperatures. This has led to frequent power outages, such as those experienced in Kuwait and Egypt.

The report emphasized the necessity of upgrading existing power infrastructure rather than solely relying on building new power plants. Upgrades would enhance efficiency and reliability, crucial during peak demand periods like summer.

This is in addition to developing electricity trade between countries lacking robust systems could mitigate shortages. This approach necessitates a structured framework for cross-border energy sharing.

The report added, countries such as the UAE have made strides in solar energy production, quadrupling capacity, emphasizing solar and wind power, along with efficient battery storage solutions, which can alleviate strain on traditional energy sources like gas and oil.

Initiatives like TAQA's plan in Abu Dhabi to replace old gas plants with solar energy and enhance water desalination through more efficient methods underscore a move towards sustainability and reduced emissions.

The report added, encouraging solar panel installations on homes and businesses, removing barriers for industries to adopt renewable energy, and optimizing national grids are crucial policy reforms suggested by the report.

This is in addition to continued investment in renewable energy infrastructure, including potential expansions in nuclear energy, reflects a commitment to long-term energy security and sustainability.

Overall, addressing the power outage crisis requires a multifaceted approach involving technological upgrades, policy reforms, regional cooperation, and increased investment in renewable energy sources. These efforts are essential for ensuring reliable energy supply amid growing demand and climatic challenges in the region.

The report indicated that simply building huge amounts of new electricity generation is not sufficient at the present time, for the following reasons:

First -- This has been the obvious solution in Lebanon and Iraq for many years, but it has not happened, due to entrenched bureaucracies and vested interests, as the growth in demand in Iraq in particular is so rapid that it seems that the country will never be able to catch up with it.

Second -- Many countries consider it an economic waste due to the increasing need to spend money on other priorities.

Third -- Countries, such as Egypt, found that they did not have enough gas to operate their new stations.

The following are the five solutions to overcome the crisis

- Electricity trade between MENA countries should grow, as it is still insufficient and lacks a clear trade structure.
- There should be more attention to efficiency, through better cooling of buildings through insulation, renewable energy-based district cooling for denser urban developments, more efficient air conditioning, proper maintenance and cleaning, less wasteful behaviour by residents, and better design of new construction.
- Restore green spaces and plan urban areas with more reflective surfaces.
- Gradually eliminating energy and water subsidies, and converting them, if necessary, into compensation payments for low-income people.
- Aligning investment, efficiency, society and politics.

S&P affirms Kuwait's A+ sovereign rating

Kuwaiti stock index drops amid Gulf market gains in June 2024

KUWAIT CITY, July 3: In June 2024, despite a decline in the Kuwaiti stock index, most Gulf stock exchanges showed positive performance, buoyed by higher oil prices, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Kuwait Financial Centre (Markaz) reported that although the Kuwait Stock Exchange experienced a downturn, it had maintained a positive performance year-to-date.

The Kuwait Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) reflected positive economic sentiment, rising to 52.4 in May from 51.1 in April.

This increase was driven by improved business confidence and expanded new orders, marking the strongest output growth in four years. However, the banking sector index in Kuwait fell by 1.7% during June, with declines notably seen in Warba Bank and Kuwait Finance House shares.

Economically, Kuwait's real GDP contracted by 4.35% year-on-year in Q4 2023, primarily due to a 6.4% decline in real oil GDP resulting from reduced oil production. Non-oil GDP also declined by 2.3% during the same period.

Despite these challenges, Standard & Poor's affirmed Kuwait's sovereign rating at A+ with a stable outlook in June, highlighting robust financial reserves. GDP declined by 1.8% in 2023 and is projected to contract by 2.3% in 2024, largely due to continued decreases in oil production.

Moreover, deposits in the Kuwaiti banking sector reached a record KWD 63.9 billion in Q1 2024, underscoring stability and liquidity in the financial sector.

Across the GCC, most stock market indices saw positive gains in June, supported by higher oil prices and strong performances from major companies.

The S&P GCC Composite Index, for instance, rose by 2.5% during the month. Foreign capital inflows into GCC markets also increased, reaching $616.7 million in May, with notable growth seen in the UAE and Saudi Arabia.

ADIA secures stake in Dubai's largest office tower

Gulf sovereign wealth funds drive $52 billion in global investments

KUWAIT CITY, July 3: The international Sovereign Wealth Fund Institute (SWFI) has highlighted the significant role of Gulf sovereign wealth funds in global investment activities during the first half of 2024, reports Al-Qabas daily.

According to their report, Gulf sovereign funds, including prominent entities like the Saudi Public Investment Fund (PIF), the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority (ADIA), and the Qatar Investment Authority (QIA), collectively facilitated deals worth $52 billion. This amount represents 54% of the total global sovereign fund deals valued at $96 billion for the same period, marking the highest percentage for Gulf funds since 2009.

The report underscores the growing importance of Gulf sovereign funds, which manage assets exceeding $4 trillion. It notes that these funds have attracted considerable attention from global bankers, investment giants, and technology sector leaders in recent years. This interest is aimed at supporting various deals, acquiring companies, raising capital, and financing ambitious investment plans across the region.

Diego Lopez, Managing Director of the Institute, highlighted that while global sovereign funds have adopted cautious approaches amid market uncertainties, Gulf sovereign funds, particularly ADIA benefiting from substantial gains in oil revenues, have been notably active in investments compared to previous periods.

The Saudi PIF emerged as the most active sovereign fund globally in the first half of 2024, bolstered by asset transfers from the Saudi government. Despite challenges in oil prices, these funds have diversified their investment portfolios and continued to play a pivotal role in financing both domestic and international projects.

Locally, the report noted significant investments within the Gulf region itself. For instance, the Saudi PIF's largest investment during this period focused internally, while ADIA, managing assets worth $105 billion, secured a stake in Dubai's largest office real estate tower, showcasing their robust participation in regional economic development and real estate ventures.

KDD, DHL Express forge strategic alliance to enhance sustainability efforts

KDD has announced a significant partnership with DHL, a leading global logistics company, to utilize the "DHL GoGreen Plus" solutions. This initiative marks KDD as the first Food & Beverage industrial company in Kuwait to join this global sustainability effort, reinforcing its leadership position within the sector. The corporate relationship between KDD and DHL started on 18th January 1982.

Commitment to Sustainability

Mrs. Bahia Ezzat Jaafar, Deputy Chairman & Deputy CEO, CFO of KDD, stated, "This partnership signifies a substantial leap in KDD's unwavering commitment to enhancing sustainability and mitigating climate change impacts. Our vision is to achieve the smallest possible environmental footprint while addressing the biggest environmental challenges in the places where we operate."

Through the GoGreen Plus initiative, KDD will proactively minimize its Scope 3 emissions. The Company's investment in Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) aims to reduce carbon emissions linked to all its parcel shipments by up to 70%.

Mr. Makram Raad, Country Manager Kuwait at DHL Express, stated, "We are excited to establish this strategic partnership with KDD, an industrial company of considerable scale and outstanding reputation. As the first Food & Beverage industrial company in Kuwait to opt for DHL GoGreen Plus service, KDD demonstrates its commitment to environmental sustainability."

"This initiative aligns with KDD's long-term sustainability goals," said Mrs. Bahia Ezzat Jaafar. "Our commitment to sustainable logistics is part of our broader strategy to address climate change and promote a low-carbon economy. By integrating sustainability into our business, culture, and operations, we aim to set a benchmark for the industry."

KDD and DHL officials during the signing of the co-operation agreement.

Kuwait programs benefited 6,500+ people through community initiatives

Agility 2023 Sustainability Report shows improved performance

KUWAIT CITY July 3: Agility, a supply chain services, infrastructure and innovation company, released its 2023 Sustainability Report, showing the company has made significant progress in environmental and social responsibility around the world. Agility's latest sustainability report highlights the company's robust efforts in environmental stewardship, strategic infrastructure development, and commitment to diversity and inclusion.

Awards

Agility is deeply committed to sustainability and community initiatives both in Kuwait and globally, striving to achieve direct, positive, and measurable impacts. These efforts continued to be recognized by various organizations. In 2023, the company was ranked as one of the top three in sustainability leadership within the Transport & Logistics sector in the Middle East and was one of only three Kuwait-based companies on Forbes' Middle East Sustainable 100 list.

Kuwait Highlights:

Agility subsidiaries in Kuwait:

■ Processed 7500 metrics tons of medical waste and has developed capacity to annually recycle 60,000 tons of scrap metal to the highest environmental standards (Metal and Recycling Company (MRC)). Aiming to raise public awareness of medical waste management best practice, MRC has participated in and sponsored several public campaigns led by Kuwait's Environment Public Authority.

■ Are building high-quality worker accommodations and strategic logistics infrastructure in Sabah Al-Ahmed city, with 40% greater energy efficiency than the market.

Agility also:

■ Trained public sector employees on facility management training, in partnerships with Public Youth Authority (Agility Logistics Parks).

■ Trained more than 4,000 Kuwait-based employees in human rights and fair labor standards between 2021 and 2023.

■ Assisted over 4,000 people in need of food and healthcare through partnerships with charities like Al-Ber Foundation and Fawzia Sultan Healthcare Network.

■ Enabled over 1,000 young men and women to access free coding programs via educational and capacity-building efforts with CODED Academy.

■ Helped prepare Kuwaitis for the job market through specialized training and financial literacy programs and initiatives with INJAZ-Kuwait and LOYAC.

Sustainability Highlights

Environment

The report outlines commitments by two of Agility's largest businesses – Menzies Aviation and Tristar – to achieve net-zero emissions. Menzies and Tristar accounted for roughly 74% of Agility's 2023 revenue.

Agility 23 report published page.

Menzies, which provides in-plane fueling and other ground services for commercial aviation, is playing a key role in aviation industry decarbonization. Menzies' first net-zero targets have been approved by the Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi), making it the first major aviation services provider to achieve this important validation, and aims to convert 25% of its motorized ground support equipment (GSE) to electric power by 2025.

Fuel logistics provider Tristar, meanwhile, has expanded its investment in solar energy at its Dubai headquarters, boosting its capacity to nearly 1mWh and eliminating emissions of approximately 650 tons of CO2 annually. Tristar has commissioned the first hybrid bunker barge in the UAE.

Agility Logistics Parks demonstrated its commitment to energy efficiency, conservation and waste management in the Middle East and Africa by developing the GCC's first "zero-carbon ready" warehouse in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia and West Africa's first zero-carbon ready warehouse in Abidjan, Cote D'Ivoire. Both facilities received EDGE Advanced "green building" certification.

People

At the Group level, Agility is making strides in promoting gender diversity. Women represent 16.7% of the company's Board of Directors and 25.1% of its workforce, significant in traditionally male-dominated industries. Menzies, Agility's largest business by headcount, has a workforce that is 29% female and aims to have 25% of senior leadership roles held by women by 2025, in line with the 25by2025 targets of the International Air Transport Association (IATA).

Agility businesses remain deeply committed to health, safety and fair labor standards. Ninety-five percent of the company's eligible employees have completed human rights training; and 90% took part in health and safety training over the past three years. Tristar's health and safety performance was recognized with two gold medals at the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents Awards. In 2023, Menzies serviced more than 1.3 million aircraft turns, over 217 million airline passengers, and moved 2 million tonnes of cargo – all while outperforming the industry average for operational safety performance, and with an aircraft damage rate 15 times lower than the industry average.

Supply Chain Sustainability

Agility has implemented new supplier sustainability requirements that cover two-thirds of its spending on goods, services, and materials for Agility parent company and subsidiaries Agility Logistics Parks, Global Clearinghouse Systems, Metal Recycling Company, and Shipa. All new suppliers for Menzies and Tristar are screened for sustainability criteria. Starting in 2024, all new contracts must adhere to stricter sustainability standards, ensuring a greener and more responsible supply chain.

Community

Globally, Agility's community investments focused largely on education, training, and support for young people. Agility-backed programs provided digital skills and job training to more than 93,000 women and girls. In addition, the company continues to support humanitarian aid and refugee assistance, providing critical resources and support in regions affected by crises.

Mariam Al Foudery, Group Chief Marketing Officer, said: "The targets that Agility has set at the Group level and in its business units are intended to make a tangible impact on the environment and the communities where we operate. This year's achievements, from pioneering zero-carbon ready infrastructure to our ongoing emphasis on fair labor practices to our investment in our communities, reflect our unwavering commitment to sustainable growth and innovation. We are committed to our journey of creating a greener, safer, more diverse and responsible future."

Buyers balked at still-high prices

US new-vehicle sales barely rose in the second quarter

DETROIT, July 3, (AP): U.S. new-vehicle sales rose only slightly in the second quarter, despite larger discounts and slightly lower prices.

But brisker sales could be on the horizon: Auto industry analysts say they expect prices to drop further and there's a possibility of interest-rate cuts that would make taking out a loan for a new vehicle more affordable.

Overall, U.S. sales were up only 0.1% compared to a year ago, as still-high prices kept many potential buyers out of the market, according to preliminary tallies Tuesday by Motorintelligence.com.

Sales were crimped in late June, when cyberattacks knocked out software from CDK Global that dealerships use to do sales paperwork. CDK said most dealers were back up by Tuesday afternoon, but companies such as General Motors said the problem pushed some deliveries into the third quarter.

Analysts say inventories on dealer lots are building, especially for pickup trucks and other higher-priced vehicles.

Discounts vary by demand for vehicles, with smaller, less-expensive models and gas-electric hybrids generally being in shorter supply. Many customers are delaying purchases, figuring that bigger discounts are coming.

"Waiting may be the optimal strategy here," said Cox Automotive Senior Economist Charlie Chesbrough.

Toyota, which sells many popular gas-electric hybrids, posted a 9.2% sales increase from April through June. Honda sales were up 2.7%, while General Motors posted just a 0.3% gain and Hyundai reported a 1.8% increase. Subaru had a 5.4% sales gain.

Sales at Stellantis fell 20.7% in the second quarter, with the Ram brand off 26% and Jeep sales falling 19%. Nissan sales fell 3.1%, while Kia was down 1.6%.

Together, automakers reported selling roughly 4.13 million new vehicles from April through June. That's on pace to reach forecasts of nearly 16 million for the year, a little above last year's 15.6 million.

Ivan Drury, director of insights at Edmunds.com, said interest rates for new vehicles are averaging just above 7%, a high number for people who bought or leased vehicles years ago but now find they need to replace their rides.

Many, he said, are going for what few lower-priced vehicles remain in the mid- to upper- $20,000 range.

"The stuff that's very affordable, that's where it's at," said Drury. "You really have to have an attractive product at an attractive price for it to move today."

For instance, sales of the Chevrolet Trax compact SUV, which starts at $20,400 excluding shipping, were up 152.7% during the quarter.

Kevin Roberts, director of analytics for the CarGurus auto site, said automakers want to keep making higher-profit SUVs and trucks when a big chunk of buyers are after less-expensive vehicles such as compact sedans.

"You're seeing people search more and more for affordable vehicles. You're seeing people searching for under $30K," Roberts said.

The U.S. industry, he said, is at an inflection point where automakers will have to add discounts to get the prices down, or they'll have to change what they produce to "try to get more attractive price points and try to keep those inventory levels lighter."

Small businesses could find filing for bankruptcy more difficult task

NEW YORK, July 3, (AP): A type of bankruptcy protection filing that made it easier for small businesses to seek relief has expired, which will complicate filing for small businesses with more than $3 million in debt.

The filing type, known as Subchapter V, is cheaper and less time-consuming than the traditional Chapter 11 bankruptcy filing.

The rule went into effect in 2020 as part of the Small Business Reorganization Act. It let small businesses with less than $2.75 million in debt file under the subchapter. That debt limit was extended to $7.5 million in March 2020 amid the pandemic for one year - and that was extended two more times.

A bill to make the debt limit permanent failed, so the debt threshold reverted to $3 million (the original debt limit adjusted for inflation), on June 21.

Subchapter V filing imposes shorter deadlines for filing reorganization plans, allows for greater flexibility in negotiating restructuring plans with creditors and doesn't require the payment of U.S. Trustee quarterly fees. A trustee is appointed for each case and the trustee works with the small business debtor and creditors to facilitate a reorganization plan.

According to data compiled by the Justice Department's U.S. Trustee Program, between 2020 and 2023, Subchapter V filers had 51% of plans confirmed by a judge, compared with 31% of plans from filers of other types of bankruptcy protection. Subchapter V filers had half the percentage of plans dismissed compared with other filers, and a shorter time to confirmation.

US job openings rise to 8.1m despite higher interest rates

Americans quitting their jobs basically unchanged

WASHINGTON, July 3, (AP): U.S. job openings rose slightly to 8.1 million in May despite the impact of higher interest rates intended to cool the labor market.

Vacancies rose from a revised 7.9 million in April, the first reading below 8 million since February 2021, the Labor Department reported Tuesday. April openings were marked down from an originally reported 8.1 million.

Layoffs rose to 1.65 million in May from 1.54 million in April. The number of Americans quitting their jobs - a sign of confidence in their prospects - was basically unchanged.

"The report was another sign that the labor market is holding firm … The expansion looks solid,'' said Robert Frick, economist at the Navy Federal Credit Union.

The U.S. economy and job market have been remarkably resilient in the face of the Federal Reserve's campaign to raise interest rates to rein in inflation. The Fed hiked its benchmark rate 11 times in 2022 and 2023, lifting it to a 23-year high.

Defying expectations of a recession, the U.S. economy kept growing and employers kept hiring.

But lately there have been signs the economy is losing some steam. Job openings have come steadily down since peaking at 12.2 million in March 2022. The job market is still strong. There are 1.25 jobs for every unemployed American, but that's down from a 2-to-1 ratio in January 2023.

Fed policymakers welcome lower job openings - a relatively painless way to cool a hot job market and reduce pressure on companies to raise wages, which can feed inflation.

From January through March this year, the economy grew at an annual pace of just 1.4%, slowest since spring 2022. Consumer spending, which accounts for around 70% of U.S. economic activity, e xpanded just 1.5% after advancing at a pace of more than 3% in each of the last two quarters of 2023.

The Labor Department is expected to report Friday that employers added 190,000 jobs last month, down from 272,000 in May, according to a survey of forecasters by the data firm FactSet. Unemployment is forecast to stay low at 4%.

High interest rates have helped bring inflation down closer to the Fed's target of 2% a year from a four-decade high 9.1% in June 2022. Progress on containing price increases is expected to allow the central bank to start cutting rates. Wall Street investors are expecting the first rate cut at the Fed's September meeting.

Speaking at a conference in Portugal Tuesday, Fed Chair Jerome Powell said that progress toward lower inflation appears to have resumed after stalling earlier this year. But he said the Fed needed to see more evidence before it cuts rates.

A hiring sign is displayed at a restaurant in Arlington Heights, Ill., Friday, June 28, 2024. On Tuesday, July 2, 2024, the Labor Department reported on job openings and labor turnover for May. (AP)

Powell: US inflation is cooling again, though it isn't yet time to cut rates

WASHINGTON, July 3, (AP): Inflation in the United States is slowing again after higher readings earlier this year, Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell said Tuesday, while adding that more such evidence would be needed before the Fed would cut interest rates.

After some persistently high inflation reports at the start of 2024, Powell said, the data for April and May "do suggest we are getting back on a disinflationary path."

Speaking in a panel discussion at the European Central Bank's monetary policy conference in Sintra, Portugal, Powell said Fed officials still want to see annual price growth slow further toward their 2% target before they would feel confident of having fully defeated high inflation.

"We just want to understand that the levels that we're seeing are a true reading of underlying inflation," he added.

Powell also acknowledged that the Fed is treading a fine line as it weighs when to cut its benchmark interest rate, which it raised 11 times from March 2022 through July 2023 to its current level of 5.3%. The rate hikes were intended to curb the worst streak of inflation in four decades by slowing borrowing and spending by consumers and businesses. Inflation did tumble from its peak in 2022 yet still remains elevated.

Federal Reserve Board Chair Jerome Powell speaks during a news conference at the Federal Reserve in Washington, June 12, 2024. Powell was to be in Portugal on Tuesday, July 2, 2024, to take part in a panel discussion on central banking policy with members of the European Central Bank. (AP)

If the Fed cuts rates too soon, Powell cautioned, inflation could reaccelerate, forcing the policymakers to reverse course and impose punishing rate hikes. But if the Fed waits too long to reduce borrowing costs, it risks weakening the economy so much as to potentially cause a recession.

"Getting the balance on monetary policy right during this critical period - that's really what I think about in the wee hours," Powell said in response to a question about his top worries.

On Friday, the government reported that consumer prices, according to the Fed's preferred measure, were unchanged from April to May, the mildest such reading in more than four years. And compared with a year earlier, inflation dropped to just 2.6% in May, from 2.7% in April, the government said.

Excluding volatile food and energy costs, "core" prices also barely rose from April to May. On a year-over-year basis, core inflation fell to 2.6% from 2.8% in April. The latest inflation figures were a sharp improvement from early this year.

In his appearance Tuesday, Powell said the U.S. economy and job market remain fundamentally healthy, which means the Fed can take its time in deciding when rate cuts are appropriate.

Initiative focuses on topics like robotics, AI, and cybersecurity.

Youth Camp empowers students of all ages.

Company supports Tech Summer Camp, organized by Computer Science Dept, College of Science

Kuwait University, Zain invest in youth's digital capabilities

KUWAIT CITY, July 3: Zain announces its support for the Youth Power Tech Summer Camp 2024, organized by the Computer Science Department of the College of Science, Kuwait University. This initiative aims to enhance young people's digital skills through a variety of engaging workshops and activities in tech-related areas during the summer.

The initiative is a result of the shared vision between the Computer Science Department and Zain to cultivate a digitally capable generation, with a focus on science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields that are increasingly prioritized by today's markets.

The program is organized in collaboration with the Women's Cultural and Social Society, Alsayer Holding Group, and Marina FM. It is supervised by faculty members and assistant faculty members from the Computer Science Department, the College of Science's Computer Science Club, and the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training's Hemma educational volunteer program.

The Youth Power Tech Summer Camp aims to empower 100 middle school, high school, and university students who are passionate about technology through daily workshops, training sessions, and panel discussions. These activities cover topics such as robotics, coding, sensors, artificial intelligence, machine learning, cybersecurity, data privacy, and more.

In addition to technical skills, the initiative focuses on developing interpersonal skills like leadership, teamwork, critical thinking, effective communication, and problem-solving. These skills are essential for personal and professional success and help prepare students for their future careers.

This unique experience aims to foster students' passion for technology and encourage them to pursue STEM careers. It also highlights the effective partnership between the public and private sectors in empowering the next generation of innovators in Kuwait.

Al Dirwaza account

Account offers Islamic banking benefits

KIB announces winners of Al Dirwaza account draw

KUWAIT CITY, July 3: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) announced the winners of the monthly and weekly draw held under the Al Dirwaza account's 2024 campaign, which is distinguished by the highest number of winners throughout the year. The monthly and weekly draw, based on customers' June deposits, recently took place in the presence of representatives from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, as well as representatives from the Bank. Kawthar Eissa Husain Asiri, Hassan Ali Husain Sabti were named the lucky winners in the monthly draw, with each customer walking away with a prize of KD 5,000. As for the weekly draw, the KD 1,000 prize was awarded to Tamer Mohammed Sulaiman Elhossary, Rasha Ahmad Abed Alshalabi, Taghrid Ahmad Mohammed Khader, Khaled Sunaitan Shaar Almutairi, and Mariam Jamal Safar Almoamen, whilst the KD 500 prize was awarded to Sayed Mubarak Sayed Elahi Ismail, Mohammad Khalaf Deej, Hameed Helail Ali Almuhannadi, Abdulkarim Mohammed Abdulrahman, Tahani Mohammed Khaled Albatel, Ahmed Mohammed Elsayed Ahmed Youssef, and Hayaa Humoud Rudaini Alazmi.

It serves to note that AlDirwaza account is a savings account for individual customers, based on the Wakala investment principle, launched by KIB as one of its banking products for individuals. The account is currently the best of its kind in the sector, with annual expected profits of up to 2% disbursed on a monthly basis, where the customer gets an expected profit of 2% for the first 3 months from the account opening date and up to 1% expected rate onward. The expected profits are automatically deposited into the customer's account within the first day of the beginning of each month.

Al Dirwaza account holders are eligible to enter the weekly, monthly and annual draws on the condition of maintaining at least KD 100 in their account. For the weekly and monthly draws, each KD 1 that has completed a full month's cycle in the account will count for one chance, and chances are calculated based on the lowest monthly balance preceding the draw. As for the mega draw, chances are calculated for each KD 1 that completes a two-month cycle in the account – based on the lowest two monthly balances prior to the draw.

Al Dirwaza account is also in compliance with the provisions of Islamic Sharia and approved by the KIB's Sharia Supervisory Board. Furthermore, the account comes with a wide range of benefits, including the ease of opening the account, which does not require a salary transfer, and the customer's ability to open it remotely without visiting a branch through KIB Online on the Bank's website or KIB Mobile application on smartphones.

Additionally, Al Dirwaza account automatically grants customers instant issuance of an ATM card, with a KD 2,000 ATM daily withdrawal limit, as well as the ability to issue credit cards against the cash collateral in the account. To open the account and participate in its draws, a minimum of KD 100 is required and can only be withdrawn upon account closure.

Bank strengthens CSR and youth empowerment through education

KFH supports Kuwait University's College of Engineering & Petroleum graduation

KUWAIT CITY, July 3: As part of its commitment to supporting education and outstanding students, Kuwait Finance House (KFH) participated in the graduation ceremony of the College of Engineering and Petroleum's Honor List students at Kuwait University. This participation strengthens KFH's position as a leader in CSR and youth empowerment.

The College of Engineering & Petroleum graduation ceremony was held under the patronage of Acting Dean Prof. Khalid AlHazza. He commended KFH for its sponsorship and support, including backing graduation projects and student activities across various fields.

KFH Executive Manager Media and Government Relations, Mohammed Alfaris received an honorary plaque presented by Prof. AlHazza. Alfaris highlighted KFH's participation in the annual graduation ceremony of the College of Engineering and Petroleum students and sponsoring the graduation projects for students from various majors.

He stated that KFH is one of the biggest supporters of student graduation projects, motivating them to continue achieving success and driving them to be more creative and innovative.

Mohammed Alfaris receiving the honor from Khalid AlHazza.

"This unwavering support reflects KFH's belief in the importance of honoring outstanding and hardworking students by recognizing their efforts and dedication in the appropriate way," said Alfaris.

He added that KFH has consistently recognized the outstanding students at the College of Engineering and Petroleum, providing unwavering support for the college's activities. This recognition acknowledges the vital role the college plays in nurturing young talent for public institutions, who are the main foundation of the country's development.

He pointed out that KFH is a leader in sponsoring students and youth and has a track record of contributions in this field. This includes supporting students' clubs, graduation projects, participating in seminars, research, workshops and lectures that contribute to developing professional and scientific performance as well as students' graduation ceremonies of universities and high schools from different levels.

American University of Kuwait and American University in Washington, D.C. announce collaborative partnership

KUWAIT CITY, July 3: The American University of Kuwait (AUK) and the American University (AU) in Washington, D.C. have solidified a strategic partnership by signing a Memorandum of Agreement. This milestone marks a significant advancement in fostering academic collaboration and promoting cultural exchange between the two esteemed institutions.

Under the agreement, AU and AUK have committed to exploring cooperative academic initiatives. The agreement outlines a framework for joint programs, research endeavors and other educational initiatives. This partnership will not only enhance educational opportunities for students but also contribute to the advancement of knowledge and understanding on a global scale.

Commenting on the significance of this agreement, AUK President and Dr. Rawda Awwad stated, "Our collaboration with the American University in D.C. will provide our students with expanded opportunities to broaden their academic and cultural horizons in the heart of America's political and cultural landscape, while also offering AU the opportunity to engage with diverse perspectives and innovative ideas from our dynamic student body. This partnership further strengthens AUK's commitment to student mobility, experiential learning and exchange, underscoring the core values of a liberal arts education in Kuwait."

AUK

This strategic partnership between AU and AUK reaffirms their shared values of academic excellence, diversity and inclusivity. By harnessing their collective expertise and resources, both institutions aim to empower students and faculty members to make meaningful contributions to society and address pressing global challenges.

LOYAC's '7 Habits for Highly Effective Teens' featured in KIPCO's leadership program

KIPCO sponsors LOYAC's summer leadership retreat for teenage girls

KUWAIT CITY, July 3: Sponsored by KIPCO – Kuwait Projects Company (Holding) –eleven girls between the ages of 12 and 18 have embarked on LOYAC's 'Summer Leadership Retreat' in Nottinghamshire, UK.

The retreat is held as part of KIPCO's ongoing partnership with LOYAC,a local non-profit organization that aims to empower youth to become impactful leaders in society. The program incorporates LOYAC's flagship '7 Habits for Highly Effective Teens' workshop by Franklin Covey, in addition to activities that reinforce teamwork and leadership, foster personal independence and build connections with peers.

Living together in wooden huts in the heart of nature, under the supervision of chaperones, the teenage girls will be responsible for cooking and cleaning, participate in physical activities like hiking and cycling, as well as entertainment activities and contests. The events of each day will expose the girls to the 7 Habits.

Retreat participants & chaperones.

Ms Sumayah Al Mulla, Assistant Manager for Corporate Communications and Investor Relations, is representing KIPCO and is one of the chaperones of the trip. She said:

"Supporting youth has always been an important pillar in KIPCO's social outreach program, and the 'Summer Leadership Retreat' is yet another investment in helping create Kuwait's leaders of tomorrow. We are especially proud to be partnering with LOYAC on this initiative to provide a program that is dedicated to teenage girls and helps empower them into becoming stronger versions of themselves."

Music

Festival brings together leaders and artists for celebration and dialogue

Usher and Janet Jackson headline 30th Essence Festival of Culture

NEW ORLEANS, July 3, (AP): The best of Black culture's policymakers, thought leaders, creatives, spiritual gurus, business movers and shakers, health experts and, of course, musical talent are poised to converge in New Orleans over the Fourth of July weekend as part of the Essence Festival of Culture.

The festival kicks off Thursday and runs through Sunday. This year, it celebrates 30 years of entertainment, networking and thought-provoking conversations to inspire solutions for issues facing urban communities. The underlying premise remains the same: purposeful partying.

Vice President Kamala Harris is scheduled to hold a conversation with Essence CEO Caroline Wanga during the Global Black Economic Forum on Saturday at the festival. The visit comes amid calls by some for the replacement of President Joe Biden on the Democratic presidential ticket following his debate with former President Donald Trump. Those types of in-depth dialogues, covering a wide-range of topics, can be expected throughout the event.

"This experience was built to celebrate 25 years of Essence magazine, Black womanhood," said Hakeem Holmes, vice president for the Essence Festival of Culture. "Black women built this festival, Black women poured into this festival. They had a good time at this festival, made relationships and networked - all at this festival - and then they brought what they learned home with them."

Since its beginning, the festival has morphed into a multi-generational event that seeks to touch the entire Black family, by offering "a little bit of everything for everyone,'' Holmes said.

Much of that transition, Holmes said, is thanks to the city that's hosted the event every year except one. In 2006, Houston hosted the festival, while New Orleans dealt with the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

Lisa Alexis, director of Mayor Latoya Cantrell's Office of Cultural Economy, said 30 years of Essence has had a $327 million impact on the city.

Conversations

"Relevancy is driven by our relationship to this community," said Holmes, a New Orleans native. "We are constantly listening. … We have what folks want to see throughout this event. We have people who are coming to have conversations about things they can actionably take as next steps when they return home. And, we have the parties, too!"

Holmes said keeping long-term fans engaged in the festival is always a challenge.

Holmes said the festival will be available in person and virtually (via essence.com). "We're giving folks everything they want in a consolidated amount of time during the day and then at night, they can go and have a good time," he said.

That good time includes a Friday night concert inside the Superdome featuring Bryan "Birdman" Williams and Friends as they, too, celebrate 30 years of Cash Money Records and its Millionaires. Juvenile, Busta Rhymes, T-Pain, The Roots and Mannie Fresh are scheduled to perform. R&B singers Jacquees and Ari Lennox and country artist Mickey Guyton also will take the stage.

Usher headlines Saturday and celebrates the 20th anniversary of his "Confessions" album, which includes hits like "Yeah," "Burn," "Caught Up" and "Bad Girl." "Confessions'' has sold more than 10 million units in the U.S. Others scheduled to perform include Charlie Wilson, Ayra Starr, Big Boi, Donell Jones, Lloyd, Method Man, Sheila E. and TGT - a trio featuring Tyrese, Ginuwine and Tank.

Janet Jackson is the headliner Sunday, the final night. Victoria Monét, Keke Palmer, Teedra Moses, Tank and the Bangas, Dawn Richard, SWV, Jagged Edge, Bilal and Anthony Hamilton will also perform. The four-day event will close with the return of the all-white party and a special tribute to Frankie Beverly & Maze, curated by Grammy award-winning producer and songwriter, Bryan-Michael Cox. Beverly has said that he is stepping away from performing live, and the group has been on a farewell tour.

For the festival's first 15 years, Frankie Beverly & Maze closed the event with a massive performance, watched by thousands singing along to the group's hits, including "Before I Let Go," "Joy and Pain" and "Happy Feelin's." In 2010, a new event producer ended the tradition to the disappointment of many festgoers despite the talent tapped to close, including Beyoncé, Mary J. Blige and Lionel Richie.

Variety

This image released by Netflix shows Eddie Murphy, (left), and Taylour Paige in 'Beverly Hills Cop: Axel F.' (AP)

Film

Action, comedy, nostalgia in 'Beverly Hills Cop' sequel

Murphy's Axel Foley is back in action

By Mark Kennedy

Judge Reinhold is in a truck barreling down the highway chased by angry cops when he turns to Eddie Murphy at the wheel and says something we're all feeling, "God, I missed you, Axel."

We all really did, but we get the sarcastic and sweet Axel Foley once again in Netflix's "Beverly Hills Cop: Axel F," exactly 30 years since "1994's Beverly Hills Cop III." Is the new movie any good? Who cares?

The fourth outing brings back not just Murphy and Reinhold to the Axel Foley Cinematic Universe, but also long-time co-stars Paul Reiser, John Ashton and Bronson Pinchot. Kevin Bacon, Taylour Paige and Joseph Gordon-Levitt make their debuts.

The plot is pretty simple: Murphy's Foley is living his best cop life in Detroit - destroying things spectacularly - when he's asked to urgently return to Beverly Hills to help his estranged daughter, played with real grit by Taylour Paige. He then gets caught up in a murder case that has dirty cops and lets him make fun of snooty Beverly Hills.

Newcomers may be puzzled by the slow pace and '80s feel of Mark Molloy's directed sequel. It's not as funny as previous ones or ambitious in the way sequels for beloved franchises have gotten. But it has Murphy blowing stuff up and joking about it - all we need, really.

"Goddamn, Foley. Here we go again," says Ashton, playing the exasperated chief of police, and that sentiment runs through the fourth entry. All you need to make your Gen X friends happy is a montage of Murphy behind the wheel while "The Heat Is On" by Glenn Frey plays. ("Neutron Dance" by The Pointer Sisters also returns).

Speaking of music, the filmmakers seem to want to break some sort of record for Most Theme Song Plays in a Single Movie, as the instrumental tune "Axel F" by Harold Faltermeyer is cued up, by one rough count, approximately 5,000 times.

There are also a lot of vehicles commandeered in "Beverly Hills Cop: Axel F," perhaps a nod to the advanced age of the core group. There's a snowplow, a helicopter, a golf cart and trucks, none of which are returned in mint condition.

The screenwriters - Will Beall, Tom Gormican and Kevin Etten - leave plenty of places for Murphy to improvise but also craft some surprisingly strong dialogue between Foley and his 32-year-old daughter, both nursing hurt feelings.

"You didn't fight. I'm your daughter. The only thing you've ever fought for is your job," she tells him. "Look, we both messed this thing up. All right? Let's just call it even." Come for the explosions, stay for the heart-to-hearts.

Murphy uses Mary J. Blige's "Family Affair" and proves it. In one scene, Foley is arrested while trying to drive away in a comically small cop car. One of the traffic cops is played by Murphy's daughter, Bria, one of his 10 kids. Another cop who later teases him is a son-in-law.

A lot has changed in the three decades since Foley was breaking rules and skulls and there's the feeling of a requiem as these aged men go into battle again. "They don't want swashbucklers out there anymore. They want social workers," Reiser's detective says.

There are jokes about Wesley Snipes, small yappy dogs and Spirit airlines, a scary shootout on Wilshire Boulevard, way too much synth played and an inside joke about the last sequel, a stinker: Gordon-Levitt goes through all of Foley's brushes with the California police and says "'94, not your finest hour."

"Axel F" is not exactly Murphy's finest hour, either. But Murphy just saying "Jesus!" is funny. Let's hope we don't have to wait another 30 years for our next Axel Foley fix. God, we've missed him.

"Beverly Hills Cop: Axel F," a Netflix release that starts streaming Wednesday, is rated R for "language throughout, violence and brief drug use." Running time: 117 minutes. Two stars out of four.

Also:

LOS ANGELES: Actors **Lily Gladstone**, **Da'Vine Joy Randolph** and **Catherine O'Hara** and filmmakers **Cord Jefferson**, **Boots Riley** and "RRR" director **S.S. Rajamouli** are among the lucky few who have been invited to join the film academy.

In total 487 artists, including actors, directors, costume designers, publicists and executives received invitations this year, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences said Tuesday. Those who accept will be able to vote in the Oscars race.

Should all invited in the 2024 class say yes, the academy will have 9,934 voting members and the makeup would be 35% women, 20% from underrepresented ethnic and racial communities and 20% international.

The invitees include 19 Oscar-winners, like best documentary recipient **Mstyslav Chernov** ("20 Days in Mariupol") and "Anatomy of a Fall" filmmaker **Justine Triet**, as well as 71 nominees including **Sandra Hüller**, "The Color Purple's" **Danielle Brooks**, "Past Lives" filmmaker Celine Song and "Oppenheimer" production designer Ruth De Jong.

Jefferson, who wrote and directed "American Fiction," was among eight individuals invited to join multiple branches. In his case, it was directing and writing, and like his peers he'll have to choose which branch to join. Song and Triet have to make the same decision.

"We are thrilled to welcome this year's class of new members to the academy," said Academy CEO **Bill Kramer** and Academy President **Janet Yang** in a statement. "These remarkably talented artists and professionals from around the world have made a significant impact on our filmmaking community."

Other actors invited include Jessica Alba, Greta Lee and her "Past Lives" co-star **Teo Yoo**, **Tia Carrere** and **Stephanie Beatriz**. Those asked to join the directors branch include **Alice Diop**, **Lila Avilés**, **Fede Álvarez**, **A.V. Rockwell**, **Emma Seligman** and **David Yates**.

Among the executive branch invitees are **Duncan Crabtree-Ireland**, the Screen Actors Guild-American Federation of Television and Radio Artists, Alamo Drafthouse founder **Tim League** and **Kim Yutani**, the Sundance Film Festival's programming director.

The 97th Academy Awards will be held in Los Angeles on March 2. (AP)

SANTA FE, N.M.: Producers of the western movie "Rust" may have to forgo a robust economic incentive as they try to sell the film to distributors and fulfill financial obligations to the immediate family of a cinematographer who was fatally shot by **Alec Baldwin** during rehearsal in 2021.

New Mexico tax authorities denied an application this spring by Rust Movie Productions for incentives worth as much as $1.6 million, according to documents obtained by The Associated Press. A late July deadline for producers to appeal the decision is approaching.

Meanwhile, Baldwin is scheduled to go on trial starting next week on an involuntary manslaughter charge in **Halyna Hutchins**' death. The lead actor and co-producer of "Rust" was pointing a gun at Hutchins when it went off, killing her and wounding director **Joel Souza**.

Melina Spadone, an attorney representing the production company, said the film production tax incentive was going to be used to finance a legal settlement between producers and Hutchins' widower and son.

"The denial of the tax credit has disrupted those financial arrangements," said Spadone, a **New York**- and **Los Angeles**-based senior counsel at **Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman**. She helped broker the 2022 settlement that rebooted the stalled production of "Rust" in Montana with some of the original cast and crew, including Baldwin and Souza. Filming wrapped up last year.

Terms of the settlement are confidential, but producers say finishing the film was meant to honor Hutchins' artistic vision and generate money for her young son.

Court documents indicate that settlement payments are up to a year late, as attorneys for Hutchins' widower determine "next steps" that include whether to resume wrongful death litigation or initiate new claims. Legal representatives for **Matthew Hutchins** did not respond to telephone and email messages seeking comment. (AP)

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LOS ANGELES: **Ann Wilson**, lead singer of rock band Heart, says she has cancer and the band is postponing the remaining shows on its Royal Flush Tour while she undergoes treatment.

Baldwin

Wilson

Wilson said in a statement Tuesday that she underwent a surgery to remove a cancerous growth and is recovering steadily, but that her doctors urged her to undergo preventive chemotherapy and take time off from performing "in order to fully recover." That meant the rest of the shows on the North American tour will be postponed to dates in 2025.

"To the ticket buyers, I really do wish we could do these gigs. Please know that I absolutely plan to be back on stage in 2025," Wilson said in the statement. "My team is getting those details sorted & we'll let you know the plan as soon as we can."

All previously purchased tickets for the now-postponed shows will be honored. The rescheduled dates will be announced in the coming weeks, according to the release.

"This is merely a pause. I've much more to sing," Wilson continued in the statement before adding, "Respectfully, this is the last public statement I'd like to make on the matter." (AP)

People & Places

Obituary

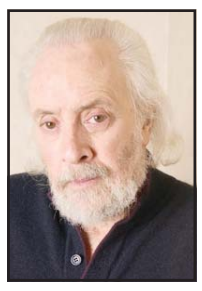
'Chinatown' architect

Oscar-winning writer Towne passes away

NEW YORK, July 3, (AP): **Robert Towne**, the Oscar-winning screenplay writer of "Shampoo," "The Last Detail" and other acclaimed films whose work on "Chinatown" became a model of the art form and helped define the jaded allure of his native Los Angeles, has died. He was 89.

Towne died Monday surrounded by family at his home in Los Angeles, said publicist Carri McClure. She declined to comment on any cause of death.

In an industry which gave birth to rueful jokes about the writer's status, Towne for a time held prestige comparable to the actors and directors he worked with. Through his friendships with two of the biggest stars of the 1960s and '70s, Warren Beatty and Jack Nicholson, he wrote or co-wrote some of the signature films of an era when artists held an unusual level of creative control. The rare "auteur" among screen writers, Towne managed to bring a highly personal and influential vision of Los Angeles onto the screen.



Towne

"It's a city that's so illusory," Towne told The Associated Press in a 2006 interview. "It's the westernmost west of America. It's a sort of place of last resort. It's a place where, in a word, people go to make their dreams come true. And they're forever disappointed."

Recognizable around Hollywood for his high forehead and full beard, Towne won an Academy Award for "Chinatown" and was nominated three other times, for "The Last Detail," "Shampoo" and "Greystoke." In 1997, he received a lifetime achievement award from the Writers Guild of America.

"His life, like the characters he created, was incisive, iconoclastic and entirely (original)," said "Shampoo" actor Lee Grant on X.

Success

Towne's success came after a long stretch of working in television, including "The Man from U.N.C.L.E" and "The Lloyd Bridges Show," and on low-budget movies for "B" producer Roger Corman. In a classic show business story, he owed his breakthrough in part to his psychiatrist, through whom he met Beatty, a fellow patient. As Beatty worked on "Bonnie and Clyde," he brought in Towne for revisions of the Robert Benton-David Newman script and had him on the set while the movie was filmed in Texas.

Towne's contributions were uncredited for "Bonnie and Clyde," the landmark crime film released in 1967, and for years he was a favorite ghost writer. He helped out on "The Godfather," "The Parallax View" and "Heaven Can Wait" among others and referred to himself as a "relief pitcher who could come in for an inning, not pitch the whole game." But Towne was credited by name for Nicholson's macho "The Last Detail" and Beatty's sex comedy "Shampoo" and was immortalized by "Chinatown," the 1974 thriller set during the Great Depression.

"Chinatown" was directed by Roman Polanski and starred Nicholson as J.J. "Jake" Gittes, a private detective asked to follow the husband of Evelyn Mulwray (played by Faye Dunaway). The husband is chief engineer of the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power and Gittes finds himself caught in a chaotic spiral of corruption and violence, embodied by Evelyn's ruthless father, Noah Cross (John Huston).

Influenced by the fiction of Raymond Chandler, Towne resurrected the menace and mood of a classic Los Angeles film noir, but cast Gittes' labyrinthine odyssey across a grander and more insidious portrait of Southern California. Clues accumulate into a timeless detective tale, and lead helplessly to tragedy, summed up by one of the most repeated lines in movie history, words of grim fatalism a devastated Gittes receives from his partner Lawrence Walsh (Joe Mantell): "Forget it, Jake, it's Chinatown."

Towne's script has been a staple of film writing classes ever since, although it also serves as a lesson in how movies often get made and in the risks of crediting any film to a single viewpoint. He would acknowledge working closely with Polanski as they revised and tightened the story and arguing fiercely with the director over the film's despairing ending - an ending Polanski pushed for and Towne later agreed was the right choice (No one has officially been credited for writing "Forget it, Jake, it's Chinatown").

But the concept began with Towne, who had turned down the chance to adapt "The Great Gatsby" for the screen so he could work on "Chinatown," partly inspired by a book published in 1946, Carey McWilliams' "Southern California: An Island on the Land."

Revelation

"In it was a chapter called 'Water, water, water,' which was a revelation to me. And I thought 'Why not do a picture about a crime that's right out in front of everybody,'" he told The Hollywood Reporter in 2009.

"Instead of a jewel-encrusted falcon, make it something as prevalent as water faucets, and make a conspiracy out of that. And after reading about what they were doing, dumping water and starving the farmers out of their land, I realized the visual and dramatic possibilities were enormous."

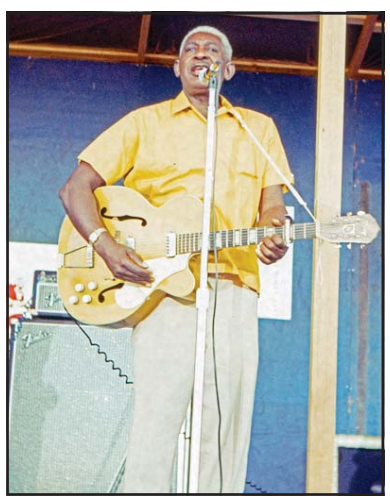
The back story of "Chinatown" has itself become a kind of detective story, explored in producer Robert Evans' memoir, "The Kid Stays in the Picture"; in Peter Biskind's "East Riders, Raging Bulls," a history of 1960s-1970s Hollywood, and in Sam Wasson's "The Big Goodbye," dedicated entirely to "Chinatown." In "The Big Goodbye," published in 2020, Wasson alleged that Towne was helped extensively by a ghost writer - former college roommate Edward Taylor. According to "The Big Goodbye," for which Towne declined to be interviewed, Taylor did not ask for credit on the film because his "friendship with Robert" mattered more.

Wasson also wrote that the movie's famous closing line originated with a vice cop who had told Towne that crimes in Chinatown were seldom prosecuted.

"Robert Towne once said that Chinatown is a state of mind," Wasson wrote. "Not just a place on the map in Los Angeles, but a condition of total awareness almost indistinguishable from blindness. Dreaming you're in paradise and waking up in the dark - that's Chinatown. Thinking you've got it figured out and realizing you're dead - that's Chinatown."

The studios assumed more power after the mid-1970s and Towne's standing declined. His own efforts at directing, including "Personal Best" and "Tequila Sunrise," had mixed results.

This image released by Amazon shows Emma Roberts in a scene from 'Space Cadet.' (AP)



In this image provided by Jeff Titon, Athur Crudup performs in Ann Arbor, Mich., Sunday, Aug. 3, 1969. Crudup wrote the song 'That's All Right,' which Elvis Presley later recorded for his first single. (AP)

Rushdie

Presley

Variety

FRANKTOWN, Va.: **Arthur "Big Boy" Crudup** helped invent rock 'n' roll.

His 1946 song "That's All Right" would become the first single **Elvis Presley** ever released. **Rod Stewart** would sing it on a chart-topping album. **Led Zeppelin** would play it live.

But you wouldn't have known it if you saw Crudup living out his later years on **Virginia**'s Eastern Shore, dressed in coveralls and leading a crew picking cucumbers, tomatoes and sweet potatoes.

The **Mississippi**-born blues musician died 50 years ago, leaving behind one of the starker accounts of 20th century artist exploitation. As the 70th anniversary of Presley's recording of "That's All Right" approaches Friday - July 5, considered a cultural milestone.

Crudup didn't hold the rights to his own songs. His original manager did. And that was common practice back then.

Lester Melrose had initially signed and managed Crudup.

"I wouldn't record anybody unless he signed all his rights in those tunes over to me," he once said, according to **Alan Lomax**'s book "Mister Jelly Roll."

Many Black musicians signed over copyrights or were forced to share them, Southwestern Law School professor **Kevin J. Greene** told The Associated Press.

"A huge chunk of what we're talking about in terms of exploitation is still under copyright," said Greene, who testified before a **California** reparations task force. (AP)

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NEW YORK: The man charged with stabbing author **Salman Rushdie** rejected a plea deal Tuesday that would have shortened his state prison term but exposed him to a federal terrorism-related charge, the suspect's lawyer said.

Hadi Matar, 26, has been held without bail since the 2022 attack, in which he is accused of stabbing Rushdie more than a dozen times and blinding him in one eye as the acclaimed writer was onstage, about to give a lecture at the Chautauqua Institution in western New York.

Matar's attorney, **Nathaniel Barone**, confirmed that Matar, who lived in Fairview, **New Jersey**, rejected the agreement Tuesday in Mayville, New York.

The agreement would have had Matar plead guilty in **Chautauqua County** to attempted murder in exchange for a maximum state prison sentence of 20 years, down from 25 years. It would have also required him to plead guilty to a federal charge of attempting to provide material support to a designated terrorist organization, which could result in an additional 20 years, attorneys said. (AP)

❑ ❑ ❑

KULA, Hawaii: Two men arrested last month on a public road within **Oprah Winfrey**'s property on the Hawaiian island of **Maui** are suspected of illegal night hunting, state officials said Monday.

The two Maui men, both 19, were arrested just before midnight on June 21 after officers found them using a hunting spotlight on a public road that runs through Winfrey's ranch in **Kula**, the state Department of Land and Natural Resources said in a news release.

While they were not caught actively hunting, officers found a loaded shotgun and a loaded rifle in the pair's truck, and Winfrey's ranch surrounds the road where they were stopped, the state said.

The men were arrested on suspicion of hunting on private lands without permission, not having a hunting license and other violations. One of them was also arrested for an unregistered semi-automatic rifle. (AP)

Film

Actress talks her career shift, love of books

Roberts set to inspire in 'Space Cadet'

LOS ANGELES, July 3, (AP): As one of Ryan Murphy's go-to actors for his "American Horror Story" franchise, Emma Roberts has been sawed in half, played a ruthless witch and a final girl facing off against a serial killer. Most recently she was a pregnant actor targeted by a cult.

When the opportunity to play a college dropout-turned-NASA trainee in the rom-com "Space Cadet" came along, she jumped at the change in tone.

"This movie kind of feels nostalgic, kind of early 2000s in a way, but also fresh and fun," said Roberts in an interview.

Roberts executive produces and stars in the movie premiering Thursday on Prime Video. She's Rex, a young woman who had big dreams growing up of becoming an astronaut but whose adult reality has taken a different path. Rex is working as a bartender when she gets accepted to a NASA trainee program. The movie co-stars Tom Hopper, Poppy Liu of "Hacks" and Gabrielle Union.

The script reminded Roberts of "Private Benjamin" and "Legally Blonde," and she was excited to play "the underestimated female character who ends up surprising people in unexpected ways."

It was her past work in "American Horror Story" that made writer, director Liz W. Garcia confident that Roberts could play Rex.

"The genre itself might be horror, but she's always got a wink," said Garcia. "This is Hollywood blonde stuff and playing with that archetype. Emma was really into the idea of having a Goldie Hawn moment for herself by leaning into physical comedy and something a little more heightened. She was really, as it turns out, brilliant."

In a Q&A, Roberts spoke more about "Space Cadet," and other topics including being a boy mom, producing and her book club. Answers are edited for clarity and brevity.

AP: With box office numbers down and an overall cut in new TV shows, have you noticed it's a rough time getting things going in Hollywood?

Roberts: Yeah, I feel like we're feeling the effects of the strikes more so now than we did even last year, which is ironic. Between the strikes and COVID, we've just been living in such unprecedented, weird times. I'm so grateful for the TV show I executive produce, "Tell Me Lies," which just wrapped filming its second season. With "Space Cadet," I'm excited to put something out there that I think will make people smile and laugh and hopefully feel a little inspired.

AP: What can you say about Season 2 of "Tell Me Lies." The premise is based on a book by Carola Lovering. Does the show stay close to that plot?

Roberts: I'm so excited for people to see Season 2. It's more unexpected than people think. Our showrunner, Meaghan Oppenheimer, is incredible. She really took this show to just a new level. With TV shows, it's fun, especially in a second season - to turn everything on its head. I think we definitely did that and I can't wait to see people's reactions.

AP: You have a young son. Is he into space?

Roberts: We love space. Our thing is he gets his pajamas on and then we'll go outside and look at the stars before he goes to bed, and he's like, "There's so many stars." There's this childlike wonder about space at any age, but I don't hear a lot of young girls saying they want to be astronauts. I would love to hear more young girls, or even just young people in general, say that.

AP: You grew up in a household with your mom and sister. What's it like being a boy mom?

Roberts: My mom has a sister. I have a sister. Like, we're all like sisters, mothers, daughters. There's so many girls around. I was convinced I was having a girl. I was like, "I know it. It's intuition. I'm having a girl." They said it was a boy, and I was like, "Huh?" but I love it. I've definitely had to brush up on my basketball and soccer skills. I was a little rusty, so I'm trying to dig in. I will say I've saved a lot of money on clothes being a boy mom, because you just throw them in whatever. I see little girl stuff and I'm like, "Oh my God." I'd be broke if I had a daughter because everything is so cute.

AP: You recently co-starred with Kim Kardashian in "American Horror Story: Delicate" and she got positive reviews. Were you surprised by her acting skills?

Roberts: I was really impressed by her. I'm still impressed by her. I mean, everything she does is impressive. She's a mom. She's a businesswoman and now an actress. She also has "The Kardashians," which I watch. My bodysuit under my dress is SKIMS, actually, if we're being honest. I just love her. We're making a show called "Calabasas" with ("Pretty Little Liars" creator) I. Marlene King, and we're all executive producing. We're both from Calabasas (California), which is so funny. She's so fun. She's game for anything, I'm really excited to get to work on something else with her.

AP: You're one of the regular actors that Ryan Murphy taps for his projects. How does that work?

Roberts: It's funny. You never know when he's going to ask you to do something - which I love about him - and then you see his name pop up on your phone and you're like, 'OK, what are we doing?' It's always a yes for Ryan. His stuff is always so inspired and the worlds he builds are so singularly his.

AP: You also have an online book club called Belletrist. As an avid reader, it must feel good to recommend books and engage with followers.

Roberts: It's been seven years now, and it's been so amazing to see the community grow. It really makes me so happy when people stop me on the street and they're like, "Emma!" And I think, like, "What are they going to say?" And they're like, "What should I read?" I love curating, even for my friends, especially in the summer or when they're going on long trips. I'm like, "OK, where are you going? What's your vibe? How long is the flight? I'm going to recommend you three books to take." It brings me so much joy.

Judge Reinhold, Eddie Murphy and John Ashton arrive at the premiere of 'Beverly Hills Cop: Axel F' on Thursday, June 20, 2024, in Beverly Hills, Calif. (AP)

– Details Page 11

Kisunla slows disease progression in early stages

FDA OKs second Alzheimer's drug that slows disease modestly

WASHINGTON, July 3, (AP): US officials have approved another Alzheimer's drug that can modestly slow the disease, providing a new option for patients in the early stages of the incurable, memory-destroying ailment.

The Food and Drug Administration approved Eli Lilly's Kisunla on Tuesday for mild or early cases of dementia caused by Alzheimer's. It's only the second drug that's been convincingly shown to delay cognitive decline in patients, following last year's approval of a similar drug from Japanese drugmaker Eisai.

The delay seen with both drugs amounts to a matter of months - about seven months, in the case of Lilly's drug. Patients and their families will have to weigh that benefit against the downsides, including regular IV infusions and potentially dangerous side effects like brain swelling.

Physicians who treat Alzheimer's say the approval is an important step after decades of failed experimental treatments.

"I'm thrilled to have different options to help my patients," said Dr. Suzanne Schindler, a neurologist at Washington University in St. Louis. "It's been difficult as a dementia specialist - I diagnose my patients with Alzheimer's and then every year I see them get worse and they progress until they die."

Both Kisunla and the Japanese drug, Leqembi, are laboratory-made antibodies, administered by IV, that target one contributor to Alzheimer's - sticky amyloid plaque buildup in the brain. Questions remain about which patients should get the drugs and how long they might benefit.

The new drug's approval was expected after an outside panel of FDA advisors unanimously voted in favor of its benefits at a public meeting last month. That endorsement came despite several questions from FDA reviewers about how Lilly studied the drug, including allowing patients to discontinue treatment after their plaque reached very low levels.

Costs will vary by patient, based on how long they take the drug, Lilly said. The company also said a year's worth of therapy would cost $32,000 - higher than the $26,500 price of a year's worth of Leqembi.

The FDA's prescribing information tells doctors they can consider stopping the drug after confirming via brain scans that patients have minimal plaque.

Prescription

More than 6 million Americans have Alzheimer's. Only those with early or mild disease will be eligible for the new drug, and an even smaller subset are likely to undergo the multi-step process needed to get a prescription.

The FDA approved Kisunla, known chemically as donanemab, based on results from an 18-month study in which patients given getting the treatment declined about 22% more slowly in terms of memory and cognitive ability than those who received a dummy infusion.

The main safety issue was brain swelling and bleeding, a problem common to all plaque-targeting drugs. The rates reported in Lilly's study - including 20% of patients with microbleeds - were slightly higher than those reported with competitor Leqembi. However, the two drugs were tested in slightly different types of patients, which experts say makes it difficult to compare the drugs' safety.

Kisunla is infused once a month compared to Leqembi's twice-a-month regimen, which could make things easier for caregivers who bring their loved ones to a hospital or clinic for treatment.

"Certainly getting an infusion once a month is more appealing than getting it every two weeks," Schindler said.

Lilly's drug has another potential advantage: Patients can stop taking it if they respond well.

In the company's study, patients were taken off Kisunla once their brain plaque reached nearly undetectable levels. Almost half of patients reached that point within a year. Discontinuing the drug could reduce the costs and safety risks of long-term use. It's not yet clear how soon patients might need to resume infusions.

This image provided by Eli Lilly shows the company's new Alzheimer's drug Kisunla. The Food and Drug Administration approved Eli Lilly's Kisunla on Tuesday, July 2, for mild or early cases of dementia caused by Alzheimer's. (AP)

Logistical hurdles, spotty insurance coverage and financial concerns have all slowed the rollout of competitor Leqembi, which Eisai co-markets with U.S. partner Biogen. Many smaller hospitals and health systems aren't yet setup to prescribe the new plaque-targeting Alzheimer's drugs.

First, doctors need to confirm that patients with dementia have the brain plaque targeted by the new drugs. Then they need to find a drug infusion center where patients can receive therapy. Meanwhile, nurses and other staff must be trained to perform repeated scans to check for brain swelling or bleeding.

"Those are all things a physician has to have set up," said Dr. Mark Mintun, who heads Lilly's neuroscience division. "Until they get used to them, a patient who comes into their office will not be offered this therapy."

Children vulnerable

Hot sidewalks, unshaded play areas pose burns risk

PHOENIX, July 3, (AP): Ron Falk lost his right leg, had extensive skin grafting on the left one and is still recovering a year after collapsing on the searing asphalt outside a Phoenix convenience store where he stopped for a cold soda during a heat wave.

Now using a wheelchair, the 62-year-old lost his job and his home. He's recovering at a medical respite center for patients with no other place to go; there he gets physical therapy and treatment for a bacterial infection in what remains of his right leg, too swollen to use the prosthesis he'd hoped would help him walk again.

"If you don't get somewhere to cool down, the heat will affect you," said Falk, who lost consciousness due to heat stroke. "Then you won't know what's happening, like in my case."

Sizzling sidewalks and unshaded playgrounds pose risks for surface burns as air temperatures reach new summertime highs in Southwest cities like Phoenix, which just recorded its hottest June on record. The average daytime high was 109.5 degrees Fahrenheit (43 Celsius), without a single 24-hour high below 100 (37.7 C).

Surface

Young children, older adults and homeless people are especially at risk for contact burns, which can occur in seconds when skin touches a surface of 180 degrees Fahrenheit (82 C).

Since the beginning of June, 50 people have been hospitalized with such burns, and four have died at Valleywise Health Medical Center in Phoenix, which operates the Southwest's largest burn center, serving patients from Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, Nevada, Southern California and Texas, according to its director, Dr. Kevin Foster. About 80% were injured in metro Phoenix.

Last year, the center admitted 136 patients for surface burns from June through August, up from 85 during the same period in 2022, Foster said. Fourteen died. One out of five were homeless.

"Last year's record heat wave brought an alarming number of patients with life-threatening burns," Foster said of a 31-day period, including all of last July, with temperatures at or above 110 degrees (43 C) during Phoenix's hottest summer ever.

In Las Vegas, which regularly sees summer-time highs in the triple-digits, 22 people were hospitalized in June alone at the University Medical Center's Lions Burn Care Center, said spokesperson Scott Kerbs. That's nearly half as many as the 46 hospitalized during all three summer months last year.

As in Phoenix, the desert sun punishes Las Vegas for hours every day, frying outdoor surfaces like asphalt, concrete and metal doors on cars and playground equipment like swings and monkey bars.

Surface burn victims often include children injured walking barefoot on broiling concrete or touching hot surfaces, adults who collapsed on a sidewalk while intoxicated, and older people who fell on the pavement due to heat stroke or another medical emergency.

Survive

Some don't survive.

Thermal injuries were among the main or contributing causes of last year's 645 heat-related deaths in Maricopa County, which encompasses Phoenix.

One victim was an 82-year-old woman with dementia and heart disease admitted to a suburban Phoenix hospital after being found on the scorching pavement on an August day that hit 106 degrees (41.1 C). With a body temperature of 105 degrees (40.5 C) the woman was rushed to the hospital with second-degree burns on her back and right side, covering 8% of her body. She died three days later.

Many surface burn patients also suffered potentially fatal heat stroke.

Valleywise hospital's emergency department recently adopted a new protocol for all heat-stroke victims, submerging patients in a bag of slushy ice to quickly bring down body temperature. Recovery for those with skin burns was often lengthy, with patients undergoing multiple skin grafts and other surgeries, followed by months of recovery in skilled nursing or rehabilitation facilities.

Bob Woolley, 71, suffered second- and third-degree burns to his hands, arms, leg and torso after he stumbled onto the broiling backyard rock garden at his Phoenix home, wearing only swim trunks and a tank top.

35% spike in diabetes-related deaths from 2017 to 2021

Kuwait's diabetes death rate doubles global average – Audit Bureau report

KUWAIT CITY, July 3: A recent Audit Bureau report reveals that Kuwait's diabetes-related mortality rate has surpassed the global average, reaching 7 percent compared to the global average of 3 percent.

According to the annual report from the Office of Performance Oversight Department, Kuwait ranks second among Gulf Cooperation Council countries in diabetes-related deaths, following Oman with a mortality rate of 8 per 100. In comparison, Kuwait's rate stands at 7 percent, Qatar at 6 percent, the UAE at 5 percent, Saudi Arabia at 3 percent, and Bahrain at 2 percent, reports Al-Rai daily.

The report highlights a 35 percent increase in diabetes-related deaths from 2017 to 2021, with a majority occurring among individuals aged 60 to 85 years, totaling 424 cases.

Additionally, the report notes a rising prevalence of diabetes among school-age children, with over 50 percent of type 2 diabetes cases diagnosed in individuals suffering from severe obesity.

The Audit Bureau recommends legislative actions to mitigate risk factors associated with chronic non-communicable diseases. These include increasing taxes on tobacco and sugar-sweetened beverages, utilizing school gyms and covered halls for physical activities, and establishing cycling lanes in residential areas.

The report also emphasizes the importance of enhancing health education across all age groups and promoting regular health screenings for early detection and management of diabetes and its complications.

Fasting diet lowers blood sugar and weight

Study shows 5:2 diet more effective than medication with type 2 diabetes patients

KUWAIT CITY, July 3: A new study reveals that the 5:2 diet, which involves fasting for two days a week, is more effective than medication for individuals newly diagnosed with type 2 diabetes, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The 5:2 diet consists of eating normally for five days a week and fasting on the remaining two days, with a calorie intake of only 500 to 600 calories per fasting day. According to the study published in the journal JAMA Network Open, this dietary approach offers more benefits than anti-diabetic medications.

The study involved 405 Chinese adults recently diagnosed with type 2 diabetes. Participants were divided into groups: some were prescribed diabetes medications like metformin or empagliflozin, while others followed the 5:2 diet.

Those on the 5:2 diet fasted on two nonconsecutive days each week and consumed a normal diet on the other days, which included a typical breakfast, lunch, and a meal-replacement dinner.

After 16 weeks, the 5:2 diet group showed a more significant reduction in glycated hemoglobin (HbA1c), dropping from an average of 7.9% to 6% (a decrease of 1.9%). In comparison, reductions were 1.6% with metformin and 1.5% with empagliflozin.

The 5:2 diet also led to greater weight loss, with participants losing an average of 9.7 kg (20.3 lb), compared to 5.5 kg (12.3 lb) in the metformin group and 5.8 kg (13.6 lb) in the empagliflozin group.

Additionally, the 5:2 diet group experienced significant reductions in waist circumference, as well as systolic and diastolic blood pressure.

There were no significant differences in most metabolic markers except for triglycerides and HDL-C when compared to patients on antidiabetic medications.

The researchers suggest that doctors should consider recommending the 5:2 diet to newly diagnosed type 2 diabetes patients.

The diet not only improves blood sugar control and promotes weight loss but also lowers cholesterol levels. The authors conclude that the 5:2 diet "could serve as a first-line lifestyle intervention for type 2 diabetes patients, providing an alternative to metformin and empagliflozin."

Virus linked to birth defects in 30 countries

Zika cases increase to 8 in India

NEW DELHI, July 3, (Xinhua): India's western state of Maharashtra has recorded eight cases of Zika virus infection, officials said Wednesday.

According to health officials, six people have tested positive for Zika virus infection in Pune while one each has been identified from Ahmednagar and Kolhapur districts.

Officials at the National Institute of Virology (NIV) said they received 106 samples from across the country and so far eight people have tested positive for Zika virus infection.

On Tuesday evening, a 55-year-old woman was detected with Zika virus infection in Pune, which took the number of cases to seven. However, one case that was earlier said to be positive was later found negative.

On June 26, the first case of Zika virus infection was reported at Erandwane, where a 46-year-old doctor's report came positive. His 15-year-old daughter also tested positive.

Later on, two pregnant women were also found to be infected. The increase in cases has set off concern among health officials. However, officials at NIV said there was no need to panic over the Zika cases in Maharashtra.

Meanwhile, Pune Municipal Corporation has intensified surveillance and so far surveyed a population of 14,314 in Kothrud, an upmarket residential neighborhood in Pune city.

Officials said mosquito breeding sites were detected across 200 homes. It has undertaken fogging and fumigation to curb the breeding of mosquitoes as a precautionary measure.

The civic body officials have appealed to residents to empty water containers that have not been properly covered. Zika is a mosquito-borne virus. The disease is a mild, self-limiting illness that presents with fever, rash and joint pain.

Zika virus infection has been linked to severe birth defects in almost 30 countries. These include microcephaly, where babies are born with abnormally small heads and restricted brain development.

Although the virus is mostly spread by mosquitoes, it can also be sexually transmitted.

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Jones and Stewart help New York beat Minnesota

Aces top Fever in front of 5th-largest crowd in WNBA's history

Indiana Fever guard Caitlin Clark (22) and Las Vegas Aces center A'ja Wilson (22) chase after a rebound during the first half of an WNBA basketball game in Las Vegas. (AP)

LAS VEGAS, July 3, (AP): Kelsey Plum scored 34 points and the Las Vegas Aces defeated the Indiana Fever, 88-69, in front of the fifth-largest crowd in WNBA history.

With an announced gathering of 20,366, the most-attended sporting event in T-Mobile Arena, home to the 2023 Stanley Cup champion Vegas Golden Knights, the two-time defending champion Aces won their fifth straight.

A'ja Wilson added 28 points and nine rebounds, while Jackie Young had 15 points and 10 assists. Kiah Stokes

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added 12 rebounds.

Indiana's All-Star contingent of Kelsey Mitchell, Aliyah Boston and Caitlin Clark combined to score 54 points - 78.2% of the team's scoring. All three were named to the WNBA All-Star team that will play the U.S. Olympic team in Phoenix on July 20.

Liberty 76, Lynx 67

In New York, Jonquel Jones had 21 points and 12 rebounds, and New York used stellar defense in the fourth quarter to beat the Minnesota Lynx.

Breanna Stewart added 17 points and 17 rebounds for the Liberty in a rematch of the Commissioner's Cup championship game that was won by the Lynx a week ago.

New York (17-3) trailed 65-61 before clamping down defensively. Minnesota missed 10 shots and had four turnovers over the next 7 1/2 minutes and the Liberty scored 15 consecutive points to go up 74-65 with 1:07 left on two free throws by Sabrina Ionescu.

Dorka Juhasz finally ended the drought with a layup with 30 seconds left, but it wasn't enough.

"That was great team defense, everyone was locked in," said Jones, who was named to the WNBA All-Star team after the game.

Kayla McBride scored 17 points for the Lynx (14-5), and Napheesa Collier had 15.

Las Vegas Aces guard Jackie Young (0) shoots a layup against Indiana Fever forward NaLyssa Smith (1) during the first half of an WNBA basketball game in Las Vegas. (AP)

Mystics 82, Sparks 80

In Los Angeles, Shatori Walker-Kimbrough scored 10 of her 17 points in the fourth quarter, and the Washington Mystics rallied past the Los Angeles Sparks .

Myisha Hines-Allen had 16 points for Washington, which trailed 64-52 entering the fourth.

Walker-Kimbrough made a 3-pointer with 2:55 left, lifting the Mystics to their first lead since it was 6-5 in the opening quarter.

Walker-Kimbrough threw it over the defense to find Stefanie Dolson for a layup with 1:18 remaining. Dolson was fouled on the play and made the free throw for an 80-77 lead.

Walker-Kimbrough helped close it out when she stole an inbounds pass with 20.7 seconds left and made one free throw at the other end for a four-point lead. She went 1 of 2 from the free-throw line again before Los Angeles forward Stephanie Talbot beat the buzzer with a 3-pointer from the corner.

Croatia beat Slovenia in Games qualifying tournament 'opener'

Bahamas top Finland 96-85

PIRAEUS, Greece, July 3, (AP): Buddy Hield and the Bahamas are a step closer to the Paris Olympics. Luka Doncic and Slovenia are now facing an uphill battle to get there.

Hield scored 24 points, Valdez Edgecombe Jr. added 20 and the Bahamas beat Finland 96-85 on Tuesday in the first game of the Olympic qualifying tournament at Valencia, Spain.

"We grinded it out. Grinded out a win today," Hield said. "Staying together, figuring it out. Game of basketball is a game of runs. First half, we didn't quite figure it out."

The tournaments in Spain and Greece were two of four that started on Tuesday to determine the last four spots in the men's basketball field for the Paris Olympics. Other tournaments are being held in Latvia and Puerto Rico, both of them also starting on Tuesday. Group play at all four sites continues through Thursday, with semifinal games Saturday and four games with Olympic berths on the line set for Sunday.

OLYMPICS

The Bahamas closed the game on a 44-21 run over the final 17 minutes, erasing what was a 12-point second-half deficit.

But for Slovenia, there was no comeback. At Piraeus, Greece, Croatia led by as many as 29 points and rolled to a 108-92 win. Doncic had 26 points, 11 rebounds and 10 assists for Slovenia, while Croatia had a its own triple-double - 19 points, 10 rebounds and 10 assists - from Dario Saric, along with 21 points from Goran Filipovic and 18 points in 19 minutes from Ivica Zubac.

Croatia can qualify for the semifinals on Wednesday with a win over New Zealand. Slovenia must beat New Zealand on Thursday to have any chance of keeping its Olympic hopes alive.

"Croatia played great," Doncic said. "They outplayed us. ... I've got to play way better than this and we've got to play with way better energy."

Doncic was dealing with injuries during the NBA Finals when Dallas lost to Boston, and he was clearly laboring at times on Tuesday as well. But he insisted he would keep going.

"It's an honor for me to play for my country," Doncic said. "A lot of times, there's going to be injuries. But I just see a big honor for me to play for my country. We're 2 million people and to represent my country, it means everything to me."

Deandre Ayton scored 19 and Eric Gordon added 16 for the Bahamas, who can advance to the qualifier's knockout round by beating Poland on Wednesday. It is an interesting mix for the Bahamas; three starters are NBA players, but the starting point guard is Lourawls Nairn - a former Michigan State player and now the associate head coach at Bowling Green.

"He's a coaches' dream and I think the players love playing with him," Bahamas coach Chris DeMarco said. "He definitely belongs and he could be doing this for a living, but he pursued a different career."

Mikael Jantunen and Edon Maxhuni each scored 20 for Finland, which faces Poland on Thursday.

At Valencia, host Spain rolled behind 17 points from Santi Aldama, 15 from Usman Garuba and 14 from Jaime Pradilla. Spain can wrap up a spot in the semifinals with a win over Angola on Wednesday.

Youssef Khayat scored 20 for Lebanon, which faces Angola on Thursday.

At Riga, Latvia, Brazil trailed for most of the game but outscored Montenegro 29-16 in the fourth quarter to pull off the comeback.

'We've worked really hard…'

Caslick set to lead Australia's charge for rugby sevens gold

BRISBANE, Australia, July 3, (AP): Charlotte Caslick will lead Australia's world series champion squad to the Paris Olympics, where she's aiming to win her second gold medal after taking the honors when rugby sevens made its debut at the Summer Games in 2016.

The women's and men's Australian squads for Paris were confirmed Wednesday, with Caslick and Sharni Smale on the women's squad and Nick Malouf and Henry Hutchison on the men's squad set to become three-time Olympians.

"We've worked really hard to get to this point where we are chasing a gold

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medal," said the 29-year-old Caslick, a two-time world sevens series player of the year. "I've loved every moment of being able to lead these players and we're in a good place.

"Paris is an incredible city that will bring the best out of our players. We can't wait to get over there."

After edging New Zealand for the first Olympic gold ever awarded in rugby sevens, the Australian women failed to make it into the medal playoffs in Tokyo. But the women's team

In this file photo, Perry Baker of the United States runs to score a try as he breaks away from Australia's Hayden Sargeant during the second day of the Hong Kong Sevens rugby tournament in Hong Kong. The US hasn't won an Olympic medal in rugby sevens since the sport was introduced in 2016. (AP)

enters Paris as the world series champions after edging Tokyo Olympic gold medalist New Zealand in the semifinals of the series finale last month and then beating France for the title.

The women's team has been grouped with Ireland, South Africa and Britain in the 12-team Olympic tournament from July 28-30. The men's squad includes Mark Nawaqanitawase, who recently decided to leave rugby union and sign with the Sydney Roosters in the National Rugby League.

Australia's men reached finals on two stops of the world series tour, placing fourth in the league stage behind Argentina, Ireland and New Zealand.

The men's tournament kicks off the rugby sevens competition on July 24, two days before the official opening ceremony with Australia in a group against Argentina, Samoa and Kenya.

Australia squads:

Women: Charlotte Caslick (captain), Sharni Smale, Dominique du Toit, Tia Hinds, Maddison Levi, Faith Nathan, Sariah Paki, Bridget Clark, Teagan Levi, Isabella Nasser, Kaitlin Shave and Bienne Terita.

Men: Nick Malouf (captain), Henry Hutchison, Nathan Lawson, Maurice Longbottom, Dietrich Roache, Ben Dowling, Matthew Gonzalez, Mark Nawaqanitawase, Henry Paterson, Hayden Sargeant, Corey Toole and James Turner.

Anderson, Warriors working to nail 3-yr deal

LeBron James agrees to a 2-yr extension with Lakers

SAN FRANCISCO, July 3, (AP): Free agent forward Kyle Anderson and the Golden State Warriors were working to complete a $27 million, three-year contract, a person with direct knowledge of the negotiations said Tuesday night.

The person spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because the contract wasn't finalized and hadn't been formally announced.

A day after losing guard Klay Thompson to the Dallas Mavericks, Golden State continued adding to its roster in an offseason that general manager Mike Dunleavy has said will be important in building the team back into a contender after missing the playoffs.

The Warriors will use a Traded Players Exception to acquire Anderson from Minnesota and both sides will swap second-round draft picks, according to the person who spoke to the AP, in the wake of Thompson's departure on a sign-and-trade deal of $50 million over three years. ESPN first reported that aspect of the deal.

The 30-year-old Anderson played 79 games with 10 starts for the Timberwolves last season, averaging 6.4 points, 3.5 rebounds and 4.2 assists in 22.6 minutes.

The Warriors will be his fourth team as he enters his 11th season. Anderson played four seasons with San Antonio and four with Memphis before spending the past two years with the Wolves, who valued his versatility, leadership and poise in a reserve role.

LOS ANGELES, July 3, (AP): LeBron James is making it official: He's coming back for a record-tying 22nd season in the NBA, one where the league's all-time scoring leader could share the floor with his son Bronny as teammates with the Los Angeles Lakers.

James has agreed to a two-year contract to remain with the Lakers, a person with knowledge of the negotiations said Wednesday. The second year of the deal is at James' option and means he could become a free agent again next summer, said the person, who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because the agreement had not been announced publicly.

ESPN reported that the Lakers and James' agent, Klutch Sports CEO Rich Paul, may agree on a salary slightly less than the max that James could have gotten - a move that could keep the team from reaching the second apron and preserve some roster flexibility going forward.

Either way, the expectation is that James will make around $50 million - give or take a little bit - this coming season, pushing his career on-court earnings to around $530 million and making him the first player in NBA history to eclipse the $500 million mark.

It will be James' 22nd season in the NBA, tying Vince Carter for the league record. The Lakers selected Bronny James last week in the second round of the draft, putting them in position to have the first on-court father-son duo in NBA history.

BASKETBALL

Getting the deal done clears one logistical hurdle: LeBron James needed a new deal in place before he could take the floor with USA Basketball for the start of its training camp in Las Vegas this weekend, one where the squad will start preparations for the Paris Olympics.

James will play in the Olympics for the fourth time, his first since helping the U.S. win gold at the 2012 London Games.

He'll turn 40 in December and averaged 25.7 points, 7.3 rebounds and 8.3 assists last season - as the oldest active player in the league.

Not only is James the all-time leader in points (40,474), but he's fourth in assists (11,009), sixth in games played (1,492), and eighth in both 3-pointers made (2,410) and steals (2,275).

His 20 All-Star selections is a record, as are his 20 appearances on the All-NBA team. He holds the records for being both the youngest player, and oldest player, to make an All-NBA squad.

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S. Korea lowers hope in Paris with smallest squad in 48 years

SEOUL, July 3, (Xinhua): South Korea lowered expectations for medals in the 2024 Olympic Games as it will field the smallest Olympic squad to Paris in almost five decades.

"(South Korea) aims to win the 15th place in the overall medal table by securing five gold medals," Lee Kee-heung, president of the Korean Sport & Olympic Committee (KSOC), said at a press conference that was held just one month before the Paris 2024 opening ceremony.

OLYMPICS

In Tokyo 2020, South Korea fielded over 230 athletes but finally ranked 16th with six gold, four silver and 10 bronze medals, the lowest number since Los Angeles 1984.

The lowered medal expectation in Paris 2024 came as the country planned to send a delegation of about 140 athletes competing in 21 out of 32 sports.

It would be South Korea's smallest squad since the Montreal Olympics, to which the country sent 50 athletes.

The smallest delegation in five decades stemmed from the country's failure to qualify in most team sports, including football, baseball, basketball, volleyball, rugby and hockey. The women's handball team solely qualified for the Paris Olympics.

However, Jang Jae-keun, head of the South Korean national training center, said that better-than-expected results would be possible as the performance of athletes have been on the "great rise." Some local media forecast that the gold medal tally could double the expectation if the country takes five golds in the traditionally strong archery and fencing while securing one respective gold in badminton, swimming, shooting, taekwondo and judo. South Korea may contend for gold in modern pentathlon, sport climbing and golf in Paris, according to local media.

"I was a teenager in Tokyo. My goal (in Paris) is to win the third straight gold in the men's team event," 20-year-old archer Kim Je-deok told reporters.

Kim made his Olympic debut in Tokyo where he took two golds. South Korea has claimed 43 Olympic medals, including 27 golds, in total in archery.

Alvarez named in Argentina squad for Paris Olympics

BUENOS AIRES, July 3, (Xinhua): Manchester City forward Julian Alvarez was one of three overage players named in Argentina's squad on Tuesday for the Paris Olympic Games.

The 16-team Olympic football tournament is open to players under the age of 23, but each side can include three overage "wild cards" in their squad.

Argentina coach Javier Mascherano also named Ajax goalkeeper Geronimo Rulli and Benfica central defender Nicolas Otamendi as wild cards on his 18-man list.

The under-23s include Botafogo attacking midfielder Thiago Almada, who was a member of Argentina's 2022 World Cup-winning squad, Atletico Madrid's Giuliano Simeone and Fiorentina striker Lucas Beltran. The Albiceleste will begin their Olympic campaign against Morocco on July 24 before also meeting Iraq and Ukraine in the group stage.

Argentina squad: Goalkeepers: Leandro Brey (Boca Juniors), Geronimo Rulli (Ajax).

Defenders: Marco Di Cesare (Racing Club), Julio Soler (Lanus), Joaquin Garcia (Velez Sarsfield), Gonzalo Lujan (San Lorenzo), Nicolas Otamendi (Benfica), Bruno Amione (Santos Laguna).

Midfielders: Ezequiel Fernandez (Boca Juniors), Santiago Hezze (Olympiacos), Cristian Medina (Boca Juniors), Kevin Zenon (Boca Juniors).

Forwards: Giuliano Simeone (Atletico Madrid), Luciano Gondou (Argentinos Juniors), Thiago Almada (Botafogo de Brasil), Claudio Echeverri (River Plate), Julian Alvarez (Manchester City), Lucas Beltran (Fiorentina).

Murray teaming up with Raducanu to play mixed doubles at Wimbledon

Gauff reaches 3rd round, defending champ Alcaraz also advances

LONDON, July 3, (AP): Coco Gauff likes No. 1 Court at Wimbledon. It's where she beat Venus Williams back in 2019 when Gauff made her Wimbledon debut at age 15.

On Wednesday, Gauff beat qualifier Anca Todoni 6-2, 6-1 to advance to the third round at the All England Club.

"This is the court where I first started here at Wimbledon. Court 1 is always a special place for me to play on," the 20-year-old Gauff said in her on-court interview.

The victory also allows Gauff, the No. 2 seed, to move another step away from last year's first-round exit.

"Overall, I just learned about life a lot," the U.S. Open champion said when asked about putting that three-set loss to Sofia Kenin behind her.

"I just realized that, yes, what I do I'm very passionate about, but it's not ever that serious and sometimes the world can make you feel like there's so much pressure, there's so much expectation," she said. "At the end of the (day), it's a game. It's sport."

The 19-year-old Todoni is from Romania and was making her Grand Slam debut.

"I do think I could have played cleaner at some moments," Gauff said.

Five years ago, Gauff beat Williams - a five-time Wimbledon champion - 6-4, 6-4 in the first round and eventually reached the last 16, all on her Grand Slam debut.

Defending champion Carlos Alcaraz trailed 6-5 in the first set before coming back to beat Alexsander Vukic 7-6 (5), 6-2, 6-2, setting up a third-round meeting with No. 29 Frances Tiafoe after the American eliminated Borna Coric 7-6 (5), 6-1, 6-3.

When told by the on-court interviewer that Tiafoe said he's "coming after you," the 21-year-old Spaniard replied with a smile: "I'm going for him."

"We played a really good match in the U.S. Open," the No. 3 seed said of their 2022 semifinal that Alcaraz won at Flushing Meadows.

In other results, No. 11 Danielle Collins completed her first-round match - a 6-3, 7-6 (4) win over Clara Tauson. It had been suspended Tuesday night at 4-4 in the second set.

No. 20 Beatriz Haddad Maia advanced to the third round by beating Magdalena Frech 7-5, 6-3.

On the men's side, No. 16 Ugo Humbert eliminated Botic van de Zandschulp 7-6 (9), 6-1, 6-3.

Andy Murray and Emma Raducanu will team up in mixed doubles at Wimbledon, the tournament announced Wednesday, a pairing of the two biggest stars of British tennis.

TENNIS

The 37-year-old Murray owns three Grand Slam titles, including from the All England Club in 2013 and 2016. The 21-year-old Raducanu won the 2021 U.S. Open at age 18 and became the first qualifier to claim a major trophy.

Murray withdrew from singles at Wimbledon on Tuesday, a little more than a week after having surgery to remove a cyst from his spine. He is also entered in men's doubles with his older brother, Jamie.

Murray has said this will be his final appearance at the tournament. He is planning to retire after the Paris Olympics, which start later this month.

The All England Club awarded a wild-card entry to Murray and Raducanu in mixed doubles on Wednesday. The Murray brothers were given a wild card for men's doubles last week.

Murray withdrew from singles at Wimbledon a little more than a week after surgery to remove a cyst from his spine, and the two-time men's champion at the All England Club said he would make his farewell appearance at the tournament by playing doubles with his older brother, Jamie.

"I'm disappointed. I wanted to play in the tournament, and I wanted to have a chance to go out there and walk out on my own on Centre Court again and give it another go. But I also was only going to do that if I felt like I could be competitive. And I didn't feel like that today," Murray said.

"I'm sorry, obviously, for everyone that came and wanted to support and watch again. And I wanted that moment, as well, as much for me as for the people that have supported me over the years.

The fans, but also my closest friends, family, my team. It was important for me to do that with them, as well," he said. "It's one of those things. Unfortunate. The timing was horrible. The surgery was a complex one. It wasn't to be."

The 37-year-old Murray - who has been planning to retire after the Paris Olympics, which start later this month - was supposed to face Tomas Machac at Centre Court on Tuesday in the first round of singles. Murray was replaced in the bracket by David Goffin, who lost during qualifying rounds last week.

Murray won Wimbledon in 2013 and 2016; the first of those made him the first British men's singles champion at the tournament in 77 years, and he was awarded a knighthood by Queen Elizabeth II after the second title.

He said over the weekend that he was hoping for "maybe a bit of closure" by getting one more chance to "feel that buzz" of playing at Centre Court before the end of his career.

Colombia & Brazil through to quarterfinals after stalemate

Costa Rica eliminated despite beating Paraguay

SANTA CLARA, July 3, (Agencies): Daniel Munoz canceled out an early Raphinha strike as Colombia and Brazil drew 1-1 in their final Copa America group stage match .

Raphinha put Brazil ahead with a sumptuous free-kick before Munoz slotted home from close range on the stroke of halftime.

The result ensured Colombia finished top of Group D with seven points from three games, two points ahead of second-placed Brazil.

Both teams will play their quarterfinal matches on Saturday, with the

SOCCER

Cafeteros facing Panama in Phoenix and Brazil confronting Uruguay in Las Vegas. "We had our chances to win, and it's disappointing that we didn't, but even so, it's mission accomplished so far," Colombia defender Davinson Sanchez said. "We have big plans, and we're not going to be satisfied just by reaching this stage. We want more." The result ended Colombia's winning streak that had extended to 10 matches. But the Cafeteros remain unbeaten in their last 26 outings dating back to early 2022.

Brazil, meanwhile, looked far from the well-oiled machine that football fans are accustomed to.

Raphinha admitted the five-time world champions are still a work in progress under manager Dorival Junior, who took charge in January following a disastrous run of results last year.

"We are still finding our way but I'm sure we are going to click soon," the Barcelona winger said.

"To win major tournaments, you have to overcome tough challenges like tonight. We couldn't get the win but we had our chances. We did what was required to progress and now we have to be prepared for what's coming." It took just 12 minutes for Brazil to take the lead at Levi's Stadium as Raphinha curled a 25-yard free-kick into the top-right corner.

Colombia's James Rodriguez is tackled by Brazil's Andreas Pereira during a Copa America Group D soccer match in Santa Clara, Calif. (AP)

Colombia appeared to equalize shortly after when Sanchez headed in after James Rodriguez's inch-perfect free-kick. But the goal was ruled out for offside after a review by the video assistant referee (VAR).

The game was played at a frenetic pace with both sides attacking relentlessly. Vinicius Junior went down in the area after a clumsy challenge from Daniel Munoz, but referee Jesus Valenzuela said there was no penalty after another VAR review.

Munoz was proving a thorn in Brazil's side and he put his side on level terms in the 47th minute when he latched onto Jhon Cordoba's pass and fired a first-time effort past goalkeeper Alisson.

Colombia continued dictating terms after halftime and Brazil were fortunate that attempts from Cordoba and Jorge Carrascal were directed straight at Alisson.

Rafael Borre, a 76th-minute substitute for Jhon Cordoba, should have given Colombia the lead but could only manage to hammer his attempt over the bar from point-blank range with Alisson nowhere in sight.

Brazil also narrowly missed a chance to go ahead when Andreas Pereira's long-range effort was tipped over by Vargas in the fifth minute of stoppage time.

Costa Rica was eliminated from the Copa America despite beating Paraguay 2-1 as Francisco Calvo and 19-year-old Josimar Alcócer scored in the opening seven minutes.

Costa Rica finished third in Group D with four points when Colombia and Brazil played a 1-1 draw. The Brazilians took second place with five points.

Paraguay had been eliminated when it lost its first two matches.

The Ticos were eliminated in the group stage for the fourth time after 1997, 2011 and 2016. They reached the quarterfinals in 2001 and 2004.

Calvo was left wide open in front of the net to head home Joseph Mora's bending cross in the third minute. Four minutes later, Alcócer dribbled from near midfield and slotted a shot from distance past a diving Rodrigo Morínigo.

Those were Costa Rica's only two shots on goal.

Paraguay held possession for a majority of the second half and Ramón Sosa scored his first international goal in the 55th. Costa Rica goalkeeper Patrick Sequeira preserved the victory by making a fingertip save of Ángel Romero's close-range shot in second-half stoppage time. Costa Rica has not finished the group stage without a victory since 1997, its first appearance as a guest at South America's championship.

Two-time champion Pogacar retains lead

Cavendish breaks Merckx's record for most career Tour stage wins

SAINT-VULBAS, France, July 3, (Agencies): Mark Cavendish broke Eddy Merckx's long-standing record for most career Tour de France stage wins with his 35th victory on Wednesday.

The 39-year-old Cavendish sprinted for the win in the fifth stage of the Tour, pulling away some 100 meters from the line despite being bunched in. He crossed the line ahead of Jasper Philipsen and then jumped into the arms of a teammate.

Two-time champion Tadej Pogacar retained the race leader's yellow jersey, but the day belonged to Cavendish.

He equaled Merckx's mark of 34 wins during the 2021 Tour and went close to No. 35 in the seventh stage last year when he was narrowly beaten to the line by Philipsen. He then crashed a day later and broke his right collarbone. Merckx, the Belgian considered the most dominant rider in cycling history, won his 34 individual stages at the Tour from 1969-75.

Cavendish's decision to give it one more shot paid off.

With his 2023 race ending early, Cavendish decided to put off retirement by a year and came back to try again.

Finally, Cavendish made cycling history - 16 years after winning his first Tour stage back in 2008.

Other riders were happy for Cavendish, with several stopping to speak with or hug him after the 177.4-kilometer (110-mile) leg from Saint-Jean-De-Maurienne to Saint-Vulbas

Britain's sprinter Mark Cavendish loses his bicycle chain as he crosses the finish line to win a record 35th Tour de France stage win to break the record of Belgian legend Eddy Merckx in the fifth stage of the Tour de France cycling race over 177.4 kilometers (110.2 miles) with start in Saint-Jean-de-Maurienne and finish in Saint-Vulbas, France. (AP)

When Eritrea's Biniam Girmay crossed the finish line at the end of the third stage of the Tour de France in a bunch sprint in Turin, Italy on Monday, Eritreans from all walks of life flocked to social media to celebrate Girmay's historic win.

The 24-year-old Eritrean cyclist's triumphant victory marked a continental achievement as he became the first black African to win a Tour de France stage, often regarded as the pinnacle of cycling sport.

African Union (AU) Commission Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat was among the first to congratulate Girmay, describing his achievement as a "historic moment" for Eritrea and the African continent as a whole.

"Immense pride as Eritrean cyclist Biniam Girmay becomes the first Black African to win a stage, and also the longest leg of this year's prestigious Tour de France spanning 231 km," the AU Commission chief shared Tuesday on social media X, formerly Twitter.

CYCLING

Faki further highlighted that Girmay's "inspiring personal achievement marks a historic moment for his country and, indeed, across all of Africa."

Cycling is deeply ingrained in Eritrea's culture, with the pedal cycle being embraced by the country's population as both a mode of transportation and a means of competitive sports.

KFA concludes workshop for sports club managers

Photo by Mahmoud Jadeed
Dr. Muhammad Al-Jabr

KUWAIT CITY, July 3: The Kuwait Football Association concluded a workshop on professionalism for sports club managers at the conference hall in Jaber International Stadium. Dr. Muhammad Al-Jabr, Director of the Department of Professionalism and Player Conditions at the Kuwait Football Association, attended the event.

The workshop covered topics including the professional regulations of both Kuwaiti and International Football Associations, the roles and responsibilities of professional managers, and insights into the international transfer matching system. Such workshops aim to enhance the administrative capabilities of football organizations and strengthen professionalism within clubs, with a focus on mitigating issues related to player and technical staff contracts.

KFA lauds collaboration with Winter Games Club

KUWAIT CITY, July 3: The Kuwait Football Association commended the excellent collaboration with the Kuwaiti Winter Games Club, highlighting the club's provision of its gym and facilities for training national team players across various age groups.

Badr Abdul Jalil, Assistant Secretary for Technical Affairs and National Teams, and Technical Director of the Football Association, expressed appreciation during the honoring ceremony for the club's president and members. He emphasized the significant benefits derived by players from the club's superior facilities, citing this partnership as a model for fostering solidarity within Kuwaiti sports bodies.

Abdul Jalil presents a memorial shield to the Winter Games.

Fuhaid Al-Ajmi, President of the Winter Games Club, underscored that supporting the national football team players is a social responsibility aimed at enhancing the sports community and elevating its performance.

He stressed that advancing Kuwaiti sports requires collective efforts, with collaboration between specialized sports federations and comprehensive clubs playing a crucial role.

Carlos Alcaraz of Spain plays a forehand return to Aleksandar Vukic of Australia during their match on day three at the Wimbledon tennis championships in London. (AP)

The coach of Kuwait junior volleyball team leads the training session in this file photo.

Sports

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'We are keen to get the stadiums ready before Gulf Cup'

KUWAIT CITY, July 3: Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Child Affairs, and Minister of State for Youth Affairs, Dr. Amthal Al-Huwaila, emphasized the importance of ensuring the readiness of Kuwaiti stadiums for the upcoming Arab Gulf Cup Football Championship (Gulf 26), scheduled to be hosted in Kuwait next December.

SOCCER

After inspecting the Jaber International, Al-Nasr, and Sulaibikhat stadiums, where the championship matches will take place, Dr. Al-Huwaila stated that she directed the officials of the General Sports Authority to complete the stadium preparations in the best possible manner to ensure the event's success.

She explained that the Authority and the tournament organizing committee will make every effort to address the observations made by the Gulf Cup Federation's inspection committee in its previous rounds and to develop appropriate solutions. She added that work will continue in the coming period to complete all arrangements early for the successful preparation of the tournament.

She highlighted the special attention the tournament receives from the country's political leadership, noting its role in bringing together Gulf youth in a spirit of fraternal competition. She expressed confidence in the Kuwaiti cadres' ability to organize a distinctive version of the tournament, which garners broad popular and Gulf media attention.

Accompanying Minister Al-Huwaila on the tour were Acting Director General of the General Sports Authority, Bashar Abdullah, Deputy Director General for Administrative and Financial Affairs, Faisal Al-Yateem, and several Authority officials.

Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Child Affairs, and Minister of State for Youth Affairs, Dr. Amthal Al-Huwaila inspects one of the stadium.

Kuwait volleyball team faces Iraq in Arab Under-17 Championship

By Khaled El Anzi
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

AMMAN, July 3: The Kuwait junior volleyball team will compete in its second match at the Arab Championship for under-17 teams, hosted by Jordan until the 12th of this month. The team will face Iraq in the second round at the Sports Palace Hall in Amman at 7:00 pm. Concurrently, Bahrain will play against Saudi Arabia, and Libya will compete with Qatar.

The team started its journey against Saudi Arabia. It is scheduled to play against the host, Jordan, on July 7th, Bahrain on the 8th, Libya on the 10th, and Qatar on the 11th to conclude the preliminary league. The tournament features a single-round league format, where the top four teams from the first round will advance directly to the semifinals, with the winners vying for the championship title.

VOLLEYBALL

The technical staff of the Kuwait national junior volleyball team, led by Khaled Al-Mutairi and assisted by Meshaal Al-Sabti, prepared for the Arab Championship through an external camp held in Cairo before the competition, which included several trial matches.

Turkey oust Austria to book last 8 berth

Netherlands ease past Romania

BERLIN, July 3, (Xinhua): Merih Demiral's double strike was enough for Turkey to eliminate stubborn Austria 2-1 in a Euro 2024 round of 16 match at Leipzig's Red Bull Arena.

The Turks had a fairy tale start to the clash, scoring the fastest goal in the knockout stages of the Euro tournament as Austria couldn't clear the ball following a corner, allowing Demiral to tap home the opener just 57 seconds into the game.

Austria responded with furious attacks, but Christoph Baumgartner missed two chances to restore parity. The Austrians struggled to create more chances against Turkey's well-organized defense and failed to produce clear-cut opportunities before the break. Meanwhile, Vincenzo Montella's side remained dangerous, with Demiral heading over the target following another corner kick.

After the restart, Austria came out with momentum and kept Türkiye's defense busy. However, Marco Arnautovic couldn't beat goalkeeper Mert Gunok, and Konrad Laimer pulled wide from a promising position moments later.

Despite Austria's pressure, it was Montella's side that scored against the flow of the game. Demiral nodded home his second goal from a corner, making it two for Turkey.

Turkey's Merih Demiral, (top left), heads the ball to score his side's 2nd goal against Austria during a round of sixteen match at the Euro 2024 soccer tournament in Leipzig, Germany. (AP)

Memphis Depay of the Netherlands, (left), runs with the ball followed by Romania's Bogdan Racovitan during a round of sixteen match between Romania and the Netherlands at the Euro 2024 soccer tournament in Munich, Germany. (AP)

Austria managed to answer and halve the deficit through substitute Michael Gregoritsch, who sparked hopes after drilling a flicked-on corner into the roof of the net with plenty of time left to play.

Austria went in search of the equalizer, throwing every man forward, while Turkey kept all their men behind the ball, waiting for counterattack opportunities. Baris Yilmaz had the golden chance to finish off one of those counterattacks but missed the target from inside the box with only goalkeeper Patrick Pentz to beat.

Rangnick's side nearly restored parity in the dying seconds of the match, but Gunok denied Baumgartner's close-range header with a one-handed parry on the goal line.

With this result, Turkey advanced to the quarterfinals for the first time since 2008, where they will face the Netherlands at Berlin's Olympia Stadium on Saturday.

SOCCER

"We didn't have the necessary luck, and I believe if the game had gone to extra time, we would have won. We had time to score an equalizer. We didn't make enough of our own chances, and we didn't defend their set pieces well enough," said Austria coach Rangnick.

Cody Gakpo's opener and two late goals from Donyell Malen helped the Dutchmen to ease past Romania 3-0 into the quarterfinals of Euro 2024 at Munich's Allianz Arena .

Romania started highly motivated and created a notable chance early on, with Dennis Man's shot from the edge of the box going just wide in the 14th minute.

Six minutes later, the Dutch punished Romania's wastefulness as Xavi Simons found Gakpo on the left wing. The Liverpool striker cut inside the box before unleashing a well-placed shot into the near post corner, marking his third goal of the tournament.

The Netherlands gained momentum but failed to add another goal before the break, with Stefan de Vrij heading into the side netting from a tight angle.

Ronald Koeman's men started the second half strongly, with Memphis Depay unable to beat Romania goalkeeper Florin Nita from close range in the 54th minute, and Virgil van Dijk hitting the outside of the post four minutes later.

The Elftal continued to press, but Nita's reflexes denied Gakpo from finishing off his solo run with a goal at the hour mark. Gakpo remained active, though his second goal was ruled offside.

Romania stayed on the back foot but was fortunate as the Netherlands remained wasteful with their promising opportunities.

The Netherlands eventually doubled their advantage in the 83rd minute when Gakpo's build-up play allowed Malen to tap home into the empty net.

Malen wasn't done scoring, as Simons released the Borussia Dortmund striker, who fired past Nita to seal the victory.

"Today the start was hard, but we eventually found our game and caused them problems. Maybe one critical point was that it took too long to score the second goal. We caused Romania big problems with our attacking," said the Netherlands coach Koeman.

Players pose for a group photo before their departure.

Kuwait team departs for Dutch Open, Houston preparatory camp

KUWAIT CITY, July 3: The Kuwait squash team delegation has departed for Amsterdam, the Dutch capital, to compete in the Dutch Open Junior Championship, which commences today and runs until next Saturday. Following this event, the delegation will travel to Houston, USA, on the eighth of this month for a four-day outdoor preparatory training camp ahead of the World Junior Championships, scheduled from July 11 to 24 in Houston.

The delegation, led by Board Member Adel Al-Gharib, includes coach Majid Khan and players Jassim Al-Gharib, Abdul Rahman Al-Mughrabi, Khaled Al-Fawzan, Fahd Al-Ghais, Abdullah Hani, and Saad Al-Suwaid.

Adel Al-Gharib, head of the delegation, emphasized the importance of participating in official tournaments sanctioned by the International Federation of the Game for emerging and young players. Such participation allows them to compete against the world's best players, gain international experience, and enhance their technical skills. The Blue players participating in the world championship are recognized locally as among the top players and key supporters of the first team.

SQUASH

Khalil Nadoum represents Kuwait at Sports Media 'workshop' in Bahrain

MANAMA, July 3: Khalil Nadoum represented Kuwait at the "Introduction to Sports Media" workshop held at the lecture hall in Bahrain National Stadium, attended by 50 participants.

On the workshop's closing day, Mohammed Abdul Latif bin Jalal, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Tumooh Sports Management Company, honored the participants with certificates of appreciation, alongside a special recognition for lecturer Khalil Nadoum.

Nadoum commended Bahrain for organizing the workshop and praised all officials involved. He highlighted the significance of such workshops and courses in advancing both general and sports media. The workshop received substantial media coverage, underscoring its importance for the future of sports media.

Khalil Nadoum honored at the end of the workshop.

Germany midfielder Kroos upbeat ahead of Spain clash

BERLIN, July 3, (Xinhua): Self-confidence has grown to new heights for Germany before they face Spain in the Euro 2024 quarterfinal, former Real Madrid midfielder Toni Kroos said at a press conference at the team's base camp in Herzogenaurach.

"Faith has grown extremely within this team. We have learned we can survive tight situations; we believe in our quality much more than we did in recent months," the 34-year-old said ahead of the match this Friday evening in Stuttgart.

After ten years in the shirt of Real Madrid, he said that winning Euro 2024 on home soil was the driving force behind his return to the Germany team, after his initial retirement from international football in 2021.

"I wouldn't have returned if this idea hadn't been in my head and was part of the talks I had with [head coach] Julian Nagelsmann," the 113-cap midfielder said.

A European Championship title is still missing in his career record, despite having won 34 trophies for club and country since he started his career in 2007.

"You telling me that [Spain winger] Lamine Yamal was born that year makes me feel older right now.

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