

THE FIRST ENGLISH LANGUAGE DAILY IN FREE KUWAIT Established in 1977 / www.arabtimesonline.com



Scan the OR code to access the Arab Times WhatsApp Channel

FRIDAY-SATURDAY, JULY 19-20, 2024 / MUHARRAM 13-14, 1446 AH

emergency number 112

NO. 18648

16 PAGES

150 FILS

SEPARATE SUPPLY SYSTEM SOUGHT TO MEET GROWING DEMAND MEW report highlights June power usage

Mercury to hit 50°C in rising dust over weekend

'Awareness must'

Follow rules to avert fires: KFF

KUWAIT CITY, July 18, (KUNA): The Kuwaiti Fire Force (KFF) on Thursday called on citizens and residents to follow the safety guidelines and instructions in a bid to prevent fires, said a senior KFF of-

In his interview with Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), KFF Director Brig. Mohammad Al-Ghareeb asserted that everyone must possess fire prevention equipment and must know how to use them, including fire blankets, smoke and gas detectors, and fire extinguishers.

He also emphasized the importance of teaching security personnel, tenants, and everyone living in residential and commercial buildings how to use such tools in order to prevent and deals with emergen-

Al-Ghareeb cited many causes of fires in residential buildings, with electricity being the most prominent, explaining that overloading electrical circuits often lead to electrical faults.

He also pointed to the need to shut off unnecessary devices and gadgets, especially when leaving the building, so as to reduce energy consumption and prevent electrical faults that might lead to fire.

He added that gas stoves are also hazardous, and it is crucial to maintain them and ensure all gas cylinders are safe and not leaking, underscoring that turning off the gas lever when not in use significantly contributes to stove safety.

Continued on Page 5

Newswatch

ANKARA: Kuwaiti First Deputy Prime Minister, Defense Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah on Thurs day visited Kuwait's Minister of Oil Imad Al-Atiqi in Turkiye, where he is receiving medical treament, representing His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. (KUNA)

KUWAIT CITY: Undersecretary of the Kuwaiti Ministry of Defense Sheikh Dr. Abdullah Mishal Al-**Sabah** discussed issues of common interest and boosting bilateral cooperation with Spanish State Secretary for Foreign and Global Affairs Diego Martinez on Thursday

In a press statement, the Ministry of Defense said that Sheikh Abdullah Al-Sabah received the Spanish secretary. accompanied by Ambassador of Spain to Kuwait Miguel Aguilar, where they discussed bilateral relations in the military defense field. (KUNA)

JEDDAH: Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammad bin Salman spoke to Russian President Vladimir Putin on a range of bilat-

In a phone conversation, initiated by the Crown Prince on Wednesday, they reviewed the friendly relations and ways to promote cooperation between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Russian Federation in various areas, the Saudi Press Agency (SPA) reported. (KUNA)



Photo by Samer Shaqair

Wind and dust accompany the hot weather prevailing in the country.



Chief of the General Staff of the Kuwaiti Army, Lieutenant General Pilot Bandar Al-Muzain and the accompanying delegation at the headquarters of the Islamic Military Alliance in Riyadh.

Kuwait, Saudi Arabia eye boost in military ties

Chief of General Staff of Kuwait's Armed Forces Lt. Gen. Bandar Al-Muzain and his Saudi counterpart Lt. Gen. Fayyad al-Ruwaili dealt with means of boosting mutual collaboration on Wednesday. Al-Ruwaili met with Al-Muzain who is paying an official visit to

Saudi Arabia, Saudi Ministry of Defense said in a statement. The meeting also covered bilateral ties between the two countries, and means of enhancing and developing defensive and military fields, it added. Lieutenant General Bandar Al-Muzain praised the "professional" techniques employed by a Saudi-led Islamic alliance to fight terrorism, saying such methods are instrumental in keeping at bay the threats of extremist groups. Amid his visit to the headquarters of the Islamic Military Coun-

ter Terrorism Coalition, the Kuwaiti army chief was briefed on the latest endeavors the military body has taken, which include researches and studies that aim to push forward the fight against terrorism

Acknowledging Kuwait's contributions towards counter-terrorism efforts, the pan-Islamic coalition's secretary general Major General Mohammad Al-Moghedi said these Kuwaiti initiatives have given impetus to global anti-terrorism operations. (KUNA)

Kuwait nat'l panel for preventing human trafficking signs protocol with UN office

KUWAIT CITY, July 18, (KUNA): Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Justice Tariq Al-Asfour signed Wednesday a protocol of cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in the GCC member states.

Following signing the protocol, Al-Asfour, also Deputy Chairman of Permanent National Committee for Implementing the National Strategy for the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants, said

Continued on Page 5



KUNA photo Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah receives Pakistani Ambassador to Kuwait Malik Muhammad Farouq.

Amir, PM receive letters from Pakistan PM

KUWAIT CITY, July 18, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received a letter from Prime Minister of Pakistan Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah also received a similar letter from Sharif. The letters were received by Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Ambas-

sador Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, while receiving the outgoing Pakistani Ambassador to Kuwait Malik Farouq.

Israeli military operations aim to destroy & terrorize Palestinians

100

Al-Yahya

NEW YORK, July 18, (Agencies): Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya said Wednesday that Israeli occupation military operations seek to destroy and terrorize Palestinians. Delivering Kuwait's speech before a UN Secu-

rity Council session on the situation in the Middle East, Al-Yahya said Gaza has turned into a bleak landscape of destruction, with 40,000

deaths, mostly women and

The total number of victims under the rubble is unknown,

Leading Kuwait's delegation to the meeting, Al-Yahya said: "Israel has turned schools

into battlefields and hospitals into landscapes of pain and powerlessness" Despite the efforts to bring

an end to these attacks, Israel continues to cut lives short without any distinction, he noted. He went to say that the Israeli authorities are committing war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing. Calling for unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance across Gaza, Kuwait's top diplomat underlined the essential role of UNRWA in supporting the Palestinian people in their darkest hour.

Al-Yahya further warned against double standards and expressed support for all initiatives to reach a just and lasting solution to the Palestinian question.

He highlighted Israeli's continued criminal practices and violations of international law, referring to its unilateral decisions aiming to change the current legal and historic status of the occupied territories amid the failure of the UN Security Council to assume its responsibilities.

Al-Yahya renewed Kuwait's firm solidarity with the brotherly Palestinian people who have been struggling to obtain their legitimate rights, topped with establishing their independent state based on June 4 1967, achieving a comprehensive and fair peace, in line with the relevant international resolutions and references, to reach a fair and lasting solution to the Palestinian cause.

Continued on Page 5

Kuwait hospital in first-ever ME vascular surgery

KUWAIT CITY, July 18, (KUNA): Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital's vascular surgery and catheterization team conducted a surgery for the Aortic Thoracicin Aneurysm Arch, the first of its kind in the Middle East.

In a statement on Thursday, the hospital said the surgery involves fixing a stint to fit the size of arteries of the patient, and later implanting it through catheterization, adding that the surgery was led by Dr. Abdullah Al-Fawwaz. This technique is a safer substitute for traditional

stints, which is designed according to the case and have a high cost, it noted.

Studies showed that this technique also reduces the risk of stroke that sometimes follow traditional stint



without any side effects, the

statement said.

implanting, said the hospital. The surgery is done through one large incision for perfusion in the Brachiocephalic artery and the left common carotid artery, as well as a small incision for the left subclavian artery.

The surgery was done through local anesthesia, and the patient was discharged from the hospital the next day

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, July 18: The Ministry of Electricity and Water's monthly statistical report for June revealed significant electrical extension activities across various sectors. A total of 536 properties received electrical extensions, with a combined production capacity of 68,164 kilowatts.

Private housing led the extensions, with 499 plots receiving electricity. This sector accounted for a substantial 71 percent of the total extensions, amounting to 48,397 kilowatts.

The industrial sector ranked second, with electricity extended to 8 industrial plots. This sector's total load was 14,475 kilowatts, representing 21 percent of the total electrical loads.

The government sector followed, with 8 government plots receiving electrical extensions totaling 2,009 kilowatts, accounting for 2.9 percent of the total loads for June. The commercial sector saw extensions to 5 plots, with a

total load of 1,279 kilowatts, making up 1.9 percent of the total electrical extensions. The investment sector received electrical extensions for 3

plots, totaling 1,033 kilowatts and representing 1.5 percent The agricultural sector, with 13 plots, had a total load of

969 kilowatts, accounting for 1.4 percent of the total electrical extensions. These figures highlight the Ministry's efforts to enhance electrical infrastructure across various sectors, reflecting the

ongoing development and expansion within the country. Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy said the independent supplier system has become the most accepted option for producing electricity, reports Al-Anba

daily quoting MEW sources. The final report prepared by the Ministry's advisors strongly recommends this system as it is cost-effective, time-efficient, and reduces bureaucracy. The move towards its approval is imminent, especially since the Council of Ministers has repeatedly tasked the Ministry of Electricity to coordinate with the "Fatwa and Legislation" department

Partnership

on this matter.

Establishing electricity and water production stations through direct offering or partnership systems can take up to five years or more. This lengthy process poses a significant obstacle in meeting the increasing demand for electricity and water.

The government spends over 2.5 billion dinars annually on these services, a cost that continues to rise. The cost of producing electricity from the Ministry's generating stations s 23 fils per kilowatt, whereas production from a private sector station is around 12 fils.

Annual electricity consumption increases by 5-6%, raising the risk of shortages during peak summer times. This risk is exacerbated by the lack of new generating stations ready for operation until 2028.

The independent supplier system, where investors build operate, and maintain generation stations at their own expense and sell electricity at reduced prices to the state, has proven successful in Gulf countries and globally. This system allows for faster and easier project implementation compared to partnership contracts. MEW aims to meet the growing demand for electrical

energy through contributions from international developers who will finance, construct, manage, and operate power production and water desalination plants under the independent This approach has become the only viable solution for

financing the construction and operation of these facilities, with the government purchasing electricity or water at an agreed tariff through an energy purchase agreement with the The government will not participate in the capital, and the

investor will bear all costs for implementing, operating, and maintaining the project for up to 25 years. This arrangement eliminates risks for the government and fosters competition among companies to supply electricity at the lowest cost, resulting in financial savings for the state. Implementing the independent supplier system guarantees

the provision of electricity and water. Decree No. 207 of 2023 allows the Ministry of Electricity to purchase electricity and water from external sources.

The Ministry is encouraged to initiate the offering of solar energy plants under this system at no cost to the state and to announce its need to purchase electrical energy or water. International developers can then submit initiatives through the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority, with the Ministry selecting the best proposals based on price and

Continued on Page 5

Now Hiring Arab Times Newspaper

Advertising Representatives **Indian nationality**

- **Salary** + Commission
- Driving license and a car is a must

To apply, please send your CV to: hr@alseyassah.com

Expected weather for next 24 hrs: By Day: Very hot with light to moderate freshening at times northwesterly wind, with speeds of 15-50 km/h causing rising dust.

By Night: Hot to rather hot with light to moderate northwesterly wind, with speeds of 12-38 km/h.

Weather

Max Exp Station **Kuwait City**

37 32 35 36 34 Kuwait Airport Abdaly Jahra Salmiyah Nuwaisib Wafra

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

Program targets young graduates to prepare them for labor market

PAY opens registration for engineering contracts management training

KUWAIT CITY, July 18: The Public Authority for Youth (PAY) has reaffirmed its commitment to empowering Kuwaiti youth across various fields, with a particular focus on providing exceptional career paths for recent graduates and preparing them for the labor market, reports

Al-Seyassah daily. Dr. Musaed Al-Kuraibani, the Acting Deputy Director General of the Authority for Youth Projects Sector, announced in a press statement that registration is now open for the second season of the engineering contracts manage



Dr Al-Kuraibani

ment training and qualification program. This program is targeted at young male and female graduates and is scheduled to launch in September at Kuwait University's College of Engineering and Petroleum, running for two months.

Dr. Al-Kuraibani highlighted that the program, which is part of the "Work Makers" project, aims to develop the skills of young individuals who are entering the workforce and to enhance their knowledge in the crucial field of engineering contracts management.

The program offers both field training and theoretical lectures, supervised by aca-

demics and specialists. It targets graduates from the College of Engineering with specializations in mechanical, civil, chemical, industrial, and electrical engineering, as well as graduates from the Colleges of Law and Business Administration.

He stated that the program seeks to empower Kuwaiti youth by program steems to empower Kuwaiti youth by providing them with essential expertise in drafting, reviewing, and auditing contracts. Participants who complete the program will receive certificates accredited by Kuwait University.

Dr. Al-Kuraibani emphasized the authority's dedication to organizing this program, which offers distinguished career paths for newly graduated Kuwaiti youth. The "Work Makers" project also includes other programs such as Facilities Management, Lawyer's Assistant, Digital Programming, Freelance Business, and more.

Young people interested in joining the program are encouraged to apply through the authority's website (www.youth.gov.kw) before the registration deadline on July 31.

The program's organizers will conduct personal interviews with applicants starting from the beginning of August to finalize the

list of accepted participants. Under the directives of Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah, Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs, and Minister of State for Youth Affairs, the authority is continuously developing its programs and projects to meet the aspirations and ambitions of youth, enhancing their skills across various fields.



FM Al-Yahya meets with Under-Secretary-General of the UN and Executive Secretary of the ESCWA, Dr. Rola Dashti.

Kuwait and ESCWA strengthen ties

Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya met with UN Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ES-CWA) Rola Dashti at the UN headquarters in New York on Wednesday.

During the meeting, they looked into ways of promoting cooperation between Kuwait and ESCWA at national, regional and international multilateral levels, economic, social and environmental dimensions of development and joint cooperation prospects in this regard. (KUNA)



Al-Anba photo

Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi while receiving Egyptian Ambassador Shaltout.

Ahmadi governor receives Fire officials

Farwaniya governor receives Egyptian envoy

KUWAIT CITY, July 18: Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Naser Al-Athbi recently received in his office the Ambassador of Egypt to Kuwait Osama Shaltout, reports Al-Ânba daily.

During the meeting, both parties exchanged friendly talks and then discussed issues of mutual interest.

They praised the excellent relations between the two sisterly countries on the level of political leadership and on the popular They highlighted the continuous efforts

exerted by senior officials of both countries to expand the relations between Kuwait and Egypt to meet the ambitions of the peoples.

Ambassador Shaltout expressed his gratitude to Governor Sheikh Athbi for the generous reception he received.

Meanwhile, Ahmadi Governor Sheikh Humoud Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received in his office the Director of Ahmadi Fire Service Directorate Brigadier Ahmad Al-Habdan, Director of the Southern Fire Service Center Brigadier Thamer Bourseli, Director of Ahmadi Fire Service Center Brigadier Faisal Al-Erbeid, and Ahmadi Liaison Officer Lieutenant Colonel Ahmad Al-Anzi.

During the meeting, they discussed ways to enhance coordination to deal with emergency situations and fire incidents in the best possible manner, considering the current high temperatures.

The governor praised the efforts exerted by the various fire centers to protect the lives and properties of individuals.

Awqaf names 20 qualified participants

By Abdul Nasser Al-Aslami Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 18: The General Secretariat of Awqaf announced the names of the 20 participants who are qualified to win the 6th Kuwait International Children's Story Writing Prize in the field of charitable and voluntary endowments, under the auspices of the Minister of Justice and Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Dr. Mohammad Al-Wasmi.

In a press statement, the Acting Deputy Secretary-General for Administration and Support Services Amal Al-Dallal said the "long list" includes the titles of a total of 20 stories that are eligible to win, and the titles of the stories and names of authors that were filtered out of 1,095 stories that were submitted in the competition from 53 countries around the world.

She explained that this season was

marked for the first time in the history of the competition by receiving entries electronically through the secretariat's official website, which brought about a qualitative shift in the management of the competition, both in the sorting stage and the judging stage, and ending with the qualifiers and the announcement of the winners.

It was also marked by an unprecedented number of participants in the history of the competition, as the number of entries increased by about 40 percent compared to the fifth season, in which there were 720 participants.

Egypt came in first place this season with a total of 389 participating stories, followed by Syria in second place with 139 stories, and then Kuwait third with 132 stories, Jordan fourth with 66 stories, and Morocco in fifth place with 61 stories.

Albanian envoy woos Kuwaitis

'European destination with natural beauty, cultural diversity'

KUWAIT CITY, July 18: The Ambassador of Albania to Kuwait, HE Ilir Husa, extolled Albania as an ideal European destination for Kuwaiti travelers seeking a blend of natural beauty, rich history, and cultural affinity, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The Albanian envoy emphasized Albania's appeal, describing it as one of Europe's most stunning tourist spots, renowned for its safety, luxurious accommodations including halal dining options, and an abundance of five-star hotels.

For nature enthusiasts, he says, Albania offers majestic mountains, historical palaces, and captivating castles. Along the coast, picturesque beaches like Dhermi Beach, affectionately dubbed the "Maldives Sea," beckon with their pristine white rocks and azure waters, making it a favored retreat for discerning travelers

Highlighting Albania's cultural inclusivity, Husa pointed out the presence of mosques in every city and village, where the call to prayer resounds five times

He emphasized Albanians' deep respect and admiration for Kuwaitis, underscored by various gestures of appreciation, including naming a prominent street in Tirana after Kuwait in Arabic and issuing a commemorative postage stamp featuring the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

Contributions

The strong bilateral relations are further exemplified by Kuwait's significant contributions to Albania's infrastructure and community welfare. Over 500 mosques, hospitals, orphanages, and Islamic schools have been established through Kuwaiti charitable initiatives, reflecting Kuwait's enduring commitment to Albania's development.

In terms of investment opportunities, Husa highlighted Albania's favorable business environment, particularly in agriculture and real estate. Foreign investors benefit from streamlined processes, allowing full ownership rights without local partnership requirements and minimal bureaucratic

Albania, a NATO member on track to join the European Union soon, prioritizes safety and stability, ensuring conducive environment for economic growth and religious tolerance.

The country's strategic location along the Adriatic and Ionian Seas offers vast potential for tourism development, encouraging Kuwaiti investors to explore opportunities in building resorts and hotels along its pristine coastline.

Visa policies are equally accommodating, with Kuwaiti citizens enjoying visa-free entry, along with residents of Kuwait holding Schengen, British, or American visas can also enter Albania visa-free, facilitating seam-

less travel arrangements. As tourism between Kuwait and Albania continues to flourish, with over 3,000 Kuwaiti tourists visiting annually, Ambassador Husa expressed optimism about enhancing air connectivity and increasing tourism exchanges be-

tween the two nations. Albania's allure as an unspoiled gem in Europe, coupled with its warm hospitality and cultural vibrancy, positions it as a compelling destination for Kuwaiti travelers seeking unique experiences and natural beauty.



Ilir Husa



Photo by Mohammad Morse

A group photo from the 'Climate Change ... Enhance Your Health' awareness campaign.

MoH raises awareness with climate change drive

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 18: The Ministry of Health has launched a climate change awareness campaign entitled, "Climate Change ... Enhance Your Health," in coordination with the Environmental Police at the Ministry of Interior, Environment Public Authority (EPA), Medical Emergency Department, Green Hands Team and other concerned

In a press statement, Assistant Undersecretary for Public Health Affairs at the ministry Dr. Munther Al-Hasawi confirmed that the ministry is keen on making the health system flexible with the ability to adapt and respond to climate change through the National Committee for Preparedness and Response to the Impacts of Climate Change and Environmental Disasters, which includes several agencies and aims to raise public awareness of this phenomenon through the Health Promo-

He pointed out that Kuwait confirmed its commitment to the climate change agreement and launched a low-carbon strategy, with the hope of reaching carbon neutrality by

He revealed that climate change has many negative effects; such as the continuous increase in temperatures, dust storms, heavy rainfall and rising sea levels. These changes have health consequences like sunburn, heat exhaustion, muscle breakdown and respiratory diseases associated with dust, he explained.

'Ministry keen on making health system flexible'

He also warned that the problem will get worse in the coming decades due to failure to take measures to slow down the climate change pro-

On the other hand, Director of the Health Promotion Department Dr. Abeer Al-Bahwa disclosed that the department organized the campaign in partnership with many parties concerned with climate change in order to raise public awareness on how to deal with fainting incidents, heatstroke and other negative effects of the extremely high temperatures, which are expected to negatively affect food security, agriculture and sea levels if the rise in temperatures continues; hence, the need to raise public awareness on how to deal with this crisis.

She said heat stress is the main cause of deaths due to bad weather conditions and can lead to the exacerbation of illnesses, including cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, mental health and asthma. It can also increase the risk of accidents and the transmission of some infectious diseases, she stressed.

She explained that heatstroke is a medical emergency leading to a high death rate, warning that the number of people exposed to extreme heat is steadily increasing due to climate change all over the world.

She revealed the number of deaths resulting from heat increased by 85 percent among age groups over 65 years old from 2000 to 2004 and from 2017 to 2021. She cited studies showing that from 2000 to 2019; there were 489,000 deaths annually due to extreme heat -- 45 percent of whom were in Asia and 36 percent

She added the risk of exposure to heat is shaped by physiological factors like age, health status, and exposure factors such as occupation and social and economic conditions.

She noted that the negative effects of heat on health can be predicted and can be largely prevented due to the adoption of policies, and the implementation of specific and multisectoral interventions in the field of public health.

Other Voices

Antoine's experience and Tawfiq's sadness

By Ahmed alsarraf

The Russian writer Anton Chekhov describes failed societies as those where fools vastly outnumber the sane, and corrupt words far outnumber conscious ones. In such societies, the majority is always foolish, while the intelligent individual is the one who triumphs. When trivial topics dominate dis-

cussions and the public scene, it is indicative of a failed so-

In these societies, millions are captivated by meaningless songs and words, making their creators famous, rich, and beloved. Meanwhile, scientists and writers remain unknown and undervalued. People tend to love nonsense and those who provide it, preferring entertainers who make them laugh with trivialities over



those who urge them towards science, research, and

The latter are seen as harmful for speaking the truth. As a result, democracy does not benefit ignorant societies, as the ignorant majority will be the ones deciding your fate.

Brother Antoine's words have been echoed by many and seem to apply universally, not just to a few societies. In my view, his observations are relevant to the entire world.

The notion of the majority's stupidity has been acknowledged since ancient times, with Greek philosophers discussing it long ago. However, this perceived stupidity has not hindered the progress of humanity. Despite the folly of the masses, countless individuals have made significant contributions.

Historically, objections to trivial words, songs, and poems have been common. Brother Antoine criticizes societies for their general foolishness and the triviality of their creations, yet this triviality is both normal and prevalent.

It has not prevented thousands of creative minds from delighting us with beautiful songs, wonderful novels, magnificent poems, and timeless plays.

Creative individuals like Tawfiq al-Hakim, along with many writers and novelists, including the distinguished Maryam Nour and the Algerian writer Ahlam Mosteghanemi, have often lamented the lack of appreciation and honor they receive compared to athletes or entertainers.

They fail to realize that this disparity is normal and rooted in human nature, as people naturally gravitate towards those who entertain them rather than those who educate or challenge them with lessons in heritage, philosophy, and the mysteries of the universe. Even at the height of Kuwait's cultural progress, many of the region's leaders preferred hosting artists like Abdulhussain Abdulredha and Khaled Al-Nafisi in their palaces and homes, showering them with

praise and gifts. They rarely thought of inviting the greatest Kuwaiti physicist, for example. This phenomenon is observable at White House and Kremlin parties, as well as in the homes of the world's billionaires.

People often seek entertainment over serious matters. Brother Antoine and others demonstrate a lack of understanding of what the human soul truly yearns for. If you gathered the world's best novelists, inventors, TV presenters, philosophers, thinkers, and space scientists in a room, they likely wouldn't tolerate each other for more than an hour or two.

However, if you invited them to watch an international football match, a baseball game, or a Taylor Swift concert, they would likely turn away from each other to enjoy the event and the accompanying emotions. The human soul, when weary, seeks comfort and rejuvenation through entertainment.

Regarding Brother Antoine's claim, echoed by many before and after him, that democracy does not benefit ignorant societies, this notion does not hold

up against reality. If a society is ignorant, how long should it wait to become educated? There is no agreed-upon time

frame for this transformation. All societies, including those in the Western world, were initially ignorant, and no one suggested

they should wait. People learn through practice, trial, and error. Insisting on "maturity, understanding, and knowledge" before adopting democracy is akin to refusing to hire a new university graduate due to a lack of experi-

ence. How can someone gain experience if no one hires them? The same logic applies to democracy. For instance, if we look at the American West, we might be surprised by the naivety of many people in

those states. Yet, we cannot deny their right to elect the most powerful president in the world. The same electorate that chose Biden and Trump previously elected Kennedy, Roosevelt, Lincoln, and many other great

Thus, democracy is not something that comes in a box with a production and expiry dates. Instead, it is an experience that people live through with the guidance of enlightened leaders. True, continuous creativity has never emerged from nations living under harsh dictatorial regimes.

e-mail: a.alsarraf@alqabas.com.kw

diwaniya 🕝 چيوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

'Kuwait's shift towards stricter laws signals positive reforms'

"KUWAIT is currently experiencing a significant shift towards stricter enforcement of previously enacted laws. This marks a move towards positive reforms in political, economic, and security sectors," columnist **Dr. Ghadeer Mohammed Asiri** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

daily.

"The country is preparing for numerous projects that could introduce new economic resources through Gulf cooperation on large-scale developmental

projects. These projects involve clear collaboration across various sectors such as oil, gas, electricity, water, airports, ports, tourism, and culture, all aimed at improving income transforming



Dr Ghadeer A

Kuwait into an attractive environment for local and global investments.

"Kuwait is distinguished as one of the world's leading oil producers and exporters, according to global statistics. It is a founding member of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and holds the fifthlargest oil reserve in the world, containing 10% of the world's oil reserves.

"Kuwait plays a significant role in the global oil economy, with substantial export revenues contributing to the stability of individual income in the country. Kuwait's strong economy allows it to maintain balance and withstand global economic crises, preserving its sovereign credit rating stability as reported by Standard & Poor's, which enables Kuwait to face crises effectively.

"Kuwait has managed to improve a range of decisions and amend some laws, such as the Competition Protection Law, which has enhanced the business environment.

"The Industrial Bank of Kuwait serves as a front for creating portfolios for crafts activities, small projects, and industrial financing, aimed at diversifying Kuwait's national economy and providing job opportunities for the next generation in new industries that promote sustainability and innovation.

"Kuwait is also expanding its network of roads and rapid transportation, with regular maintenance that supports the tourism sector and encourages domestic tourism.

"The establishment of the Tourism Projects Company in the past has laid the foundation for maintaining external relations and strengthening its foreign policy for the benefit of individuals, while preserving the national fabric and implementing reforms that bolster Kuwaiti national identity.

"One of the most crucial steps in developing the country's internal policies is media credibility and the activation of official media roles to distinguish between superficial commercial media and the delivery of accurate information and facts.

"This strengthens Kuwait's internal unity and fosters trust between the people and the government, preparing responsible citizens. Focusing on citizen quality, reconditioning through the promotion of guidance practices, preservation of public funds, a culture of frugality and consumption, and daily life recycling are all priorities.

"These steps enhance citizen quality

"These steps enhance citizen quality and education, making them a means to elevate the state and society, advancing the minds and knowledge of the people, and contributing to the nation's progress."

Also:

"According to a recent Cabinet statement, maximizing non-oil revenues has become the government's primary focus. As is customary, the Council of Ministers has established a committee to address this issue," columnist Abdul Latif Al-Duaij wrote for Al-Jarida daily

"However, this approach seems akin to waiting for spring in Kuwait, a season that never comes and the new term 'maximizing non-oil revenues" has replaced the old goal of "diversifying income sources".

income sources".

"This is not a problem in itself; everything needed is already in place, studied, and simply awaiting the will and determination to implement it. The Kuwait 2035 plan, initially championed by Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad, is well thought out and ready for execu-

"The government has ample funds at its disposal, unlike countries that rely on the IMF or wealthy benefactors for financing. Kuwait's surpluses are significant, and our resources are plentiful. We also have numerous experts and willing collaborators. What we lack is the determination and decisiveness to

"The Council of Ministers must make a decision without resorting to forming another committee or assigning yet another body to 'look into' the matter. The issue requires no further contemplation; it is time for action. Make a decision, and then, if necessary, form the required support structures.

"Instead of forming more committees, it would be better to open up the country economically, socially, and culturally. Kuwait has been stifled over the past years, leading to stagnation and regression. Our governments, along with their reactionary coalitions, have excelled in suppressing progress and hindering growth.

"The entire issue boils down to a political decision. Either we embrace mo-

dernity and progress, following in the footsteps of our forefathers, or we continue to foster backwardness, spending resources unwisely, and diving deeper into stagnation.

"Sheikh Ahmed, as we have said before and will continue to say, it is time to act decisively. Prioritize progress and leave behind the endless formation of committees and bodies. We have had enough of them and their expenses."

"We often hear news about people fleeing Kuwait after committing a murder or expatriates fleeing Kuwait after embezzling money," columnist Ahmad Al-Dawas wrote for Al-Seyassah

"In 2018, a Lebanese expatriate had fled to his country after he and his wife murdered their Asian housemaid. The Lebanese authorities managed to arrest him, but according to the law in Lebanon, it does not extradite any Lebanese citizen who committed a crime outside the country and was arrested inside Lebanon.

"Why didn't Kuwait conclude a binding agreement with other countries to exchange criminals and extradite embezzlers and thieves?

"For about half a century since independence, we have not heard of receiving fugitive criminals. Our involvement has been limited to providing financial aid and assistance to Arabs and others. However, when it comes to seeking justice on our behalf, our calls are ignored and unheard. Everyone turns their backs, and some even mock us!

"There are Arabs who embezzle money while they are working in Kuwait and then flee to their country. We then read that the Kuwaiti judiciary ruled to imprison and fine them. What is the benefit of such a court ruling when the culprits have already fled with the stolen money? Won't their actions encourage others? Does the Arab country respond to the rulings of the Kuwaiti judiciary? We have not heard of Kuwait bringing back any criminal or thief from abroad.

"Our government must fill the gap in the work of the judiciary and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs by concluding a "binding agreement" based on which criminals will be exchanged with all countries of the world, so that we do not let criminals evade justice.

"There is a movie by actor Adel Imam in which he plays the role of a bank employee. He was assigned to carry a bag full of employee pensions from the bank to the company, but he stole the bag and hid it. He then confessed to the police that he had stolen one million pounds, and asked the government to place him in prison. He repeated the request over and over again. This was considered quite strange, as how does a person ask the police to arrest and imprison him? Then the reason became clear. He will spend about seven years in prison and then emerge with a million pounds. If he refrains from stealing and lives honorably, he will retire with a small pension, using which he will not be able to face the demands of life. Thus, the embezzler or thief will live a better life than the honorable.

"What kind of philosophy in life is this - Steal, go to prison, and then come out and enjoy the stolen money?

"It would be a great disaster if there are expatriates in our country who think this way."

"What bothers me is the talk about the increase in the electrical load above the normal rate, which could result in programmed power cut-offs," columnist Talal Al-Saeed wrote for Al-Seyassah daily.

"The point to be highlighted here is that the increase in electricity consumption can be considered as the natural result of the increase in the temperatures. Our country (May God protect it) records the highest temperature in the world every year. Oh God, save us from the fire of hell. What does the Ministry of Electricity expect from people?

"Air conditioning is no longer a luxury, but rather a necessity of life. Even "water dramas" now need air conditioning instead of letting the water boil!

"We are tired of these rationalization cries that are useless and have not contributed to reducing the demand for electricity due to the extreme heat. With a simple calculation, we can assume that the coming years will be hotter than the previous years. Even Europe's heat has become unbearable. This means that the demand for electricity will increase, and a comprehensive solution must be found without just calling for rationalization.

"Yesterday, power was cut off in an area in Saudi Arabia. What followed was an apology letter to every citizen and a deposit of 2,000 Saudi riyals into their accounts as compensation.

"On the other hand, we issue no apology and deposit no compensation. We instead issue a strong threat to cut off power to those who do not pay. As for the cut off that occurred in 41 areas, according to their opinion, the citizens were the reason for it!

"There is no apology or compensation. Rather, the citizens must apologize to them because the indicators crossed their notorious red line!

"O patchwork government, that is of no use. Find a radical and comprehensive solution for us, because what is coming is more difficult. We are not asking for the impossible, but we describe heat."

- Compiled by PFX Fernandes & Mahmoud Ateyieh



Mol photo

Vehicles impounded by GTD personnel.

Five juveniles arrested in Wafra

Police crackdown on reckless motorists

KUWAIT CITY, July 18: The General Traffic Department, represented by the Ahmadi Traffic Department, conducted a campaign against reckless motorists in the Wafra area yesterday morning, reports Al-Anba daily.

During the campaign, five juveniles were arrested and referred to the Juvenile Prosecution on charges of driving without licenses.

A security source reported that this happened when the Operations Department of the Ministry of Interior received information about some young men driving recklessly in the area.

Patrols were promptly dispatched to the site, where they ended the reckless

behavior and impounded the violators' vehicles.

In another incident, a Gulf citizen born in 1996 has filed a report with the Taima Police Station accusing unidentified persons of stealing two vehicle plates numbers from two four-wheel-

He told the police the vehicles were parked in front of his house in Al-Qasr area. The victim expressed his concerns to security personnel, fearing that the stolen plates might be used in crimes.

It is noteworthy that many theft crimes have involved the use of stolen license plates on the vehicles involved.

Total production 68,164 KW

536 new power installations in residential sectors in June

By Mohammed Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 18: The monthly statistical report of the Ministry of Electricity and Water revealed that electrical installations were done in 536 properties in all residential sectors in June with a total production capacity of 68,164 kilowatts.

The newspaper obtained a copy of the report; stating that private housing sector ranked first with 499 plots and a total load of 48,397 kilowatts or 71 percent of the total installations, while the industrial sector came in second place.

The ministry connected electricity to eight industrial plots with a load of 14,475 kilowatts or 21 percent of the total load.

The report also showed that the government sector ranked third in terms of total load. Its total load reached 2,009 kilowatts for eight government plots or 2.9 percent of the total in June; followed by the commercial sector with 1,279 kilowatts for five commercial plots or 1.9 percent. The investment sector came in fifth place with load of 1,033 kilowatts for three investment plots or 1.5 percent, and the agricultural sector came in last place with load of 969 kilowatts for 13 agricultural plots or 1.4 percent.

Drop in appointments in MEW

By Mohammed Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 18: According to a report on the latest statistics by the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy, there has been a significant slowdown in new appointments within the ministry over a period of six months from January to June 2024.

The report explained that the total number of employees in the ministry as of January 2024 was 34,395, and in June 2024, it came down to 34,341 employees. This means that 54 employees - 35 Kuwaitis and 19 non-Kuwaitis, left their jobs in the ministry due to various reasons such as reaching retirement age, resignations, replacements, and others.

Sources within the ministry indicated that the lack of new appointments during this period was attributed to the absence of available job openings across the ministry's sectors, which had filled all job grades during the fiscal year 2023/2024.

Six months jail with hard labor stays for club chief in judiciary insult case

Former MP Al-Qallaf's hearing delayed until July 25

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, July 18: The Court of Appeals upheld verdict issued by a lower court that sentenced Al-Arabi Club President Abdulaziz Ashour to six months in prison with hard labor for insulting and challenging the integrity of a member of the judiciary.

The Public Prosecution charged Ashour and others of violating the Supreme Court judges by publishing on the social networking site, 'Instagram', the video clip of an interview with the accused; during which he uttered words and expressions that could prejudice his integrity and his commitment to the law.

Ex-MP's trial adjourned: The Criminal Court yesterday held the first session of the trial of former MP Hussein Al-Qallaf.

The court adjourned to July 25 the case filed against Al-Qallaf who is accused of challenging the rights and authority of His Highness the Amir and transgressing the authority of the emirate. It also refused to release him on bail. During the session yesterday, former MP Hussein Al-

Qallaf denied the charges directed against him by the court, affirming that he did not mean His Highness the Amir of the country, rather, he meant the government.

Lawyer Ibrahim Al-Mousawi, who represented the for-

mer MP, urged the court for his release under any guarantee that the court deems appropriate, given that there are no justifications for his imprisonment as he is a Kuwaiti citizen and his place of residence is known.

The court decided to adjourn the session to issue its ruling after deliberation.

The Public Prosecution decided to detain Al-Qallaf for a period of 21 days and referred him to the Central Prison. Al-Qallaf was charged with challenging the rights and authority of His Highness the Amir, and transgressing the authority of the country, after he released an audio clip in which he criticized the Ministry of Interior's procedures for organizing the work of Husseiniyats during the month of Muharram.

Al-Qallaf denied the charges leveled against him during the investigation with the Public Prosecution.

Two bailiffs acquittal upheld: The Court of Appeals upheld the ruling of a lower court that acquitted two bailiffs working in the court of divulging case documents and confidential information, while it refrained to impose punishment on these bailiffs and another individual for bribery.

It has been reported that the third accused offered a bribe to photocopy case documents without following the legal procedures.

The Public Prosecution charged the two bailiffs, in their capacity as someone assigned to a public service (bailiff in the Ministry of Justice), with disclosing information about pending cases in the courts where they work. They did this despite the necessity of maintaining confidentiality and not circulating such documents unless the concerned court issues a directive in this regard to the concerned parties and if it is done in a legal manner.

The bailiffs photographed the case documents using a mobile phone camera and sent the information to the third accused, which would have harmed the interest of the entity they work for.

Mol probes knife attack: The Ministry of Interior is investigating an assault case involving a young man, reports Al-Anba daily.

The case has been classified as an attempted murder following instructions from the Deputy Public Prosecutor. The security sources said the Operations Department of the Ministry of Interior received a phone call from a man born in 1967. He reported that his son, who is residing in

the country illegally, had been attacked with a knife.

The hospital's report detailed severe injuries, including a permanent wound to the shoulder, neck, thigh, and stomach, as well as a severed ear.

When questioned about the incident, the father stated that he did not know the identity of the attacker.

Pipe stolen from site: The Jahra Prosecutor has ordered the registration of a felony theft case at the Al-Mutlaa Police Station following a report from a company representative of the General Trading and Contracting Company, reports Al-Anba daily.

11 abandoned cars removed

Electrical devices, especially scooter batteries, posing significant fire risks

KUWAIT CITY, July 18: The Public Relations and Media Department of the Directorate-General of Fire Department (DGFD) in an awareness clip broadcast on its website on the "X" platform yesterday said electrical appliances are one of the most significant causes of fires in Kuwait, reports Al-Anba daily.

The DGFD highlighted that several fires have occurred while charging scooter batteries and urged citizens and residents to purchase devices with high specifications.

The DGFD noted that most fires involving scooters occur during battery charging. They advised charging batteries in open areas and not leaving them on charging cables for extended periods. This precautionary measure aims to reduce the risk of fires and ensure public safety.

Municipality campaigns: The Public Relations Department of Kuwait Municipality stated that the campaigns held by teams from the Department of Public Hygiene and Road Works have been working on removing the violations in



Al-Anba photo Scooter battery going up in flames.

all governorates of Kuwait, reports Al-Anba daily.

In a press statement, the department explained that teams from the Hawally Department of Public Hygiene and Road Works carried out extensive campaigns, which resulted in lifting 11 neglected cars and scrap vehicles in Jabriya. These campaigns will continue and necessary legal procedures will be enforced on the violators.





Weddings | Seminars | Conferences | Celebrations

Sea view Ample car parking

For more enquires Call: 23911174 / 23911175 Mr. Jack: 97644421

Email: fahaheel@mughalmahal.com info@mughalmahal.com

LOCAL

Seven facilities revitalized

Collaborative initiative ensures a smooth start to new school year

KUWAIT CITY, July 18: In a collaborative effort to ensure a smooth start to the new school year, Jahra Governor Hamad Al-Habashi, along with Fahd Al-Haran, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Jaber Al-Ahmad Cooperative Society, have directed the preparation, maintenance, and cleaning of seven schools in Al-Mutlaa City, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The initiative aims to ready these educational institutions to welcome students effectively. Al-Habashi commended the productive partnership between the Ministry of Social Affairs, represented by Ahmed Al-Anzi, Acting Assistant Undersecretary for the Cooperation Sector, and the Ministry of Education, represented by Jassim Bu Hamad, Director of the Jahra Educational District.

He acknowledged their efforts in addressing the challenges facing the residents of Al-Mutlaa

This coordinated effort underscores the commitment of local authorities and cooperative societies to support educational infrastructure, ensuring a conducive learning environment for students in Jahra



Jahra Governor Hamad Al-Habashi, with Fahd Al-Haran, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Jaber Al-Ahmad Cooperative Society

Awqaf sees record participation rate in Hajj campaign evaluation

KUWAIT CITY, July 18: The Ministry of Awqaf announced a significant milestone in its Hajj administration, achieving the highest participation rate by pilgrims in evaluating Hajj campaigns this year, reports Al-Seyassah

According to the Studies and Follow-up Department, approximately 60 percent of the total number of pilgrims participated in this evaluation.

This record participation is seen as a testament to the great confidence that pilgrims place in the Hajj and Umrah Affairs Department.

It also highlights the Ministry's commitment to providing exceptional services and facilities to the guests of God. The Ministry expressed its gratitude to all pilgrims who took part in the evaluation, recognizing their contribution to achieving this notable participation rate.

The Ministry emphasized its ongoing efforts to improve and develop services to ensure the comfort and satisfaction of pilgrims. It aims to build on this success and achieve even greater milestones in the com-

Municipality grants final approval for Qibla plot expansion, reorganization

Jahra Council nods dairy, sports and power projects

By Inaas Awadh Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 18: The Director of the Municipality, Saud Al-Dubous, has issued a final approval for the reorganization of part of Plot No. (1) in the Qibla area. This approval aligns with the provisions of Decree-Law No. (4) of 1978 concerning the organization of regulatory plots and Ministerial Resolution No. (325/2023) related to the rules and procedures for the organization of such plots.

reorganization includes amending the shape and area of Plot No. 5 of Survey Plan No. M/39527 for commercial use and adjusting the location of surface parking lots.

The area of the plot after reorganization is 1,239 square meters, up from its previous area of 826 square meters. This reorganization has added 413 square meters to the plot, which is approximately 50% of the original plot's area, fulfilling the owner's request to purchase this additional land from the

According to the technical opinion for the transaction, a copy of which was obtained by Al-Seyassah, several conditions must be met.

The responses from the Sub-Committee for Public Facilities and Services must be adhered to, with coordination before implementation.

A key condition from the General Traffic Department, represented by the Ministry of Interior, specifies that no building permits for commercial



Dr. Amthal Al-Huwaila, Minister of Social Affairs with board members.

Al-Huwaila empowers women in co-op sector

Dr. Amthal Al-Huwaila, Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs, and Minister of State for Youth Affairs, recently appointed a temporary board of directors for the Hadiya Cooperative Society, comprising female supervisors from the ministry. This initiative aims to bolster the participation of Kuwaiti women in the cooperative sector, reports Al-Jarida daily

During the council's session, Dr. Al-Huwaila empha-

sized the importance of safeguarding shareholders' rights and public funds. She reiterated the Ministry's commitment to supporting and promoting cooperative endeavors to achieve their objectives.

Dr. Al-Huwaila also underscored the Ministry's resolve to enforce legal measures against any violations that jeopardize shareholders' rights or misuse public

for the reorganized plot until a traffic study has been submitted. This approval marks a significant

step in the development and commercial use of the Al-Qibla area, reflecting ongoing efforts to enhance urban infrastructure and regulatory compliance.

Meanwhile, the Jahra Governorate Committee in the Municipal Council, headed by council member Abdullah Al-Enezi, held its second meeting for the third round on Wednesday, during which it approved the following:

- Request of Kuwaiti Dairy Company on licensing a canteen to serve the company and its employees within the plot allocated to it in Sulaibiya Agricultural Area;
- Request of the Public Sports Authority to allocate surface parking lots for the Equestrian Club in Jahra;
- Request of the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy

to allocate a secondary power transmission station in Block 9, Sulaibiya Agricultural Area.

The committee referred to the executive branch the request of Jahra Governorate regarding the removal of waste landfills and old bicycles for

It retained on its agenda the request of the Public Authority for Industry to set back the eastern side of Plot No. 2A, Block 1, Sulaibiya.

and investment projects will be issued Room Promotion

Weekdays (Saturday - Wednesday) 2 Bedroom Chalet Queen Cabana (2 persons inclusive of breakfast) (4 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night. per night. NOW NOW BHD 60.984 net BHD 136.198 net Weekends (Thursday & Friday) Queen Cabana 2 Bedroom Chalet (2 persons inclusive of breakfast) (4 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night. per night. NOW NOW BHD 76.230 net BHD 170.247 net

Promo period from 23rd June to 31st July 2024

Tel: +973 17701201 - Ext. 351 Email: reservation@albander.com

ਿ @ albanderhotelandresort

Terms & conditions apply*

www.albander.com

Generous cash rewards up to 200 dinars

Co-op societies 'empower' Kuwaiti youth with summer employment opportunities

By Fares Al-Abdan

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 18: Several cooperative societies have initiated plans to engage youth during the summer vacation.

Reliable sources told the Al-Seyassah daily that the Cooperative Societies Union, following directives from the Ministry of Social Affairs, has issued a circular to all societies emphasizing the necessity of employing Kuwaiti students during the sum-

According to the circular, those eligible for employment include shareholders, their children, and grandchildren residing within the association's operational area, regardless of gender.

The target group comprises high school students in the tenth and eleventh grades. Employment will require a commitment of four hours per day, with attendance and departure recorded via fingerprint.

The students will receive a reward ranging between 100 and 200 dinars, as determined by each association. Payment will be based on the principle of "pay for work" within the association's general expenses.

Disbursement of payments will occur only after approval by the administrative supervisor and verification of each student's attendance and departure. The total payouts will range from 10,000 to 15,000 dinars, based on the association's discretion. If the number of applicants exceeds the

required positions, selection will be conducted by lottery, either electronically or manually, under the supervision of the administrative supervisor and a member of the board of directors The students will be divided into two

groups, one for July and another for August. The number of participating students will depend on the salary budgeted by each association and the amount allocated from public expenses.

Two companies excluded

CAPT opens 3 bids for railway project

By Mohammed Ghanem Al-Sevassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 18: According to informed sources at the Public Authority for Roads and Transportation (PART), the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT), during its ninth meeting, approved the authority's request to open the envelopes of three companies that meet the conditions and requirements for the tender for the study and detailed design work project and the preparation of documents for the first phase of the railway project.

They revealed the exclusion of two companies, one of which did not specify the primary in-

surance. The sources explained that the acceptance and exclusion of companies was carried out based on a study conducted by the technical committee that specializes in studying the bids.

It will take into account the directive of the Council of Ministers issued the day before yesterday to expedite the project procedures in terms of studying the bids and preparing technical reports on the scheduled dates.

After that, a decision will be made to award the company qualified to carry out the study, which will be immediately followed by putting the project forward for implementation. The first phase of the railway project involves a length of 111 kilometers, which will be followed by the second phase with a length of 154 kilometers, reaching a total of 265 kilometers.

The sources affirmed PART's keenness to overcome all obstacles in the implementation of the



Social care homes complex in Sulaibikhat.

MoSA plans major upgrade for Sulaibikhat social care homes

KUWAIT CITY, July 18: The Ministry of Social Affairs is finalizing plans to undertake a comprehensive renovation and development project for the Social Care Homes complex in Sulaibikhat, reports Al-Jarida

The initiative, spearheaded by Dr. Badr Al-Adwani, Assistant Undersecretary for the Financial and Administrative Affairs Sector, has the approval of Amthal Al-Huwaila, the Minister of Social Affairs, and other ministry leaders. This project is deemed crucial due to the aging infrastructure of the complex, which was originally constructed decades ago and is now in urgent need of modernization.

Sources close to the matter disclosed that the ministry has engaged prominent Kuwaiti companies renowned for their expertise in designing and constructing large-scale projects such as the Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Center (Opera House) and Al-Shaddadiya University.

These companies have been tasked with executing a modernization plan that aligns with contemporary international standards while preserving Kuwait's rich cultural heritage. The initial phase of the project is budgeted at 300 thousand Kuwaiti dinars and is expected to span one year. During this period, comprehensive data collection will be conducted, necessary permits will be secured from relevant governmental bodies, and initial infrastructure designs will be finalized. Subsequent phases will encompass the structural design and construction of new facilities.

Regarding the current residents of the Social Care Homes, including juveniles, family foster children, and the elderly, discussions are ongoing regarding the provision of temporary alternative accommodations during the renovation period.

Initiative aims to boost entrepreneurship and streamline regulatory processes

Minister Al-Omar introduces new rules for free business activities



Kuwaiti Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah Wednesday received outgoing World Food Programme (WFP) Representative to the GCC Abdel-Mageed Yahia.

New source for humanitarian gains

Proposal to harvest mosque 'dates' for charity and profit

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 18: Islamic preacher Sheikh Saleh Al-Ghanim has called on Kuwait's Ministry of Awgaf and Islamic Affairs to implement a new initiative: harvesting the date crops from palm trees located in mosques across the country.

His proposal suggests that these dates be sold or donated to disasterstricken countries, providing a dual benefit of resource management and humanitarian aid.

Sheikh Al-Ghanim emphasized that this initiative would prevent the wastage of the Ministry's resources and create a new source of financial

He highlighted the potential economic benefits, noting that each mosque in Kuwait typically has at least thirty palm trees, which collectively produce approximately 250 kilograms of dates annually.

Addressing the issue of waste and theft, Sheikh Al-Ghanim pointed out that allowing the dates to remain on the trees until they dry up and fall or are stolen by marginal workers is unacceptable. He stressed that it is forbidden to let such valuable resources go to waste.

By harvesting and utilizing these date crops, the Ministry can ensure that the fruits of the palm trees are put to good use, either by generating income or by aiding those in need.

Sheikh Al-Ghanim's proposal underscores the importance of resource conservation and the potential for community contributions to broader humanitarian efforts

Eco-friendly solution

Vertical boat docks unveiled

KUWAIT CITY, July 18: A group of graduating female students at the Department of Mechanical Engineering in Kuwait University consisting of Manar Manahi, Aisha Al-Amiri, Noura Al-Subaie, Lulwah Al-Subat and Wasita Al-Shammari presented their thesis entitled, 'Vertical Docks for Boats,' which aims to solve the problem of the scarcity of docks in the country, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The engineering student told the daily that around 20,000 boats are officially registered in the concerned authorities; but there are only 3,000 docks in the country. They pointed that the lack of docks is a major

They explained that the overcrowding of boats contributed to the illegal and random parking of boats in residential areas. They said boat owners are being fined for doing so, considering the exorbitant cost of renting marinas -- around KD20,000 or more annually.

They added "the project was designed based on a system for docking boats vertically and in a circular motion. This system is sufficient for eight boats to dock on an area measuring 150 cubic meters only. It is completely covered, runs on solar energy and cooling devices are provided. It protects the boats from hot or humid climatic condi-

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 18: The Minister of Commerce and Industry and Minister of State for Communications Affairs, Omar Saud Al-Omar, has issued Ministerial Resolution No. 168 of 2024. This resolution aims to regulate free business activities and reintegrate and regulate micro-activities and activities of a special

The new decision outlines the conditions for obtaining commercial licenses through the government application (Sahel Business) or the Ministry of Commerce and Industry's website.

To facilitate the licensing process for entrepreneurs and business owners, the resolution introduces the option to use an email approved by the Public Authority for Civil Information instead of a post office box.

Additionally, the resolution extends the licensing period from three to four years and permits the inclusion of multiple activities under a single license, provided these activities are similar or complementary to the existing commercial license.

License holders are now required to disclose their license number on their company's websites and social media accounts. All commercial transactions must be conducted through electronic payment methods only

The decision also establishes several controls for disbursing national labor support. These include submitting a bank statement for the licensed company, an annual budget, and listing the accounts of the company's electronic and social media platforms.

Any other documents specified by the Minister or his delegate must also be provided. The first year will be calculated from the date of license issuance.

This resolution represents a significant step towards facilitating and modernizing business operations in Kuwait, ensuring smoother processes for entrepreneurs and



Minister Omar Saud Al-Omar

Kuwait strengthens leadership in ACD Forum on 22nd anniversary

Ambassador Al-Mutairi as new Secretary-General

By Faris Abdan

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 17: Assistant Foreign Minister for Asian Affairs, Ambassador Samih Hayat, emphasized Kuwait's strong interest in the Asian Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) Forum, established 22 years ago.

Speaking at the 22nd-anniversary celebration of the ACD, Hayat highlight-

ed that the forum was originally a Kuwaiti initiative. With the recent election of Ambassador Nasser Al-Mutairi as the new Secretary-General, set to begin his tenure in September, Kuwait has a strategic vision to elevate the forum into a significant organization within Asia, complementing existing entities.

Ambassador Al-Mutairi underscored the need for cooperation to address Asia's diverse challenges, emphasizing that collaboration and enhanced understanding among countries are crucial for developing regional relations. He noted that Asia Day serves as a reminder of the shared history, culture, and

future of Asian nations.

Reflecting on his election by representatives from 35 countries, Al-Mutairi acknowledged Kuwait's pivotal role in the ACD, initiated by the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad in 2012 to host the General Secretariat in Kuwait. He revealed plans to transform the forum into a formal organization and to increase the Secretariat's membership.

He also stressed the importance of establishing a clear mechanism for meetings and working on new ideas once he assumes his position in Sep-

Addressing the challenges facing Asian countries, Al-Mutairi highlighted the disparities in development levels and security concerns, and expressed a vision to position the organization at both regional and global levels. He credited the forum's longevity to its focus on dialogue and projects, avoiding political entanglements.

During his speech at the annual Asian Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) Forum reception, Secretary General Dr. Pornchai Dan Vivathana warmly welcomed the guests, emphasizing that the event, held on June 18 every year, would not have been possible without Kuwait's financial

He also acknowledged the active participation of many ACD diplomatic missions in organizing 15 cultural pavilions, featuring traditional performances from local communities in Indonesia, Nepal, and Sri Lanka in Kuwait.

Dr. Vivathana highlighted that the 35 member states have agreed to discuss a new chapter at the 19th Ministerial Meeting, held in Tehran on June 24 and chaired by Iran. This meeting aimed to implement the Asian Cooperation Dialogue (2021-2030) blueprint. He also noted the establishment of working groups to prepare reports on substantive discussions for submission to the third summit, scheduled to be held in Qa-



Photo by Rizk Taufiq

Cutting of the cake ceremony during the Asian Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) Forum.

Students urged to follow personal interests

PAAET adapts to labor market needs

KUWAIT CITY, July 18: Dean of the College of Basic Education at the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) Dr. Mubarak Al-Thorwah confirmed

that the college has a broad and solid plan to meet the needs of the labor market; stressing that the college is doing its best to match the preferences and interests of students, reports

tracks, prohibiting them from consuming suffi-

Currently, sea turtle nests in Kuwait are limited

Since its establishment in 1986, Kuwait Diving

an adult is always present when children

Ghareeb stated that nowadays, elevators

are found in most residential buildings

and almost all other buildings. He as-

serted that following safety guidelines

and instructions is mandatory for all us-

new elevator, it is imperative to ensure

the company is certified by the Kuwait

Fire Force (KFF), conduct periodic

maintenance, and install a backup bat-

power outage while someone is inside

an elevator are to remain calm, not at-

tempt to open the doors to exit, press the

emergency button, and dial 112 emer-

On another note, Al-Ghareeb advised

seagoers, both swimmers and fishermen,

to be cautious of flammable materials in

boats, swim in designated and safe ar-

eas, check the weather before sailing,

carry safety equipment at all times, and

notify friends and family of departure

The KFF's instructions in the event of

tery in case of power outage.

gency hotline to request help.

He stressed that when installing a

Shifting his focus to elevators, Al-

are swimming to avoid incidents.

to Qaruh Island, where they are being monitored

Team has conducted a variety of activities to protect

the turtles and rescue them, Al-Fahdel elucidated.

ers and owners.

cient food.

and observed by researchers.

Al-Jarida daily. In a press statement when the Pub-

lic Relations Department at PAAET launched the 'My Beginnings Are Right' campaign recently, Al-Thorwah stated that the College of Basic Education is considered one of the largest colleges at PAAET. He said the college offers diverse courses and it has various departments like Islamic Studies, Arabic Language, Educational Technology, English Language, Physical Education, Music Education, Art Education and Interior Design. He added these departments branch out to many specializations.

He advised students to choose courses according to their preferences, interests and capabilities, instead of succumbing to peer pressure.

tar next October.

MEW report

turtles residing on the sands.

Continued from Page 1

KUWAIT CITY, July 18, (KUNA): Kuwait Div-

ing Team called Thursday for protecting the rare

and nearly extinct sea turtles, especially the ones

KUNA of the new phenomenon taking place in

Az Zour, saying they have identified a couple of

Team leader, Waleed Al-Fadhel spoke to

situated in Az Zour, South of the country.

The challenge of finding new energy sources or building new power plants is significant due to high costs and long timelines. Saudi Arabia, Oatar, and the UAE have successfully established companies to build, manage, operate, and maintain power plants using the independent supplier system, particularly excel-

ling in renewable energy.
With the increasing annual demand for electricity, establishing new generation stations remains a critical necessity to meet Kuwait's needs in the coming years. The independent supplier system offers the best and most appropriate solution to shorten timelines and fulfill the country's requirements promptly.

The Kuwait Meteorological Department has forecasted a heat wave over the weekend, with maximum temperatures expected to exceed 50 degrees Celsius in some areas. The weather will be extremely hot during the day and warm at night, accompanied by active northwesterly winds that will raise dust and reduce visibility, particularly in open areas.

Director of the Department, Abdulaziz Al-Qarawi, informed KUNA that Thursday's weather will be very hot, with moderate to active northwesterly winds blowing at speeds between 20 and 50 kilometers per hour, raising dust. Maximum temperatures are anticipated to range between 49 and 51 degrees Celsius, and the sea will have moderate to high waves ranging from 3 to 6 feet.

Al-Qarawi added that Thursday night will be warm, with light to moderate northwesterly winds, occasionally active along the coast, blowing at speeds between 12 and 42 kilometers per hour. The minimum temperature is expected to be between 35 and 37 degrees Celsius, and the sea will have light to moderate waves, sometimes rising between 2 and 6 feet.

compromising their nests.

Friday's weather is forecasted to be very hot, with light to moderate northwesterly winds, occasionally active, between 12 and 45 kilometers per hour, causing dust. Maximum temperatures will range between 48 and 50 degrees Celsius, and the sea will have light to moderate waves, occasionally rising between 2 and 6 feet.

On Friday night, the weather will remain warm, with light to moderate northwesterly winds blowing at speeds between 10 and 38 kilometers per hour. The minimum temperature will be between 33 and 35 degrees Celsius, and the sea will have light to moderate waves, ranging between 2 and 5 feet.

Saturday's weather is expected to be very hot, with light to moderate northwesterly winds, occasionally active, between 12 and 40 kilometers per hour. Maximum temperatures will range between 48 and 50 degrees Celsius, and the sea will have light to moderate waves, occasionally rising between 2 and 6 feet.

Saturday night will be warm, with light to moderate northwesterly winds blowing at speeds between 10 and 32 kilometers per hour. The minimum temperature will be between 34 and 36 degrees Celsius, and the sea will have light to moderate waves, ranging between 1

Kuwait nat'l

Continued from Page 1

the step aims to share consultative and technical views regarding international experiments on implementing systems and strategies to combat trafficking in

Calls for action against plastic pollution

Kuwait Diving Team urges protection of endangered sea turtles in Az Zour

Al-Fadhel called on sea-goers to refrain from

He explained that discarded plastic nets could

potentially suffocate the turtles, adding that clear

plastic bags are also a suffocation hazard as turtles

consume them believing them to be jellyfish. The

plastic bags could also obstruct their congestion

approaching the sea turtles, poaching them or

Kuwait has spared no efforts to boost cooperation between the two sides, and its goals regarding the prevention of trafficking in persons as well as the protection of victims in line with deals,

standards and rules, he affirmed. The committee was set up upon the cabinet's decree on February 5, 2018, and is chaired by the Minister of Justice, Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Dr. Mohammad Al-Wasmi. The committee's main objective is to prevent trafficking in persons and migrant smuggling, and create

societal awareness about relevant risks. In addition, it seeks to disseminate awareness among all segments of society, employers and workers based on religious values.

The committee had urged citizens and residents to call hot line: 25589696 or send an email at: MOI.GOV.KU-WAIT, in case of any crimes of trafficking in persons.

Follow rules

Continued from Page 1

Vehicle owners must ensure regular car maintenance, including oil and water changes, and avoid leaving flammable materials in the car, especially during peak heat times in the afternoon, Al-Ghareeb warned.

Another main cause of fires is children playing with hazardous electrical plugs, he said, emphasizing the necessity of carefully having an eye on children as they are playing in a bid to avoid emergencies and ensure their safety. Regarding general safety, Al-Gha-

reeb advised private swimming pool

owners to install handrails and anti-slip

tiles in and around the pools and ensure

Israeli military

and arrival times.

Continued from Page 1

This will lead to achieving security, stability and development in the region, Al-Yahya concluded. A displaced Palestinian mother has

given birth at a hospital run by Kuwait's Red Crescent Society in the southern Gaza Strip city of Khan Younis, the medical facility's manager Dr. Anwar Al-Ghara said on Thursday.

Stretching across 750 square meters, the facility is equipped with fully functional maternity wards, while it has seen an influx of critical patients as of late, he cited, saying the hospital has the capacity and critical supplies needed to treat them.

He went on to express his appreciation of Kuwait's support, singling out the "exceptional" efforts of Kuwait's Red Crescent Society and the charity's cooperation with its Palestinian counterparts, he underlined.

Meanwhile, Arab League Secretary General Ahmad Abul-Gheit strongly condemned the Israeli occuapation's Knesset vote to reject A Palestinian statehood.

In a statement on Thursday, Abul-Gheit said this is an attempt by the Israeli occupation forces to "legalize" its occupation of Palestine and deny the rights of Palestinians.

The move, which came at a time when Israeli occupation Minister of National Security Itamar Ben-Gvir broke into Al-Aqsa Mosque, is a new violation of previously-signed agreements and the international law, he added.

Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Jasem Al-Budaiwi Thursday emphatically condemned the Israeli occupation Knesset's resolution that rejected the establishment of a Palestinian state-

In a press statement, Al-Budaiwi billed the move as an obvious breach of relevant international resolutions and proof of the occupation's insistence on fueling tensions and jeopardizing regional and world security and

He called on the international community to necessarily decry and condemn this unjust resolution, which reflects the Israeli occupation forces' intention to widen the conflict.

The GCC chief, further, restated the GCC member countries' support for the establishment of a Palestinian statehood on the June 4, 1967 border, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

tion's Knesset (parliament) reportedly passed a resolution that overwhelmingly rejected the establishment of a Palestinian state. The Knesset passed the resolution

Earlier in the day, the Israeli occupa-

with 68 votes in favor and just nine against it, according to Israeli occupation media reports. Israel's far-right national security minister visited Jerusalem's most sen-

sitive holy site on Thursday, a move that could disrupt the delicate Gaza cease-fire talks. Itamar Ben-Gvir, an ultranationalist

settler leader, said he had gone up to the contested Jerusalem hilltop compound of Al-Aqsa Mosque to pray for the return of the hostages "but without a reckless deal, without surrendering.' The move threatens to disrupt sensi-

tive talks aimed at reaching a cease-fire in the 9-month-old Israel-Hamas war. Israeli negotiators landed in Cairo on Wednesday to continue talks. The visit also came just days before

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu leaves for a trip to the United States, where he will address Congress. Ben-Gvir said while standing in front of the golden dome of Al-Aqsa

Mosque that he "is praying and working hard" to ensure that Netanyahu will not give in to international pressure and will continue with the military campaign in Gaza. Ben-Gvir last visited the site in May

to protest countries unilaterally recognizing Palestinian statehood.

He has been convicted eight times for offenses that include racism and supporting a terrorist organization.

World News Roundup

Europe

Spain heats up

EU's Von der Leyen 'wins' second term

STRASBOURG, France, July 18, (AP): Lawmakers at the European Parliament on Thursday re-elected Ursula von der Leyen to a second 5-year term as president of the European Union's executive commission, giving her a comfortable majority and heading

off a possible leadership vacuum.

Von der Leyen raised both fists in victory as the Parliament President Roberta Metsola read out the result at the legislature.

The re-election ensures leadership continuity for the 27-nation bloc as it wrestles with crises ranging from the war in Ukraine to climate change, migration



Von der Leyen

and housing shortages.
A majority in the 720-seat legislature voted for the German Christian Democrat after a speech in which she pledged to be a strong leader for Europe in a time of crisis and polariza-

Von der Leyen gained 401 of the 707 votes cast. There were 284 votes against her candidacy, 15 abstentions and seven void ballots.

The secret ballot came hot on the heels of strong gains by the far right in last month's election for the European Parliament.

"I will never let the extreme polarization of our societies become accepted. I will never accept that demagogues and extremists destroy our European way of life. And I stand here today ready to lead the fight with all the Democratic forces in this house," von der Leyen said in her final pitch.

Leaders discuss migration: Leaders from across Europe expressed support for Ukraine and concern about the direction of the United States on Thursday at a security-focused summit clouded by worries about whether the US will remain a reliable ally if Donald

Trump wins a second presidency.

Newly elected UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer welcomed some 45 heads of government to a grandiose English country mansion to discuss migration, energy security and the threat from Russia as he seeks to restore relations between the UK and its European Union neighbors four years after their acrimonious

The venue for the European Political Community gathering, Blenheim Palace, was the birthplace of Britain's World War II Prime Minister Winston Churchill, and Starmer said the leaders were gathering "as a new storm gathers over our continent."

Spain heats up under 1st heatwave: Spain sweated under its first official heatwave of the year with temperatures expected to reach 40 degrees Celcius (104 Fahrenheit) in a large swathe of the country on Thursday, while Italy, Greece and other areas of southern Europe also struggled to stay cool.

After a relatively bearable spring compared to record heat in 2023 and 2022, millions of Spaniards will be sweltering at least through Saturday before feeling any relief. The nation's weather authority said the only areas to be spared will be the northwest and northern Atlantic coasts.

Weather forecasters said travelling across the Mediterranean from northern Africa will settle over central and southern Spain.

Serbia police searches for assailant: An assailant stopped by a patrol in a Serbian border town opened fire on police officers early Thursday, killing one and wounding another, the interior minister

The incident happened just before 1 a.m. in the western town of Loznica, near the border with Bosnia, the minister, Ivica Dacic said. The patrol stopped a car with two people inside and one of them opened fire while stepping out of the vehicle, he added.

The assailant shot one officer in the chest and the other in the shoulder. Both were transferred to the local hospital but one of them died there, Dacic said.

US iourno attends Russia hearing: Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich attended a hearing behind closed doors on Thursday in his trial in Russia on espionage charges that he, his employer and the U.S. government vehemently deny. Closing argu-

ments are set for Friday. Authorities arrested the 3200-year-old journalist on March 29, 2023, while he was on a reporting trip and claimed without offering any evidence that he was gathering secret information for the U.S. The American-born son of immigrants from the USSR, Gershkovich is the first Western journalist arrested on espionage charges in post-Soviet Russia.

The US State Department has declared him "wrongfully detained," thereby committing the government to assertively seek his release.

'Ukraine will find a way': Ukraine will find a way to deal with whatever comes if former president Donald Trump wins a second term, throwing into doubt vital US support for its defense against Russia's invading forces, Ukraine's defense minister said Wednesday.

In carefully framed comments to an audience of US policymakers and journalists, Defense Minister Rustem Umerov reflected the diplomatic and military difficulty facing Ukraine as Trump and running mate JD Vance gain momentum in the US presiden-

Vance, an Ohio senator, has battled in Congress to block US military and financial aid to Ukraine as it fights Russian forces and cross-border attacks, while Trump has said he will bring the war to an immediate end if he wins in November.

'France in a political quagmire': With nine days to the opening ceremony of the Paris Olympics, France's far-right leader Marine Le Pen said Wednesday that the deeply divided country is "in a quagmire" after chaotic legislative elections produced a fragmented

France has been on the brink of government paralysis since elections for the National Assembly earlier this month resulted in a split among three major political groupings: the New Popular Front leftist coalition, President Emmanuel Macron's centrist allies and Le

Pen's far-right National Rally party. The New Popular Front won the most seats but fell well short of the majority needed to govern on its



US President Joe Biden speaks at a 2024 Prosperity Summit on July 16 in North Las Vegas, Nev. Biden tested positive for COVID-19 while traveling on July 17 in Las Vegas and is experiencing 'mild symptoms' including 'general malaise' from the infection, the White House said. (AP)



President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy, (left), is welcomed by Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer, (right), to the European Political Community Summit at Blenheim Palace in Woodstock, Oxfordshire, England on July 18. Leaders from across Europe gathered at a grandiose English country mansion on Thursday for a summit clouded by worries about whether the United States would remain a reliable ally if Donald Trump wins a second presidency. (AP)





America

Rural Nevada judge indicted: A Nevada justice of the peace who ran unsuccessfully for state treasurer in 2022 has been indicted on federal charges alleging she used money donated for a memorial to slain police officers for political campaign costs, rent and her daughter's wedding.

The five-count indictment against Michele Fiore, 53, a justice of the peace in rural Pahrump and a state Republican National Committee member, was filed Tuesday in U.S. District Court in Las Vegas.

In a statement Wednesday, the former Nevada state Assembly and Las Vegas City Council member said she knew for years that the FBI was investigating but learned of her indictment through media reports. Fiore said the process "profoundly" affected her and her family, friends and constituents.

Storms flood Ozarks: Another wave of severe storms pummeled a wide swath of the United States and Canada, leading to flash floods and water rescues Wednesday in the Ozark Mountains, dropping a tornado that ravaged a community in upstate New York and stranding drivers in high water around Toronto.

The relentless series of storms has caused deaths or damage from the Plains to New England this week. Hundreds of thousands of people have lost power and air conditioning during days of sweltering heat.
As much as 11 inches (nearly 28 centim-

eters) of rain fell overnight into Wednesday on parts of the Ozarks in Arkansas and Missouri, the National Weather Service

Buses and ambulances evacuated 86 people from a nursing home in Yellville, Arkansas, where water rose to about 4 feet (1.2 meters) during flash flooding, Marion County Sheriff Gregg Alexander said. A section of a bridge washed out and a historic courthouse flooded. (AP)

NY Council member arrested: A New York City Council member was charged Wednesday with biting a police officer during a chaotic protest over the construction of

Politics

Vance talks Appalachian ties in speech

Biden contracts COVID-19, to self-isolate

LAS VEGAS, July 18, (AP): US President Joe Biden tested positive for COVID-19 while traveling Wednesday in Las Vegas and is experiencing "mild symptoms" including "general malaise" from the infection, the White House said.

Press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said Biden will fly to his home in Delaware, where he will "self-isolate and will continue to carry out all of his duties fully during that time." The news had first been shared by UnidosUS President and CEO Janet Murguía, who told guests at the group's convention in Las Vegas that president had sent his regrets and could not appear because he tested positive for the virus.

Dr. Kevin O'Connor, the president's nysician, said in a note that Biden, 81, "presented this afternoon with upper respiratory symptoms, to include rhinorhea (runny nose) and non-productive cough, with general malaise." After the positive COVID-19 test, Biden was prescribed the antiviral drug Paxlovid and has taken his first dose, O'Connor said.

Biden was slated to speak at the UnidosUS event in Las Vegas Wednesday afternoon as part of an effort to rally Hispanic voters ahead of the November election. Instead, he departed for the airport to fly to Delaware, where he had already been planning to spend a long weekend at his home in Rehoboth

Debate

The president's diagnosis comes amid intense scrutiny of his health and stamina after a disastrous debate with former president Donald Trump that sparked a flurry of concern among Democrats that Biden is not up to the rigors of winning another presidential term.

Biden gingerly boarded Air Force One and told reporters traveling with him, "I feel good." The president was not wearing a mask as he walked onto Air Force One.

The president had previously been at the Original Lindo Michoacan restaurant in Las Vegas, where he was

Brooklyn Democrat Susan Zhuang was

released without bond after being arraigned

a new homeless shelter in her district.

greeting diners and sat for an interview with Univision.

Biden has been vaccinated and is current on his recommended annual booster dose for COVID-19. The vaccines have proven highly effective at limiting serious illness and death from the virus, which killed more than 1 million people in the US since the pandemic began in 2020. Paxlovid has been proven to curtail the chances of serious illness and death from COV-ID-19 when prescribed in the early days of an infection, but has also been associated with rebound infections, where the virus comes back a few days

after clearing up. Biden last tested positive for COV-ID-19 twice in the summer of 2022, when he had a primary case and a rebound case of the virus.

Health officials have reported recent upticks in emergency room visits and hospitalizations from COVID-19. There has also been a pronounced increase in positive test results in much of the country - particularly the south-

Also:

CHARLESTON, W.Va: Newly minted vice presidential nominee JD Vance built his Wednesday night speech to the Republican National Convention around his own Appalachian roots, but it wasn't the first time he had shared his personal story.

Long before he was a US senator from Ohio, Vance rose to prominence on the wings of "Hillbilly Elegy," a bestselling memoir that many thought captured the essence of Donald **Trump**'s political resonance in a rural white America ravaged by joblessness, opioid addiction and poverty.

The 2016 book set off a fierce debate in the region. Many Appalachian scholars thought it trafficked in stereotypes and blamed working-class people for their own struggles, without giving enough weight to the decades of exploitation by coal and pharmaceutical companies that figure prominently in Appalachia's story.

Some of the resentment sparked by

Her office had no immediate comment,

and it was not immediately clear who repre-

demeanors and violations.

the book crossed party lines.

"A lot of us born and raised natives of Appalachia are just highly sensitive to the fact that knocking hillbillies is the final frontier of accepted prejudice in America," said **TJ Litafik**, an east-ern **Kentucky** Republican political consultant and Trump supporter.

Litafik said he would vote for Trump no matter whom he chose as vice president, but Vance was not anywhere near the top of his list.

Litafik, who read "Hillbilly Elegy," subtitled "A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis," and saw the 2020 film adaptation, said Vance might come off as condescending to some voters. But he called the senator "dynamic and intelligent" and said Vance's accomplishments are undeniably impressive.

"I think to me and to a lot of my friends, JD Vance is something of an enigma," Litafik said. "We appreciate some of his recent convictions, but based on past history, there's a hesi-

He said he's open to giving Vance a chance if he's willing to show his commitment to rural and blue-collar Americans by protecting them from policy proposals like those that would roll back expanded Medicaid, especially for drug treatment.

Vance was raised by his grandparents in Middletown, in southwestern Ohio, while his mother, whom he introduced during his speech Wednesday, battled an addiction he said she put behind her 10 years ago. He spent a significant amount of time traveling to Kentucky with his grandparents to visit family and said he hoped to be buried in a small mountain cemetery there.

He vowed in the speech to be "a vice president who never forgets where he came from."

Many conservatives loved the book. Among them were some who lobbied for Vance to be Trump's vice presidential pick. They include **Donald Trump** Jr.; Kevin Roberts, who leads the Heritage Foundation; and Turning Point USA's Charlie Kirk.

Images and video posted to social media showed police clashing with protesters at the planned site for a homeless shelter. In one video, a woman who appears to be Zhuang can be seen alongside other protesters trying to wrestle a barricade away from police as an officer tries to handcuff her. Another video appears to show Zhuang being led away by police in handcuffs. (AP)

Ex-Trump adviser released: Former Trump White House official Peter Navarro, released from prison Wednesday, condemned the Biden administration for what he called the "weaponization" of the justice system, even as he pledged to offer a message of national unity when he speaks to the Republican National Convention in Milwaukee.

In his first interview since his release from a Florida prison for contempt of Congress, Navarro told The Associated Press he was just one example of what many on the right say is the Biden administration's use of the judiciary to punish its political enemies.

"I'm a small part of the bigger issue," Navarro said, referring to the oft-repeated claim by conservatives that, during President Joe Biden's administration, the justice system has been used to hobble former President Donald Trump and those close to him. "If we don't control the government, the government will control us," Navarro



Vehicles run on a road during a heavy rain in Toronto, Canada, on July 16. Toronto received more than a month's worth of rain over a few hours amid a rainfall warning from Environment Canada that called for 'extremely heavy rain' with the potential for 125 millimeters in some areas on Tuesday, according to local media. (Xinhua)

Lat/Am

Security chief arrested

Haiti premier orders gangs to drop arms

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti, July 18, (AP): Haitian Prime Minister Garry Conille ordered gangs to surrender their weapons during a televised speech late Wednesday in which he acknowledged how dangerous life in Haiti's capital and beyond has become and pledged to crack down on the rampant violence.

Conille spoke a day after a second group of 200 Kenyan police officers arrived in Haiti to help quell widespread gang violence as part of a U.N.-backed mission led by the East African country.

"Life every day in Port-au-Prince has turned into a battle for survival," he said. "Many innocent people

have lost their lives. Gangs control 80% of Port-au-Prince, and they

have been blamed for killing or injuring more than 1,500 people in the first three months of the year alone.

Earlier Wednesday, Associated Press journalists observed a line of armored vehicles roll down the main boulevard in downtown Port-au-Prince, one of the capital's more dangerous areas, as a crowd of Haitians gathered quietly to observe, arms on their hips.

The vehicles carried Kenyan and Haitian police as they fanned out across the downtown area. Several shots rang out, but it wasn't clear

who fired and if anyone was injured or killed. "Drop your weapons and recognize the authority of the state," Conille said in a message to gangs.

In late February, gangs launched coordinated attacks targeting key state infrastructure. They seized control of more than two dozen police stations; opened fire on the main international airport, forcing it to close for nearly three months; and stormed Haiti's two biggest prisons, releasing more than 4,000 inmates.

The violence led to the resignation of former prime minister Ariel Henry in late April and the installation of a transitional presidential council and Conille as the new prime minister.

Diego Da Rin, with the International Crisis Group, noted that gang violence began diminishing in late May, with the first contingent of Kenyans arriving in late June.

He noted that so far, Kenyans appeared to have limited their patrols to neighborhoods in Port-au-Prince that have not been seized by gangs. "There really hasn't been any offensive opera-

tions," he said. In upcoming months, the Kenyans will be joined by police and soldiers from the Bahamas, Bangladesh, Barbados, Benin, Chad and Jamaica for a total of

2.500 personnel. Conille said restoring security is a top priority for him but warned it would take time. He said the objective is to recapture all gang-controlled territory "house by house, neighborhood by neighborhood, community

by community."
"We need to free Haiti from all sorts of gangs that are killing and raping the population," Conille said.

Gang violence also has left more than half a million people homeless in recent years as rival gangs fight for control of more territory. More than half living in crowded and unsanitary makeshift camps

Also:

CARACAS, Venezuela: Officials in Venezuela arrested the head of security for the country's top opposition leader on Wednesday, a little more than a week before President Nicolás Maduro faces a tough

Former lawmaker and opposition powerhouse María Corina Machado said that Milciades Ávila was arrested on what she said were trumped up charges of violence against women. The accusation stems from a heated incident over the weekend when, according to videos posted on social media, a group of Maduro supporters began trading insults with Machado's aides at a roadside restaurant on their way home

from a campaign event outside Caracas. Machado was banned from running against Maduro after winning an opposition-organized primary last year. She is instead crisscrossing the country with a hand selected stand-in candidate, Edmundo González, a retired diplomat previously unknown to

"Ávila has traveled with me around the country and risked his life to defend me," Machado wrote on X. "I'm sending an alert to the entire world about the increasing repression by Maduro against our campaign

There was no immediate comment from Maduro's government about the arrest.

Machado said that at least eight people connected to the opposition campaign have been detained in recent days in four states across the country, including the owner of a sound truck Machado and González hired during a recent rally in the central city of Valencia.

PANAMA CITY: Migration through the Darien Gap

dividing Colombia and Panama has declined significantly this month since Panamanian President José Raúl Mulino took office and ordered authorities to get control of the dense jungle frontier, the country's border police said Wednesday.

Still, migration through the Darien remains close to what it was in a record-breaking 2023, when more than 500,000 migrants - more than half Venezuelans made the treacherous journey.

The National Border Service reported Wednesday that 11,363 migrants had crossed the border since July 1, about 9,000 fewer than the same period last year. The agency's director general, Jorge Gobea, attrib-

uted the reduction to the installation of about 3 miles (5 kilometers) of barbed wire on five trails in an effort to funnel migrants to a "humanitarian corridor.' He also said the government's announcement of its

more aggressive efforts and plan to deport migrants back to their countries, as well as heavy rains, could have affected the number of border crossers. Mulino took office promising to stop illegal mi-

gration through the Darien Gap. The US government agreed to pay for deportation flights for those migrants deemed inadmissible, but those flights have not start-

So far this year, more than 212,000 migrants have entered Panama through the Darien. Besides Venezuelans, others crossing include migrants from Ecuador,

Colombia and China. Panama's active efforts to stop and deport migrants would be a massive shift.



This photo taken with a mobile phone shows rescue vehicles parking near the site of a department store fire in Zigong City, southwest China's Sichuan Province on July 18. (Xinhua)

Fire kills 16 people at shopping mall in southwestern China

A fire at a shopping mall killed 16 people Wednesday in the southwestern Chinese city of Zigong, state media reported. Firefighters and rescuers responded to a fire call shortly after 6 p.m. at the 14-story commercial building, and pulled 75 people to safety, according to the official news agency Xinhua.

Rescue efforts were ongoing. It was not immediately known what caused the fire or how many people were in the building when the fire broke out. The

Police mechanics attempt to repair

an armored vehicle that was carrying

Kenyan police officers part of a UN-backed multinational force as well

as Haitian officers in Port-au-Prince,

Haiti on July 17. Haitian Prime Min-

ister Garry Conille ordered gangs to

surrender their weapons during a tele-

he acknowledged how dangerous life in Haiti's capital and beyond has be-

come and pledged to crack down on

the rampant violence.

Africa

Aid worker on hunger strike: A Eu-

ropean aid worker who was arrested two months ago in Central African Republic

over spying allegations has begun a hunger

strike to protest the conditions of his deten-

tion, his family and the Portuguese honorary

the American nongovernmental organiza-

tion FHI 360, was arrested in May, accord-

ing to the Central African Republic pros-

ecutor's office. He is accused of being in

communication with armed groups to plot a

coup, jeopardizing national security, the office added, but is yet to face official charges.

Figueira initially was detained in "rela-

tively good conditions," Victor Manuel

Alves da Rocha, the Portuguese honorary

consul in Bangui, said in a phone call. But

around a week ago, Figueira was transferred

to a political prison called Camp de Roux,

located at army headquarters in Bangui,

where conditions are "very difficult," da

Interpol arrests 300: In a global op-

eration targeting West African organized

crime groups across five continents, police

arrested 300 people, seized \$3 million and

blocked 720 bank accounts, Interpol said

Operation Jackal III, which ran from 10

April to 3 July in 21 countries, aimed to

fight online financial fraud and the West Af-

rican syndicates behind it, the agency said

from West Africa is alarming and increas-

ing," said Isaac Oginni, director of Inter-

pol's Financial Crime and Anti-Corruption

Centre. "This operation's results underscore the critical need for international law en-

forcement collaboration to combat these

One of the targeted groups was Black

Axe, one of the most prominent criminal

networks in West Africa. Black Axe oper-

ates in cyber fraud, human trafficking, drug

smuggling, and is responsible for violent

crimes both within Africa and globally, the

extensive criminal networks.'

'The volume of financial fraud stemming

Rocha said. (AP)

Tuesday.

in a statement.

Martin Joseph Figueira, a consultant for

consul told The Associated Press.

building houses a department store, offices, restaurants and a movie theater.

Social media video posts showed clouds of thick black smoke coming out of windows from the building's lower levels and engulfing the entire 14-story structure as they rose into the sky. Huge flames were visible, and firefighters fought the fire with water sprays. Local media said firefighters also used

Fire hazards remain a problem in China, which reported 947 fire fatalities in this year's first several months ending on May 20, up 19% from the same period of the previous year, said Li Wanfeng, a spokesperson for the National Fire and Rescue Administration.

Li said the number of fires in public places such as hotels and restaurants rose 40% and that the most common causes were malfunctioning in electrical or gas lines and carelessness. (AP)



Taiwan should pay more for defense: Trump

'NKorea launches balloons toward South'

SEOUL, South Korea, July 18, (AP): North Korea resumed flying balloons likely carrying trash toward South Korea on Thursday, the South's military said, days after it vowed to respond to what it called repeated South Korean civilian leafleting campaigns in the North.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said in a statement that the balloons were flying north of Seoul, which is about an hour's drive from the border, on Thursday afternoon. It warned the South Korea public to be cautious of falling objects and report to authorities if they spot balloons on the ground.
Beginning in late May, North Korea

has floated numerous balloons carrying wastepaper, scraps of cloth, cigarette butts and even manure toward South to South Korean activists sending political leaflets to the North via their own balloons. No hazardous materials were

In response, South Korea suspended a 2018 tension-reduction deal with North Korea, resuming propaganda broadcasts briefly and front-line livefire military drills at border areas.

Earlier this week, the powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un vowed to respond to what she called new South Korean civilian leafleting activities. She said South Korean balloons have been found frequently at the North Korean border and other areas.

In her statement Tuesday, Kim Yo Jong threatened new retaliatory steps, saying South Korean "scum" must be ready to pay "a gruesome and dear price." That raised concerns that North Korea could stage physical provocations, rather than balloon launches.

Also:

SEOUL. South Korea: South Korea's president on Thursday appointed a former North Korean diplomat as a vice minister, the highest-level government job for any of the thousands of North Koreans who have resettled in South Korea.

Tae Yongho was a minister of the North Korean Embassy in London when he defected to South Korea in 2016. Tae is the highest-ranking North

Tourists in hospital after two bus crashes on the same road in NZ

WELLINGTON, New Zealand, July 18, (AP): Two buses carrying Chinese tourists veered off the same stretch of road in perilous weather conditions on New Zealand's South Island on Thursday, with 15 passengers taken to hospital, two of them seriously hurt.

The buses were traveling in the same direction on a stretch of highway popular with tourists when they slid from the road and overturned, at about the same time and only 100 meters (yards) apart, New Zealand's police said in an emailed statement. Temperatures in the area were freezing and others driving on the highway reported heavy fog and black ice on the road at the time.

Their cause was not known, New Zealand officials said. A spokesperson would not confirm the nationality of those on board, but a post by the Chinese consulate in Christchurch on the social media platform WeChat said the buses were carrying Chinese tourists.

The local ambulance service said 15 people were taken to hospital, two by helicopter in a serious condition. Eight of those hospitalized were moderately hurt and five had minor injuries. Officials did not say how many others were treated at the scene or how many people were on the buses.

Grace Duggin, an Australian tourist, was traveling in a car behind one of the vehicles and saw it veer off the road, rolling multiple times before landing in a field. Conditions before the crash were made treacherous by slippery black ice, she said, which regularly closes the South Island's tourist highways in winter.

A passenger pulled bloodied passengers out through a hatch in the roof of the bus, Duggin said.

Korean who has resettled in South Korea in recent years. He has said he did so because he didn't want his children to live "miserable" lives in **North** Korea and he fell into "despair" over leader Kim Jong Un's executions of officials and nuclear ambitions.

North Korea called him "human scum" and accused him of embezzling government money and committing other crimes

President Yoon Suk Yeol appointed Tae secretary general the Peaceful Unification Advisory Council, which gives the president policy advice on peaceful Korean unification. The appointment made Tae the first

North Korean defector appointed to a vice-ministerial job in South Korea, among about 34,000 North Koreans who have resettled in South Korea, according to Seoul's Unification Ministry.

WASHINGTON: Former US president Donald Trump demanded the self-governed island of Taiwan pay for U.S. protection, dodged the question of whether he would defend the island from Beijing's military action and accused the island of taking the computer chip industry away from the **United States.** "Taiwan should pay us for de-

fense," the Republican presidential candidate said in an interview with Bloomberg Businessweek. "You know, we're no different than an insurance company.'

Trump's remarks, made public Tuesday, add uncertainty to Trump's approach to Taiwan at a time his running mate, JD Vance, has called China the "biggest threat" to the United States. President Joe Biden has said he would send troops to defend the

agency added.

Black Axe used money mules to open bank accounts worldwide and is now under investigation in over 40 countries for related

money laundering activities, the agency



Lawyer Saida Al-Akrami, wife of Noureddine El-Behiri, a leader of Ennahda impossible conditions for holding democratic elections later this year. (AP)

party and former Minister of Justice, speaks during a press conference by the National Salvation Front opposition group, ahead of the upcoming presidential elections, in Tunis, Tunisia on July 17. Leading opposition parties in Tunisia asserted Wednesday that politically motivated arrests and gag orders are creating

UN condemns civilians killing: The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) on Wednesday expressed concern about widespread attacks against civilians, driven primarily by sub-national armed violence involving community-based militia groups in the country.

The UN mission said between January and March 2024, it documented 240 incidents of violence affecting 913 civilians nationwide, of whom 468 were killed, 328 injured, 70 abducted, and 47 were subjected to conflict-related sexual violence, which represents a 24 percent increase in the number of violent incidents compared to the same period last year. (Xinhua)

'Gag orders chilling poll efforts':

Leading opposition parties in Tunisia asserted Wednesday that politically motivated arrests and gag orders are creating impossible conditions for holding democratic elections later this year.

Members of the National Salvation Front, a coalition of secular and Islamist opponents to President Kais Saied, said a government crackdown on opponents had created a climate of fear, making campaign requirements like signature-gathering nearly impossible.

"There is a clear message behind all these targeted arrests," Riadh Chaibi, a leading member of the Islamist party Ennahda, told a press conference in the capital of the North African nation. (AP)



Rasiyat Holding plans subsidiary IPO decision

The Board of Directors of Rasiyat Holding Company is scheduled to convene on July 21, 2024, to deliberate on the potential listing of one of its subsidiaries on the Boursa Kuwait, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

This decision follows a recent statement from the Boursa Kuwait, which indicated that the Board will assess whether to proceed with a preliminary non-binding agreement regarding

DFMGI

PSEi

EGX 30

KSE 100

SAUDI

DUBAI

EGYPT

PAKISTAN

PHILIPPINES

this matter, along with any related new business developments. Rasiyat Holding Company has

not disclosed specific details regarding the subsidiary that is being considered for listing, nor the specifics of the non-binding agreement under review.

In the first quarter of 2024, Rasiyat Holding Company achieved profitability amounting to 129.11 thousand dinars. This marks a significant turnaround from the same period in 2023, during which the company reported losses amounting to 128.78 thousand dinars.

This upcoming decision by Rasiyat Holding Company's Board of Directors underscores its strategic focus on capital markets and potentially unlocking value through a public listing of its subsidiary. Further details are expected to emerge following the Board's meeting on July 21, 2024.

gold prices surge on Fed rate cut expectations

The recent dynamics in the gold market reflect heightened expectations of an interest rate cut by the US Federal Reserve, potentially as early as September, reports Al-Jarida daily.

This sentiment has driven gold prices to record highs, stabilizing at \$2,468.55 per ounce in spot transactions, with futures trading slightly higher at \$2,474.50 per ounce. The attractiveness of gold typi-

cally increases when interest rates are lowered, as indicated by market reactions and expert analyses.

US Fed Chairman Jerome Powell's recent comments on inflation have added to these expectations. He mentioned that recent inflation readings increase confidence that inflation is moving towards the Fed's target, hinting that a rate cut might be imminent. This sentiment

has bolstered gold's appeal as a safe-haven asset amidst economic uncertainties.

Other precious metals have shown varied movements: silver fell to \$31.04 per ounce, platinum stabilized at \$999.91, and palladium rose to \$967.06 per ounce.

These movements underscore the nuanced reactions within the broader precious metals market.

Market Movements

Change Closing pts

Change Closing pts +30.71 12,188.32 +37.21 4,169.17 +17.30 6,705.01 +313.43 28,653.85 +735.75 81,865.13

JAPAN

18-07-2024

- Nikkei 225

Change Closing pts -971.34 40,126.35

Business

Kuwait's oil sector requires modern technology & expertise from giants

KOC needs international help for new wells

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 18: To expedite the extraction of oil and gas from newly discovered wells, including the latest "Nukhada-1" well announced by the Kuwait Oil Company, oil expert Kamel Al-Harami emphasized the urgent need for assistance from major international oil companies. He stated that these collaborations are essential to harness large quantities of oil and gas from Kuwait's promising new oil discoveries, which are crucial for the country's interests.

In a statement to Al-Seyassah, Al-Harami highlighted that the new oil discoveries, especially the "Al-Nukhada 1" field, demand the expertise of international companies due to their significant proven reserves. The daily production of this field is estimated at about 2,800 barrels of light oil and 7 million cubic meters of associated gas. Furthermore, hydrocarbon resources in the layer are estimated to contain approximately 2.1 billion barrels of light oil and 5.1 trillion standard cubic feet of gas, equivalent to 3.2 billion barrels of oil equivalent.

He noted that Kuwait's current production rate is only 600,000 to 650,000 barrels per day. Therefore, implementing modern technological methods for oil extraction is vital to double these quantities.

Al-Harami suggested that the ideal solution to strengthen the Kuwaiti oil sector is to allow international oil companies to operate in Kuwait in exchange for a share or fee. These companies have exceptional capabilities in extracting oil from challenging wells, which is often the most difficult part of the process.

KPC to invest 7 bln dinars

Kuwait Petroleum Corporation to start 'Durra' field drilling in 2024

KUWAIT CITY, July 18: The CEO of the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation, Sheikh Nawaf Saud Al-Sabah, said, "We will begin drilling and construction work in the Durra field during 2024," reports Al-

Jarida daily quoting sources. The KPC chief executive officer added, the corporatino intends to spend 7 billion dinars on oil extraction operations during the next five years.

He explained that relying on oil service companies and small private contractors is insufficient for revitalizing the Kuwaiti oil sector. These companies often secure tenders through the lowest price criteria and lack the capabilities and experience of major international firms that specialize in prospecting, exploration, and extraction of oil globally.

Al-Harami stressed that to resolve the gas issue and eliminate the need for imports, Kuwait should seek assistance from these international companies. Their expertise and reputation could transform Kuwait from a gas-importing nation to an exporting one. He expressed surprise at Kuwait's inability to produce large quantities of gas despite the oil sector's enormous capabilities.

Oil price down to \$85.61 pb

KUWAIT CITY, July 18, (KUNA): The price of Kuwaiti oil went down 17 cents to USD 85.61 pb on Wednesday, compared to USD 85.78 pb the day before, said Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC)

Thursday

On a global scale, the price of the Brent crude futures' contracts went up USD 1.35 to USD 85.08 pb, as did the West Texas Intermediate crude, up USD 2.09 to settle at 82.85 pb.

KOC eyes 23% rise in oil rigs

Kuwait Oil Company plans rig increase for 2025-2026

KUWAIT CITY, July 18: Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) is gearing up for a significant expansion in its operational capabilities, aiming to increase the number of oil rigs in Kuwait by 23 percent over the next fiscal year, reports Al-Qabas daily.

According to internal documents obtained by MEED, this strategic move is part of KOC's broader efforts to enhance oil and gas production within the country.

Currently, Kuwait operates a total of 172 rigs, comprising 86 drilling rigs and 86 well maintenance rigs. Among these are 30 deep rigs, 54 development rigs, and two heavy oil rigs for drilling purposes, while the maintenance rigs include 10 deep rigs and 76 development rigs.

By fiscal year 2025-26, KOC plans to escalate its rig count to 212, with

114 drilling rigs and 98 maintenance rigs. The new setup will feature 47 deep-water rigs, 57 development rigs, and 10 heavy oil rigs for drilling operations, alongside 9 deep-water rigs, 85 development rigs, and 4 heavy oil rigs for maintenance.

Looking ahead to its five-year strategy, KOC anticipates a 38% increase in drilling rigs by FY2028-2029, aiming for a total of 119 active drilling rigs. Concurrently, the number of maintenance platforms is projected to peak at 98 in FY25-26 before gradually decreasing to 92 by FY28-29.

The development plan was formulated prior to the recent landmark discovery in the Al-Nukhdha offshore field, where Kuwait Petroleum Corporation unearthed substantial reserves of light oil and gas amounting to an estimated 3.2 billion barrels of oil equivalent.

GCC inflation remains steady despite persistent geopolitical tensions

Kuwait CPI shows 3.2% Y-o-Y increase in May 2024

GCC Countries Inflation Trend (v-o-v)

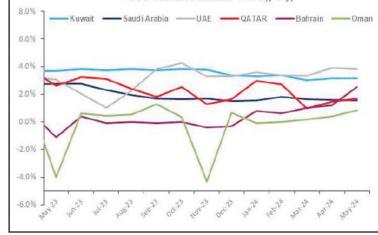
By KAMCO Invest

Inflationary pressures in the GCC continued to remain low during the first five months of 2024 for most countries in the region underpinned by strong US dollar, subdued import prices and continued subsidy policies. The growth of CPI in the GCC remained low and hovered around the 3.0% y-o-y level despite persistent geopolitical instability in the greater MENA region and the Caucasus due to the war on Gaza and the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

Among the six GCC countries, Oman reported the lowest average y-o-y growth in inflation during May-2024 at 0.9% as compared to 0.4% growth in April-2024. Comparatively, Dubai witnessed the biggest inflation increase in the GCC during May-2024 reporting a growth of +3.8% y-o-y during the month as compared to +3.9% in April-2024. Kuwait reported 3.2% inflation growth during May-2024 while the remaining three countries of the GCC reported monthly inflation growth of less than 2.5% during the month (Saudi Arabia at 1.6%, Bahrain at 2.5% and Qatar at 0.9%). Inflation data for June-2024 published by Saudi Arabia came in at 1.5% y-o-y.

At the global level, inflation was seen falling faster than expected n most regions. According to the IMF, global inflation rate is expected to decline to 5.8% in 2024 down from 6.8% in 2023. The June-2024 CPI in the US registered a yo-y increase of 3.0% and a m-o-m increase of 0.1%. The lower m-o-m US inflation rate was mainly driven by lower gasoline prices and other necessary household provisions. In context, the US inflation rate is currently in a downward trajectory and declined from its highest peak since 1981 during the pandemic that reached 9.1% in June-2022.

Similarly, the Eurozone inflation rate is also on a downward trajectory since its peak at 10.6% in October-2022. The Eurozone inflation rate witnessed a 2.5% y-o-y growth during June-2024. The downward trend of the Eurozone inflation rate has prompted the European Central Bank to lower its interest rates for the first time since 2019. The ECB reduced its key deposit rate, which stood at a record high 4.0%, by 25 bps to 3.75%. However, the ECB has indicated that its battle against inflation is far from over with anticipation that the Eurozone inflation would likely remain above its 2% target during 2024. In contrast with the ECB, the US Federal Reserve has kept its interest rates unchanged albeit providing a strong signal for a rate cut during September-2024. On the other hand, the IMF has warned that inflation in major economies has been declin-



ing slower than anticipated and this is complicating monetary policy normalization. The IMF projects GCC inflation to average 2.2% in 2024 and 2.1% in 2025.

The overall downward trend in inflation was supported by the recent release of inflation figures in the US that showed better than expected decline during June-2024. CPI in the US registered a growth of 3.0% during June-2024 as compared to 3.3% during May-2024. The consensus was expecting a y-o-y inflation rate of 3.1%. With the fall in inflation, the US Fed is now expected to implement its first rate cut of 25 bps in more than four years during its September-2024 meeting. The US Fed Chair Jerome Powell recently said that inflation is heading toward the central bank's 2.0% goal based on second-quarter economic data.

In Europe, the ECB implemented its first rate cut since 2019 during June-2024 and lowered the deposit rate to 3.75% from 4.0%. The rate cut reflected improvement in inflation that declined to 2.6% during May-2024 led by lower fuel costs and normalized supply chains. However, economists argued an uncertain and a sticky inflation path can be seen in Europe backed by the latest stronger-than-expected wages and price data. The Eurozone inflation declined to 2.5% during June-2024 led by stubborn services inflation and marginal increase in non-energy industrial goods and energy. The 4.1% increase in services inflation in Eurozone during June-2024 and the continued wage growth are factors that are widely expected to prompt ECB to keep interest rates unchanged in its meeting this week. In line with the US Fed, economists are expecting the ECB to implement the second installment of the rate cut in September-2024, although, the ECB president has expressed a cautious approach highlighting the strong labour market. The immediate impact of the rate

cut in the Eurozone was apparent

after banks in the Euro area reported the first increase in demand for consumer credit and housing loans since 2022. On the other hand, the situation remains uncertain in the UK on when the BoE would start cutting interest rates from the 16-year level of 5.25%.

Global Food Prices

The Food Price Index (FAO) remained unchanged at 120.6 points during June-2024 matching the revised figure for May-2024 due to lower cereal quotations which have compensated for the price increases in higher vegetable oil, sugar and dairy prices. Global export prices for mainly all major cereal witnessed a decline in June-2024. The fall in cereal exports was driven by a combination of different issues including seasonal pressure from continuing harvests in the northern hemisphere as well as better than expected production in some key wheat exporting countries such as Ukraine and Kazakhstan. Moreover, the export prices for Maize also declined during June-2024 reflecting the greater possibility of better than anticipated maize production in two of the biggest producers of the cereal, Argentina and Brazil. Similarly, the FAO All Rice Price Index recorded a modest fall of 0.2% m-o-m in June-2024 mainly due to a reduced amount of trading activities.

On the other hand, the FAO Vegetable Oil Price Index recorded 3.1% m-o-m growth during June-2024 to reach the highest level in thirteen months at 131.8 points. The growth reflected higher quotations for soy, sunflower oils, and palm during the month coupled with stronger demand from the Americas biofuel sector. Similarly, global dairy prices increased during June- 2024 mainly due to growth in international price quotations for butter which reached 24 months high and increased global demand for near-term deliveries. The FAO Dairy Price Index recorded 1.2% m-o-m growth during June-2024. Similarly, the FAO Sugar Price Index witnessed 1.9% mo-m increase to reach 119.4 points during June-2024 mainly because of lower than expected harvest in Brazil. The FAO Meat Price Index remained unchanged during June-2024 balanced by a drop in international poultry meat prices against price increases of ovine, pig and bovine meats.

Kuwait

The Consumer Price Index for Kuwait for May-2024 showed a y-o-y increase of 3.2%, according to official government data. The increase was mainly led by a 6.1% growth in the Food and Beverage index followed by the Clothing and Footwear price index which registered 5.6% y-o-y growth. In terms of m-o-m performance, Kuwait's CPI recorded a 0.15% m-om growth during May-2024 due to mixed movement of price increases in some major groups moderately balanced by price declines in other groups. Inflation in the Housing Services group, the largest weighted group, witnessed a y-o-y increase of 1.4% in May-2024. Kuwait's Education group prices were stable and only recorded a marginal uptick of 0.8% y-o-y during May-2024. Similarly, prices in the Transport Index, which has an index weight of 7.5%, registered another marginal 1.1% y-o-y growth due to the rise in prices of transport services.

The index for Furnishing Equipment Household, which has an index of weight of 11.4%, recorded 3.7% y-o-y growth in May-2024 driven by an increase in prices of furniture, household utensils, home textiles and glassware and table ware. In terms of monthly price movements, prices of the Foods and Beverage group recorded an uptick of 0.5% due to an increase in the prices of meat and poultry, as well as sugar and sugary products. However, the prices of fish and seafood retreaded during the month while the prices for bread, milk and cereals remained steady. Moreover, according to the Kuwait's Consumer Protection Society, increased operating costs have negatively impacted on food prices at restaurants and households, and supermarkets in Kuwait. The board noted that there has been an overall upward pressure on prices of basic food stuffs in Kuwait due to several elements including global turmoil, the Russia-Ukraine conflict, the war on Gaza and military operations in the Red Sea. Moreover, newly developed local challenges including severe shortage of storage spaces coupled with increasing warehouse rental prices are another element that is putting upward pressure in Kuwait prices.

Project spans over 70,000 sqm TEC & UPAC sign 17-year deal for Messila Beach site project

Nadia Akil, CEO of UPAC, and Abdullah Jafar, Acting CEO of Touristic Enterprises Company.

KUWAIT CITY, July 18: Touristic Enterprises Company (TEC) and United Projects for Aviation Services Company (UPAC), a commercial real estate and facilities management company, today signed a 17-year contract under which UPAC will operate the Messila Beach Site Project (Plage-2), one of Kuwait's prime entertainment destinations for families that TEC developed as part of its leading role in spearheading the growth and development of the country's tourism sector.

(UPAC

Nadia Akil, UPAC Chief Executive Officer, and Abdullah Jafar, TEC Acting Chief Executive Officer, signed the agreement at TEC headquarters in Shuwaikh in the presence of representatives from both companies.

Developed and built by TEC, the project spans over 70,000 SQM in an easily accessible prime location on Messila Beach, and aims to be a popular entertainment destination for Kuwait's residents. UPAC will handle leasing, facility management, and project operations for the duration of the 17-year contract.

The Messila Beach Site Project (Plage-2) consists of two swimming pools, a wave pool, various sporting activities, and commercial areas for restaurants, cafes, and shops. The property also includes a multi-purpose events hall, an expansive beach, a dayuse chalet, and management offices, in addition to 350 shaded parking spots.

H.E. Sheikh Mohammed Al-Salman Al-Homoud Al-Sabah, TEC Chairman, said that TEC is developing projects that enrich the entertainment, social, and tourism sectors in Kuwait, affirming that TEC's development of Messila Beach is part of a series of projects aimed at enhancing Kuwait's tourism sector.

"TEC's work contributes to Kuwait's goal of developing its economic and tourism capabilities that promote sustainable and comprehensive growth while improving citizens' welfare and satisfaction through new and innovative projects," said Sheikh Mohammed Al-Salman. He emphasized the importance of providing visitors with high-quality services as well as unique cultural and tourism experiences.

UPAC

() UPAC

Messila Beach is expected to open after a six-month handover to UPAC. At a later stage, UPAC will provide information on operating hours, ticket costs, on-site entertainment, and retail opportunities.

UPAC's Akil said: "We are thrilled to have won the contract to operate the property developed by TEC. This is a significant opportunity for UPAC to support Kuwait's tourism sector and expand the country's entertainment and family-focused options. Messila Beach holds a special place in everyone's memories, and with the new project, we aim to rekindle those cherished moments."

"The Messila Beach project enables us to grow and diversify our portfolio beyond our existing contracts and expands our presence in the entertainment and facilities management sectors. UPAC's strength is project management, and we are excited to leverage this expertise in this new venture."

Akil added: "Messila Beach will

provide Kuwait's citizens and residents with a safe, fun environment for family entertainment. Our teams will be working closely alongside TEC to ensure that we provide the public with a memorable experience."

In Kuwait, UPAC manages the operations of Kuwait International Airport's Terminal 1 (T1) airport mall, parking, and related facilities, as well as the management of real estate and parking facilities at the Sheikh Sa'ad Airport Terminal (T3).

Airport Terminal (13).

UPAC is a co-investor and developer of Abu Dhabi's US\$1.3 billion Reem Mall on Reem Island. The mall is the region's first fully integrated omnichannel retail ecosystem with digital, e-commerce, and logistics capabilities. It also boasts a unique entertainment offering, including the largest Snow Park in the UAE. Reem Mall brings together all consumer and retail services to ensure a seamless customer experience.

Japan's trade deficit for H1 declines as exports recover

Japan posted a trade surplus in June, the first in three months, highlighting a recovery in exports, government data showed Thursday. For the first six months of this year, Japan's trade deficit declined by more than half from the same period last year, to 3.23 trillion yen (\$21 billion), according to Finance Ministry data.

The yen's weakness against the U.S. dollar has helped boost Japan's exports in recent

months. The trade surplus in June grew five-fold from a year earlier to 224 billion yen, or \$1.4 billion, on rising exports of vehicles and computer chips.

The weak yen works as a negative for Japan's imports, especially amid inflationary trends and rising energy costs. Resource-poor Japan imports

almost all its energy.
Japan has logged trade deficits for six straight fiscal half-years,

starting with the final half of 2021, mainly because of the weak yen and rising global prices. Japan's fiscal year runs from April to March. For the month of June, imports rose 3% to 8.98 trillion yen (\$58 billion), while exports rose 5% to 9.2 trillion yen (\$59 billion).

In the first six months of the year, imports rose 0.8% to 54.7 trillion yen (\$350 billion), while exports gained nearly 9% to 51.5 trillion yen (\$330 billion).

European Central Bank leaves key interest rate at 3.75%,

The European Central Bank left its key interest rate benchmark unchanged Thursday as its ratesetting council and President Christine Lagarde take their time to make sure stubborn inflation is firmly under control before lowering rates again.

The decision leaves the deposit rate at 3.75%, where it has stood after a single rate at the previous meeting on June 6. "Domestic price pressures are still high, services inflation is elevated and headline inflation is likely to remain above the target well into next year," the bank said in a statement accompanying the decision. That means home buyers and businesses hoping for lower interest rates in Europe are going to have to wait at least until the bank's September meeting for more affordable credit - and pos-

sibly even longer than that. The ECB's stance for now resembles that that of the U.S. Federal Reserve, which is expected to hold off lowering rates at its next meeting July 30-31, though the Fed appears closer to cutting

rates after that than is the ECB. The ECB, Fed, Bank of England and other central banks around the developed world sharply raised rates to quell an outburst of inflation that followed Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the end of the pandemic.

The Conversation

Why have so many stores given up on them?

Target just became the latest US retailer to stop accepting payment by checks

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

> By Jay L. Zagorsky **Boston University**

an you still use a check to make purchases? In in-Creasing numbers of stores across the U.S., the answer is "no." The large retailer Target stopped accepting checks on July 15, 2024. It follows decisions a decade earlier by supermarket chains Whole Foods and Aldi to no longer accept this form of payment.

Target said it was phasing out checks because not many customers use them. It's a fair point: Check usage has fallen dramatically around the world in recent decades.

However, as a business school professor who studies how people pay for goods and services, I wonder if Target might have another, unspoken motivation. After all, customers started the switch away from checks years ago. What's new today is a rise in check fraud.

Checks have been around a long time - centuries, in fact. Paper checks are simply directions telling banks how much money to move from one account to another. Today, these directions take anywhere from a few days to a few weeks to be carried out. That's why stores prefer customers pay with debit cards, which act like checks but remove money from an account immediately

Checks were a huge part of the U.S. economy only a few decades ago. The Federal Reserve, the U.S.'s central bank, processed 17 billion checks a year back in 2000, compared with 3 billion today.

While the Fed doesn't process every check - for example, checks written between accounts at the same bank don't go through the Fed system - the numbers offer a sense of the overall decline. In 2000, the average American wrote roughly 60 checks cleared by the Fed each year, compared with about nine today.

Until 20 years ago, all checks had to be physically returned to the person writing the check after they were processed so that the writer could make sure the amount they wrote the check for matched what was deducted from their account. Years ago, I paid all my bills by check, and each month, my bank would send a fat envelope - which I never opened - containing my canceled checks.

To physically return all the checks, the government maintained a special fleet of planes that each night flew canceled checks around the country. Then in 2004, a new law allowed banks to send customers pictures of their checks, which eliminated the need to fly them.

While the Fed may be processing 80% fewer checks than it was in the early 2000s, its data shows the average person is still writing at least nine checks a year. So who is writing all those checks? The answer includes many people who deny ever writing checks.

Let me explain. Many people now use their bank's on-line bill payment service. While many of these payments are done electronically, payments to smaller businesses and individuals are done by the bank writing a check on your behalf.

Plus, there are still people who write out checks to landlords, contractors, charities and government agencies. Many people still give checks at weddings, births and other special occasions. Last, many businesses still write checks to other businesses when paying their bills.

Given that checks are still being used - albeit less often than before - why are businesses like Target, Whole Foods and Aldi refusing them? I think an important part of the story is that check fraud is becoming rampant in the U.S.

The U.S. Treasury has a dedicated department that fights monetary crimes, called the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network, or FinCen for short. FinCen gets "Suspicious Activity Reports" from banks about activities from money laundering to loan fraud. FinCen reports that the number of check fraud cases has exploded since 2020, nearly doubling from 2021 to 2022.

One of the biggest places where this fraud occurs are checks written at the cash register. As the Atlanta Fed points out, "Anyone with graphics software and a high-

quality printer can readily turn out counterfeit checks." Merchants are hit with a double whammy when check fraud occurs. First, they lose the merchandise, which cannot be sold to a legitimate customer. Then, unlike shoplifting, the store is faced with more financial pain because most banks charge both the merchant and the check writer when a counterfeit check is presented. Both sides are charged because the Federal Reserve charges high fees for returning uncollectable checks.

Target's most recent annual report mentioned a problem with theft, saying, "We continue to experience higher inventory shrink, as a percentage of sales, relative to historical levels." Translated into plain language, this means people are stealing more from Target than they have in the past.

The increase in check fraud means Target's recent announcement will likely be repeated soon by other chains. I expect in the future only stores like Costco, which photograph every member and has every customer's address on file, will allow checks.

Since retailers often raise prices when check fraud happens to cover the losses, curbing check fraud lowers prices and is in the interest of every honest consumer.

And for those stores worried about increasing check, debit and credit card fraud, there is a simple answer: Encourage your customers to use cash. Paper money is safe and secure, and once handed over, any retailer knows the transaction is paid. Going old-school with paper money

Small business sales growth tapers in June

Small business sales growth slowed in June as consumers took a pause on spending.

That's according to new data from financial services and payments provider Fiserv.

Consumers have been reining in spending as high prices on groceries and other necessities and high interest rates weigh on their pocketbooks. The Commerce Department reported Tuesday that sales for retailers of all sizes were flat in June from May.

Nationally, the seasonally adjusted Fiserv Small Business Index, which rates small business performance, declined to 140 in June from 144 in May. Month-over-month sales at small businesses dipped 2.9% from May, and transactions fell by 1.5%. But sales and transactions rose compared to June 2023.

The slowdown from May was driven by lower average ticket sizes as inflation slowed and consumers became more budget conscious, according to Fiserv.

"As the quarter came to a close, consumers throttled back both spending and foot traffic across retail, restaurants and other servicebased businesses," said Prasanna Dhore, chief data officer at Fiserv.

Some of this tapering could be due to short-term seasonal demand shifts, however. Notable increases in June spending came from rising premiums for insurance, higher summer foot traffic and new subscription sign-ups at web-based content hosting sites. But consumers cut back on small business spending and visits across a number of industries, including retail, accommodations, restaurants, ambulatory health care and professional services

The Fiserv Small Business Index uses point-of-sale transaction data, including card, cash, and check transactions in-store and online across about 2 million U.S. small businesses. (AP)

BoE faces dilemma after T. Swift upside impact on British inflation

Decision on rate cuts expected next month

LONDON, July 18, (AP): The Bank of England is facing a dilemma about whether to cut interest rates next month after official figures Wednesday showed inflation holding steady at its target against expectations of a modest decline, possibly as a result of Taylor Swift's Eras

The Office for National Statistics said inflation, as measured by the consumer price index, remained at the bank's 2% target in the year to June. Most economists had predicted a decline to 1.9% as lower domestic energy bills filter through.

The statistics agency said the largest upward contribution to the annualized inflation rate came from restaurants and hotels, with some economists attributing the increases to Taylor Swift's tour of the U.K. Swift performed to hundreds of thousands during June in Edinburgh, Liverpool, Cardiff and London and is back in London, so there could be another potential spike then.

"While difficult to fully untangle, it's certainly very possible that some Taylor Swift effects were at play here and could very well reverse out next month, said Sanjay Raja, chief U.K. economist at Deutsche Bank.

Following the release of the figures, financial markets think it's now less likely that there will be a majority in the bank's Monetary Policy Committee in favor of cutting the main interest rate from 5.25% at its next meeting on

Some on the panel have voiced concerns in recent months about the scale of price rises in the crucial services sector, which accounts for around 80% of the Brit-

China's big economic shifts extraordinary

British economist extolls Beijing's move

BEIJING, July 18, (Xinhua): China's big economic shifts and the extraordinary improvement of its ing aspects of the country's development, John Ross, senior fellow of Chongyang Institute for Financial Studies at Renmin University of China, has said.

China has transitioned from being one of the world's poorest nations to a state of moderate prosperity within a single person's lifetime, the British economist told Xinhua in a recent interview.

"There's never been anything like that," he said.

Ross, also a former director of economic policy for the mayor of London, said he became very interested in China following the third plenary session of the 11th Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee in 1978, adding he has since held high expectations for the country's develop-

"In 1992 ... People asked me: 'Why are you so interested in China? It's a poor country. You many and Japan.' I said: 'China's economic policy is absolutely correct from the point of economic theory. It's gonna be a huge success," he said.

Having worked in a Chinese university since 2009, Ross has witnessed firsthand the improvements in Chinese people's lives over the years.

A frequent traveler between Beijing and Shanghai, the British economist used to spend the greater part of a day on the journey, but now he feels he barely loses any

time thanks to high-speed trains. "Once I'm in the high-speed train, it's like being in my office, because I can plug in the computer, turn on the Wi-Fi and be connected," said Ross, adding that the movement made possible by improved transportation in China

has effectively made the country feel smaller. China's technological advance-

China is not only moving up the value chain but also excelling in sectors with strong growth prospects, he said, highlighting the country's success in areas such as telecommunications and green

"I've very carefully looked at which cars have got blue number plates, which shows that they are running internal combustion engines, and which have got green number plates, which means that they're new energy vehicles (NEVs)," Ross said, adding it's fascinating to see many taxis in Beijing are NEVs.

"I've been writing on China's economy for more than 30 years and about every two years, there's something published saying that China is about to collapse. It never does," he said.

out of Cyprus gas contract land's first important step to transition-NICOSIA, Cyprus, July 18, (AP): A Chinese-led consortium on Thursday

China-led consortium pulls

pulled out of its contract with Cyprus to build the island nation's first natural gas import terminal over what it says was the Cypriot government's failure to pay what it owed for work completed this year

The CPP-Metron Consortium said in a statement that the Cypriot government failed to live up to its commitments to pay up, despite promises made during a March meeting chaired by President Nikos Christodoulides.

"No contractor can be expected to work indefinitely on credit," the consortium said. "That was not the deal CMC signed up to.'

The Cyprus government has not yet commented on the development.

Work on the 289 million euro (\$319 million) terminal on the island's southern coast began in July 2020 and was scheduled to be completed two years

The European Union had pitched in a 101 million euro (\$110 million)

Billed as Cyprus' costliest energy project, it was the crude-dependent is-

ing to cleaner, cheaper natural gas for energy generation. The government had said the terminal would cut power generation costs by 15%-25% and reduce Cyprus' carbon footprint by 30%.

Cypriot officials also said it would allow for future use of natural gas from fields discovered in waters off Cyprus. ExxonMobil, Chevron, Italy's Eni and French Total are all licensed to drill for oil and gas off Cyprus' southern coastline. The terminal features a tanker ship

built in Singapore and refitted to con-

vert liquefied natural gas back into

gaseous to use in Cyprus' main power plant. It also includes a jetty and pipelines to convey the gas to the nearby Vasilikos power plant.

But a string of delays that CPP-Metron blamed on Cyprus' Natural Gas Infrastructure Company (ETYFA) held up

completion of the work until the consor-

tium decided to pull the plug. The consortium consists of China Petroleum Pipeline Engineering, Metron Energy Applications, Hudong-Zhongua Shipbuilding and Wilhelmsen Ship Management.

ish economy, as well as the pace of wage increases, which raise the risks of an inflation rebound if interest rates are cut too soon. Many economists are factoring a steady rise in the headline inflation rate over the coming months.

"For the majority of the MPC, today's inflation report won't be as encouraging as it may have anticipated," said Deutsche Bank's Raja. "With live music and accommodation prices rising at such speed, the MPC could potentially be minded to look past some of the upside in services inflation. To be sure, we now think that an August rate cut is finely

balanced."

The last time inflation was at 2% was in July 2021 before prices started to shoot up, first as a result of supply chain issues during the coronavirus pandemic and then because of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which pushed up energy costs.

The Bank of England, like the U.S. Fed and other central banks, raised interest rates aggressively in late 2021 from near zero to counter the rapid increase in inflation, which hit a peak of above 11% in late 2022.

Higher interest rates - which cool the economy by making it

more expensive to borrow - have helped ease inflation, but they've also weighed on the British economy, which has barely grown since the pandemic rebound.

Prime Minister Keir Starmer has stressed that upping the U.K.'s economic growth will be the driving mission of his Labour government. Later Wednesday, his government is to announce its plans for the coming year. Starmer said the measures announced in the King's Speech to Parliament would "take the brakes off Britain" and "create wealth for people up and down the country" by spurring economic growth.

Bid to balance growing China influence

Pacific island leaders agree to enhance Japan's role in the region

TOKYO, July 18, (AP): Leaders of 18 Pacific island nations and areas agreed to an enhanced role of Japan in the region's development while opposing any attempted coercive activity, in a joint declaration adopted at their summit Thursday, as Tokyo seeks greater engagement

to counter China's influence. The Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting, or PALM, launched under a Japanese initiative in 1997, has become Japan's key diplomatic tool to deter China's security and economic influence in the region by strengthening its ties with the Pacific Island Forum

members, stressing its willingness to stand by them and maintaining unity as an equal partner.

The leaders agreed that Japan provides greater support and cooperation in climate change, maritime security and defense, economic development and other areas, according to the joint declaration.

They noted climate change as "the single greatest existential threat to the livelihoods, security and well-being of the peoples of the Pacific" and showed their commitment to elevating their collaboration to support the region in

mitigating and adapting to the impacts of climate change.

The declaration emphasized the "primacy" of peace and stability and shared "the importance of the free and open international rules-based order in line with the international law."

They expressed "strong opposition to any unilateral attempts to change the status quo by the threat or use of force or coercion anywhere in the world," according to the declaration that carefully avoided identifying China.

Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida told a joint press conference after the meeting that Japan and the island leaders "shared values and principles such as the rule of law, democracy and opposition to attempts to change the status quo by force.

Cook Islands Prime Minister Mark Brown, who is co-chairing this year's summit, welcomed Japan's approach to working with the PIF members "as equals" to achieve their 2050 strategy for the Blue Pacific, "our vision for a region of peace, harmony, security, social inclusion, and prosperity.

The leaders also adopted action plans of cooperation in seven areas including climate resilience and disaster risk management, sustainable management of oceans, economic resilience. "ensuring people-centered development" and investment in technology and connectivity.

The declaration needs to be put into action, Brown said, adding that the region is having trouble getting climate financing and welcomed Japan's consideration for a contribution but called on the country to "confirm earlier rather than later."

South Pacific island nations have become a focus of security concern among Japan and its ally the United

as Australia and New Zealand in recent years as Beijing increases its presence in the region where many island nations are economically dependent on China, as with many other countries. Japan has sought to share with the

States and their regional partners such

leaders the importance of maintaining the rules-based, free and open international order in the region, with China in mind but carefully not spelled out.

Kishida has been also holding bilateral meetings with the leaders since earlier this week on the sidelines of

Organizing such awareness activities helps foster fraud-resilient environment, says Altimimi

NBK hosts awareness session on fraud & protection methods for 'NBK Aspire' interns

KUWAIT CITY, July 18: As part of its ongoing efforts to promote the "Let's Be Aware" banking awareness campaign launched by the Central Bank of Kuwait, in collaboration with Kuwait Banking Association (KBA), and in furtherance to its endeavors to increase fraud awareness and protection methods, National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) held a session for the participants in the 'NBK Aspire' Summer Internship Program for 2024 in which it highlighted the importance of safeguarding oneself against fraud, with a particular focus on social media.

The interns delved into the various measures implemented by banks to ensure the protection of their customers and their sensitive personal information from fraudulent activities. The discourse underscored the



Adnan Altimimi

significance of being vigilant and proactive in mitigating the threats posed by fraud, especially in the



Photo during the event.

digital age where cybercrimes are prevalent.

An integral part of the conver-

sation revolved around the risks associated with sharing OTP and the potential consequences of such actions, noting that maintaining the confidentiality of OTP and not sharing it with anyone is the best way to keep bank accounts information secure.

Commenting on this, Adnan Altimimi, Digital Communications Officer at National Bank of Kuwait said, "The session was highly engaging for the interns of 'NBK Aspire' program targeting students between the age of 14 and 18 years. It served as a platform for them to gain a deeper understanding of the strategies and best practices for enhancing their security posture and fortifying their defenses against fraudulent

"By organizing such awareness activities, we help foster a fraudresilient environment. NBK uses all its digital channels to highlight different fraud types. It also warns customers against all fraud schemes via SMS, e-mail or phone calls by sharing social media communications to warn customers against clicking unverified ads like those promising high gains, enticing individuals to register their personal information on fake trading platforms or accounts promising financial aids," he explained.

It is worth mentioning that NBK frequently warns its followers against all types of fraud by posting text communications and video clips as well as reposting CBK's communications related to the "Let's Be Aware" campaign, as part of its efforts to promote fraud protection among all sectors of so-

Bank enhances employee well-being

Burgan Bank inaugurates on-site 'medical clinic' at its head office

KUWAIT CITY, July 18: In a new effort to continue providing a wellrounded, healthy work environment that caters to employees' holistic well-being, Burgan Bank announced that a dedicated healthcare professional will be available at the HQ's medical clinic to tend to the employees' medical needs without delay. The newly introduced on-site medical care service is a testament to Burgan's commitment to its social responsibility strategy and its mission to be an employer of choice in Kuwait.

"At Burgan Bank, our employees" health and overall well-being is our single most important priority. It is our responsibility to ensure the soundness of their physical, mental, and emotional health," said Mr. Naqeeb Amin, General Manager -Human Resources and Development for the Group at Burgan Bank. "With the new on-site clinic, the primary healthcare that our employees need is now a few steps away every day.'

It serves to note that Burgan Bank's approach to employee health and wellness remains one of the most comprehensive and engaging in the Kuwaiti banking market, spanning everything from sports competitions and programs to awareness workshops with top healthcare and nutrition professionals. The most recent examples include the monthlong 'Rock Your Habits' wellness program and challenge, the breast cancer awareness workshop, and the Burgan Talk' on working parents' health and well-being.

As a certified Great Place to Work®, Burgan Bank remains committed to providing its staff with a healthy, inclusive, and inspiring work environment that enables every employee to innovate and excel in their areas of specialty.

About Burgan Bank

Established in 1977, Burgan Bank is a Kuwait-based conventional bank with a significant focus on the corporate and financial institution sectors.

From its earliest days, the Bank has significantly sought to diversify its offering to cater to its growing retail and private banking customer base.

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

TIB (Tunisia), and Burgan Bank Turkey. Furthermore, Burgan Bank has a presence in the UAE through its corporate office, Burgan Financial Services Limited

The Bank has continuously improved its performance over the years, through an expanded revenue structure, diversified funding source es, and a strong capital base. The adoption of state-of-the-art services and technology has positioned it as a trendsetter in the domestic market and within the MENA region. Moreover, Burgan Bank's brand has been built on a foundation of real values - trust, commitment, excellence, and progression - which serve as a reminder of the high standards to which the Bank always aspires. In fact, the Bank's core philosophy of 'Driven by You' is the foundation on



Human Resources and Development for the Group at Burgan Bank.



Alfouz draw winner

ABK introduces new draws

Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait unveils KD 10,000 Alfouz draw winner

KUWAIT CITY, July 18: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) is excited to announce Najat Abdulsamad Magames as the winner of AlfouzKD 10,000 weekly draw on Monday 15 July 2024. The draw took place in the presence of a Ministry of Commerce and Industry representative, ensuring transparency.

From the highly coveted mega annual draw of a KD 5,000 monthly salary for 10 years to its KD 10,000 weekly prize, the Alfouz account has already attracted the attention of the Kuwaiti market.Based on the account's great success, ABK decided to go above and beyond to reward customer loyalty.

By introducing a KD 100,000 quarterly draw, in addition to an exciting KD 20,000 monthly draw, the Alfouz offering has continues to surpass expectations and deliver even more customer satisfaction.

To top it off, ABK has simplified

the ability to open the account and win! Customers can enter the draws and get extra entry chances for every KD 10 deposited as opposed to KD 100 previously. The more you save, the higher your chance to be the next Alfouz winner!

ABK encourages everyone to open an Alfouz draw account or increase their balance to participate in the upcoming weekly draw, which is scheduled to take place on 22 July

Open an Alfouz account today and enjoy increased opportunities to win the lifestyle you've been waiting for!

To learn more about the Alfouz account and its range of exciting draws and prizes, please follow the ABK's Instagram account @abk_kuwait, visit eahli.com, contact Ahlan Ahli 1 899 899 or visit one of the Bank's branches across Kuwait.

which its products and services are continuously developed.

The Bank obtained the ISO/IEC 27001: 2022 Information Security Management Systems certificate (ISMS), ISO /IEC 27701:2019 Privacy Information Management Systems (PIMS), ISO/IEC 20000-1: 2018 Information Technology Service Management System (ITSMS) and was re-certified with the prestigious ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management System (QMS), making it one of the few banks in the GCC and Kuwait to receive such certification for five consecutive times. The Bank also has the distinction of being the only Bank in Kuwait to have won the JP Morgan Chase Quality Recognition Award for twenty consecutive years. Moreover, in a testament to its dedication to the development of its human capital, Burgan Bank is the first bank in Kuwait to be certified as a Great Place to Work®, earning the distinct honor in 2023.

Burgan Bank is a majority-owned subsidiary of KIPCO (Kuwait Projects Company), one of the largest holding companies in the MENA

CBK introduces fast and secure payments

Commercial Bank of Kuwait launches 'WAMD' service to its CBK Mobile App

KUWAIT CITY, July 18: Commercial Bank of Kuwait is pleased to announce "WAMD" instant payment service offered through its CBK Mobile App. The service, was launched on Sunday 30 June 2024, enhances easy and fast money transfers. This comes within the framework of Al-Tijari's ongoing commitment to providing a cutting-edge digital banking experience to its customers in line with the rapid developments in the field of digital transformation.

Mohammad Al-Haid, the Chief Digital Officer at the Bank, said: "Commercial Bank of Kuwait keeps pace with everything new in the field of digital payments to offer its customers a distinctive digital banking experience. This comes in light of the implementation of the "WAMD" instant payments system by the Shared Electronic Banking Services Company "KNET" under the supervision of the Central Bank of Kuwait."

Al-Haid added: "Providing reliable and secure services that maintain customers' data and money contributes to realizing a high level of performance to satisfy customers. In this regard, the "WAMD" instant payments service provides safe and



Mohammad Al-Haid

sophisticated payment options that meet the needs of various customer segments." He furtheraccentuated the Bank's constant care for applying the latest developments in digital banking technology and driving forward the digital transformation process that is shaping the future of the banking industry at the domestic and global levels.

Al-Haid said that a key feature of the "WAMD" service available in CBK Mobile App. is that the customer can make transfers very quickly and easily. The customer only has to enter the beneficiary's mobile number, the amount to be sent, the purpose of the transfer, and other notes, then agree on the terms and conditions so that the transaction can be executed. To benefit from "WAMD" service through CBK Mobile App., the customer should register and link one bank account in Kuwaiti Dinars to the service, which enables him to send, receive, or request money

Al-Haid added that Commercial Bank of Kuwait is committed to providing a distinguished digital banking experience to its customers in line with the rapid developments in the field of digital transformation, and adopting the latest technological and digital developments to meet customers' highest aspirations. Through CBK Mobile App., the Bank aims to provide customers with a safe method for executing their various banking transactions and managing their money easily anywhere any time.

The Conversation

Fact-checking tips for online content

'Beware of misleading feel-good stories on social media'

By H. Colleen Sinclair Louisiana State University

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

Propagandists are already working to sow disinformation and social discord in the run-up to the November elections.

Many of their efforts have focused on social media, where people's limited attention spans push them to share items before even reading them - in part because people react emotionally, not logically, to information they come across. That's especially true when the topic confirms what a person already believes.

It's tempting to blame bots and trolls for these problems. But really it's our own fault for sharing so widely

Research has confirmed that lies spread faster than truth - mainly because lies are not bound to the same rules as truth.

As a psychological scientist who studies propaganda, here is what I tell my friends, students and colleagues about what to watch out for. That way, they can protect themselves - and each other - from lies, half-truths and misleading spins on current

If something you see online causes intense feelings - especially if that emotion is outrage - that should be a red flag not to share it, at least not right away. Chances are it was intended to short-circuit your critical thinking by playing on your emotions. Don't fall for it.

Instead, take a breath.

The story will still be there after you verify it. If it turns out to be real, and you still want to share it, you may also want to consider the fire you may be contributing to. Do you need to fan the flames? During these unprecedented times we have to be

careful about not contributing to emotional contagions. Ultimately, you are not in charge of alerting the public to breaking news, and you're not in any race to share things before other people do.

A new tactic being adopted by misinformation warriors is to post feel-good stories that people will want to share. Those pieces may be true or may have as much truth as urban legends. But if lots of people share those posts, it lends legitimacy and credibility to the fake source accounts that originally post the items. Then those accounts are well positioned to share more malicious messages when they judge the time is right.

These same agents use other feel-good ploys as well, including attempts to play on your vanity or inflated self-image. You've probably seen posts saying "Only 1% of people are brave enough to share this" or "take this test to see if you are a genius." Those aren't benign clickbait - they're often helping a fraudulent source get shares, build an audience, or in the case of those "personality quizzes" or "intelligence tests" they are trying to get access to your social media profile.

If you encounter a piece like this, if you can't avoid clicking then just enjoy the good feeling it gives you and move on. Share your own stories rather than those of others.

What you read may make some extraordinary claim - like the pope endorsing a U.S. presidential candidate when he has never endorsed a candidate before. Astronomer and author Carl Sagan advocated for the response you should have to such claims: "Extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence," which is a longstanding philosophical premise. Consider whether the claim you're seeing was supported by any evidence at all - and then check that the quality of that evidence

Also, remember that a quirk of human psychology means that people only need to hear something three times before the brain starts to think it's true even if it's false.

If you're reading something that matches so well with what you had already thought, you might be inclined to say "Yep, that's true" and share it

Meanwhile, differing perspectives get ignored. We are strongly motivated to confirm what we already believe and avoid unpleasant feelings associated with challenges to our beliefs - especially strongly held beliefs.

It is important to identify and acknowledge your biases, and take care to be extra critical of articles you agree with. Try seeking to prove them false rather than looking for confirmation they're true. Be on the lookout because the algorithms are still set up to show you things they think you will like. Don't be easy prey. Check out other perspectives.

Posts that are riddled with spelling and grammatical errors are prime suspects for inaccuracies. If the person who wrote it couldn't be bothered to spell-check it, they likely didn't fact-check it either. In fact, they may be using those errors to get your attention.

Similarly, a post using multiple fonts could unintentionally reveal that it had material added to the original - or be trying to deliberately catch your eye. (Yes, the errors in the heading for this tip were intentional.)

Memes are usually one or more images or short videos, often with text overlaid, that quickly convey a single idea.

While we may all enjoy a good laugh with a new "Ermahgerd" meme, memes - particularly those sowing political discord - have actually been identified as one of the emerging mediums for propaganda. In recent years, the practice of using memes to incite divisiveness has rapidly escalated, and extremist groups are using them with increasing effectiveness. For example, white supremacist groups have

commandeered the "Pepe the frog" meme, a cartoonish image that may attract younger audiences.

Their origins as benign, humorous images about grumpy cats, cats who want cheeseburgers or calls

to "keep calm and carry on" have led our brains to classify memes as enjoyable or, at worse, harmless. Our guards are down. Plus their short nature further subverts critical thinking. Stay alert.

Was the post from an unreliable media outlet? The Media Bias/Fact Check website is one place to look to find out whether a particular news source has a partisan bias. You can also assess the source yourself. Use research-based criteria to judge the quality and balance of the evidence presented. For instance, if an article expresses an opinion, it may present facts slanted in a way favorable to that opinion, rather than fairly presenting all the evidence and drawing a conclusion.

If you find that you're looking at a suspect site, but the specific article seems accurate, my strong suggestion is to find another credible source for the same information, and share that link instead. When you share something, social media and search-engine algorithms count your sharing as a vote for the overall site's credibility. So don't help misinformation sites take advantage of your reputation as a cautious and careful sharer of reliable information.

It may be surprising, but politicians and other public figures don't always tell the truth. It may be accurate that a particular person said a particular sentence, but that doesn't mean the sentence is correct. You can double-check the alleged fact, of course, but you can also see how truthful particular people are.

If you're hearing information from a friend, of course, there's no website. You'll have to rely on old-fashioned critical thinking to evaluate what she says. Is she credible? Does she even have sources? If so, how reliable are those sources? If evaluating the message is too much work, maybe just stick with the "like" button and skip the "share."

If you find something that seems compelling and true, check out what nonpartisan sources say on the subject. For a view of media outlets' perspectives, take a look at the Media Bias Chart.

Finding no mention of the topic in nonpartisan media may suggest the statement or anecdote is just a talking point for one side or the other. At minimum, ask yourself why the source chose to write or share that piece. Was it an effort to report and explain things as they were happening, or an attempt to influence your thinking or actions - or your vote?

There are a lot of reputable fact-checking organizations, like Snopes and FactCheck. It doesn't take long to click over to one of those sites and

But it can take a very long time to undo the harm of sharing misinformation, which can reduce people's ability to trust evidence and their fellow humans.

To protect yourself - and those in your social and professional networks - be vigilant. Don't share anything unless you're sure it's true. Misinformation warriors are trying to divide American society. Don't help them. Share wisely. (AP)

Coppola's All-Movie Hotel opens doors for business

PEACHTREE CITY, Ga., July 18, (AP): Two years ago, Francis Ford Coppola stopped at Georgia Film Academy on the hunt for apprentices for his upcoming film, "Megalopolis."

Jordan Holifield, then a 23-year-old student, did a double-take when

he saw one of the application questions - did he know how to disassemble IKEA furniture?

Months later, Holifield, one of four selected apprentices, pulled up to Coppola's hotel - which was originally a Days Inn motel. But gone was the IKEA furniture from the old motel.

Now the All-Movie Hotel is outfitted with post-production facilities, editing suites, recording rooms and screening spaces. The hybrid property will soon host film nerds and production companies alike.

The "Godfather" director originally bought the hotel in 2022 for \$4.35 million to host the production of "Megalopolis" - a self-funded, \$120 million film starring Adam Driver as an architect in a futuristic New York City. Amid rumors of production drama, the movie garnered harsh reviews after its debut in Cannes, and The Associated Press reported some critics called it a "disaster."

Coppola's hotel collection, The Family Coppola Hideaways, has properties in Belize, Guatemala, Argentina, and Italy. The All-Movie Hotel is Coppola's first property in the United States, opening July 25, in Peachtree City, just under an hour south of Atlanta's downtown.

There are 27 rooms with prices ranging from \$170 to \$470 per night.

From the outside, the hotel's architecture mirrors its former days as a motel. But props from Coppola's movies scattered throughout the property add flair, such as old school "Godfather" pinball machines in the lobby. An imposing golden hawk figurine, which can be seen in the "Megalopolis" trailer, is perched outside the pool-area fence.

Coppola himself, along with Driver, stayed in rooms that will soon be available to book. In Coppola's room, a round gray couch with spheric pillows sits in front of a king sized bed and among leather director-style chairs The "his and hers" bathrooms are joined by a shower, inspired by a lodge Coppola stayed at in Guatemala.

"I envisioned The All-Movie Hotel to be a space where filmmakers could truly immerse themselves in the creative process, fostering a collaborative environment that inspires innovation," Coppola said.

Potted succulents imported from Italy line the outdoor walkway and textured walls. Beyond the colorful doors, each room has its own quirks. One has bunk beds, designed for interns and children of production staff. Another is Japan-themed and decorated with photographs of notable Japanese filmmakers. Most of the rooms connect, which Driver appreciated, since he stayed in a room adjacent to his assistant.

Georgia has emerged as a top production hub since 2005, when the state enacted tax breaks for the industry. Tax credits for filmmakers increased dramatically in 2008 and are expected to reach \$1.35 billion this year. The tax incentive supported \$5.54 billion in economic activ-

ity in 2022, according to the Georgia Screen Entertainment Coalition.
Filmmakers work closely with an already well-developed network of rental properties, hotels and house crews, said Kelsey Moore, executive director of Georgia Screen Entertainment Coalition. But she said the All-Movie Hotel is "a really interesting addition that meets a niche filmmaker

need" for an all-in-one communal facility for post-production. The industry's growth in the state has slowed, with an estimated 40% fewer productions this year compared to last year, according to WSB-TV. But Moore is confident that Coppola's choice to use Georgia's infrastructure shows that its location is still a creative hub.

The hotel "really indicates there's a desire to do a full ecosystem of production in Georgia," Moore said.

On the final day of filming "Megalopolis," the crew gathered for their last meal in the farmhouse-style kitchen. Coppola had the placement of a series of book shelves altered to fit a horizontal poster from " Apocalypse Now," one of his signature films.

The crew, actors, interns and Coppola himself dined on a spread of shrimp, pasta, pizza, sausage, steak, sandwiches, and whatever else was left in the refrigerator, Holifield said. Now, when production companies haven't rented out the entire space, tourists can venture to suburban Atlanta and cook from Coppola's own stove.

Variety



This image released by Universal Pictures shows Glen Powell, (right), and Daisy Edgar-Jones in a scene from 'Twisters.' (AP)

Film

SANTA FE, N.M.: A movie armorer has asked a judge to dismiss her involuntary manslaughter conviction or convene a new trial in the shooting death of a cinematographer by actor Alec Baldwin, alleging suppression of evidence and misconduct by the prosecution.

In a court filing Tuesday, defense ierrez-Reed argued her case should be reconsidered because prosecutors

Judge Mary Marlowe Sommer last week brought Baldwin's trial to a sudden and stunning end based on misconduct of police and prosecutors over the withholding of evidence from the defense in the 2021 shooting of cinematogra-

"This court stated on July 12 that the integrity of the judicial system demanded that the court dismiss Mr. Baldwin's case with prejudice," said defense attorney Jason Bowles in the new court filing. "How can it be any different with Ms. Gutierrez-Reed's case. with this proven litany of serious discovery abuses?"

in both the Baldwin and Gutierrez-Reed cases - said her written response would be filed in court next week, declining further comment.

The case-ending evidence at Baldwin's trial was ammunition that was brought into the sheriff's office in March by a man who said it could be related to Hutchins' killing. Prosecutors said they deemed the ammo unrelated and unimportant, while Baldwin's lawyers alleged they "buried" it and filed a motion to dismiss the case.

Gutierrez-Reed was convicted by a jury in March in a trial overseen by Judge Marlowe Sommer, who later assigned the maximum 18-month penalty. Gutierrez-Reed already has an appeal pending in a higher court on the involuntary

Prosecutors blamed Gutierrez-Reed for unwittingly bringing live ammunition onto the set of "Rust," where it was expressly prohibited, and for failing to follow basic gun safety protocols.

She was acquitted at trial of allegations she tampered with evidence in the "Rust" investigation.

counsel for armorer Hannah Gutfailed to share evidence that might have been exculpatory

pher **Halyna Hutchins** on the set of the film "Rust."

Kari Morrissey - lead prosecutor

manslaughter conviction.

She also has pleaded not guilty to

By Lindsey Bahr We have a complex relationship with disaster movies. Just look at the discussion about a "Twisters" poster, which became a perfect encapsulation of our love-hate tendencies.

In the promo for the film, in theaters Thursday, actors Daisy Edgar-Jones, Glen Powell and Anthony Ramos are standing in front a massive, menacing cyclone. It not only contains various objects swirling in mid-air, from houses to trucks, but also appears to be on fire. Some people wondered why the stars weren't looking at said tornado. Others said if you're asking questions like why the tornado is on fire, this movie

Both lines of thought can be true though. Maybe their coexistence is essential. This makes no sense! Also, sign me up immediately! Disaster movies are almost required to be graded on a curve. And filmmaker Lee Isaac Chung's entry into the canon is perfectly paradoxical.

It might not be fair, or rational, but there is something about the genre that inspires otherwise reasonable moviegoers to giddily give themselves over to a wild premise - the more ridiculous and illogical the better. There is something to be said about the joy of collective laughter where there wasn't an intentional joke, or a spirited post-movie debate about the flawed logistics of a plan and exactly how many people have died from being sucked into a tornado. These are the movies that are hard to see clearly the first time but tend to become sneaky favorites over the years.

Such is the case with "Twister," Jan de Bont's film about storm chasing and remarriage. The modern collective love for it would probably surprise even the critics who reviewed it favorably in 1996. Part of that is certainly the fact that in the 28 years since it was released we lost both Philip Seymour Hoffman and Bill Paxton. But it's also just fun to watch with fresh eyes, to see the

internet remember (or realize for the first time) that one of the storm chasers was played by Todd Field, the man who would go on to write and direct "Tár." I re-watched it recently on plane and

had a blast. I'd forgotten the insane opening but

New disaster movie offers wild premise

Youth drives into the storm in 'Twisters'

remembered Dusty's impassioned foot chant. There's been a lot of cautious optimism surrounding "Twisters" that's felt different from a lot of the reboots and "new chapters" (anything to avoid calling it a sequel) that have come and gone in recent years. Audiences are craving something big and fun, but worried that it won't live up to their idea of what it should be. This is inherently flawed because "Twister" has earned its reputation, its quotability, across many viewings and many years. "Twisters" we're just meeting. It's hard to get too excited about a first date.

Action

But Chung, a filmmaker best known for the comparatively small "Minari," has made a solid film with escalating action sequences that look great on the big screen. There is once again a crazy opening that gives Edgar-Jones' tornado-obsessed Kate a trauma origin story. Her hubris in thinking she could "tame" a tornado with science backfired and people died; But five years later her old friend Javi (Ramos) convinces her to come back to Oklahoma's Tornado Alley to attempt a different kind of study.

The story is credited to Joseph Kosinski (who was once going to direct) and the screenplay to Mark L. Smith ("The Revenant") and none of them can get the original out of their heads. Yes, these are all new characters (including Powell's YouTube star storm wrangler Tyler) and the only real connection to the first movie is that the Dorothy technology exists. But it is so referential as to be distracting: Literal lines of dialogue ("I'm not back"); An attempt to make Tyler's crew a gang of Dustys (which underserves actors like Sasha Lane and Katy O'Brian); Making David Corenswet wear what's essentially a recreation

of Carey Elwes' baseball cap and earpiece. Don't they want us to think of "Twisters" on its own terms?

But Chung clearly also had a vision, attempting to ground the insanity in a real place with regionally appropriate styles and music, and deeper characterization. The supporting players were thoughtfully cast. Its leads, Powell and Edgar-Jones, are endlessly watchable with palpable chemistry, even as they're monologuing about sodium polyacrylate.

I wish I had the ability to know how "Twisters" will play 28 years from now, in 2052. Will the 12-year-olds seeing it this weekend go back to it as a comfort watch? Will it feel like it was part of the good old days of big studio movie making? Right now, it doesn't necessarily feel like it's destined for that kind of longevity. And I'd love nothing more than to be wrong about that.

"Twisters," a Universal Pictures release, is rated PG-13 by the Motion Picture Association for "intense action and peril, injury images, some language." Running time: 122 minutes. Two and a half stars out of four.

Also:

LOS ANGELES: MAX has a few good new offerings, too, with the streaming premiere of " Love Lies Bleeding " (one of the AP's favorites of the year so far) on Friday and "The Commandant's Shadow" on Thursday. The former is the sophomore feature of filmmaker Rose Glass, who directs Kristen Stewart in a wildly compelling performance as a gym manager who has fallen for a bodybuilder (Katy O'Brien) drifter. Associated Press Film Writer Jake Coyle wrote in his review that it "gives Stewart a vivid noir sandbox where all of her talent for obsession, desire and rage finds its gnarliest expression yet." The latter is a documentary in which the son of Nazi commandant Rudolf Höss (also the subject of the Oscar-winning "The Zone of Interest") reckons with his family's past. (AP)

a separate felony charge that she allegedly carried a gun into a bar in Santa Fe, New Mexico, where firearms are prohibited.

Baldwin, the lead actor and co-producer for "Rust," was pointing a gun at Hutchins during a rehearsal on a movie set outside Santa Fe in October 2021 when the revolver went off, killing



BEIJING: Chinese comedy "Successor" continued to top the daily box office chart on the Chinese mainland on its second day of release, with a daily earning

Hutchins and wounding director

of 141.37 million yuan (about

Joel Souza. (AP)

19.83 million **U.S.** dollars) on Wednesday, data from the China Movie Data Information Network showed.

Starring comedy stars Shen Teng and Ma Li and directed by Yan Fei and Peng Damo, the film tells the story of a wealthy couple who deliberately fakes a challenging environment for their son in

order to foster his personal growth. Crime thriller "A Place Called Silence" stood second, raking in over 30 million yuan on its 15th day of public screening. Universal and Illumination's

animated comedy "Despicable Me 4" came up third with more than 12 million yuan of box office sales. (Xinhua)

People & Places

Books

'Sugar on the Bones'

Quest for a new king in 'The Bright Sword'

NEW YORK, July 18, (AP): A rudderless nation, lost in uncertainty, searches for its next commander in chief. There's an uneasy sense that the country's glory days have passed, and that a monumental turn in history is coming - for good or for ill. How do you find a leader to unite such a fractured, polarized land?

Such is the uneasy world of Arthurian England in "The Bright Sword," the new novel by **Lev Gross**man. The tale begins with Collum, a poor orphan who escapes an abusive home and flees to Camelot with nothing but a stolen suit of armor and the dream of serving King Arthur as knight of the Round Table. Just one problem: King Arthur is dead.

Only a few ragged remnants of the Round Table are left, and no one has any idea who the next king will be. The theme of an



anxious nation searching for a leader when no one has a clear mandate to govern gives the novel a distinctly modern sense of angst. Wouldn't it be so much easier if we could just make every candidate try to pull a sword out of a stone and be done with it? Despite his poor timing,

Collum plows forward in his quest to join what's left of the Round Table. He's pinned all his hopes to the idea of Camelot, the idea that he can be a hero amongst this glorious brotherhood of leg-

endary knights. Yet the heroes of this book are largely broken, bitter men. Each knight in the story's rather large ensemble gets their own tale in the form of a few flashback chapters, offering a tantalizing glimpse at how their past with Arthur shaped their hopes for

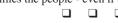
England's future. However, most of the characters get little development beyond their brief backstories, so few of the knights stand out as truly compelling or memorable characters. The most interesting member of the court of Camelot is Nimue, a formidable enchantress and one-time apprentice to Merlin, who doesn't provide the most glowing reviews of her former mentor.

In Grossman's England, dueling factions vie not just for the kingdom's throne but also its very identity: is this the ancient, pagan Britain, filled with fairy magic, or a Christian Britain? This battle for the soul of a nation is a powerful theme, but Grossman at times gets too dragged down with clunky monologues as characters brood over weighty questions of politics and destiny.

The most thrilling scenes are those where characters step into action. Grossman's strength is his deep attention to the details in battle scenes, where every blow or parry illuminates a character's psychology.

The mixture of boldness and desperation that Collum throws into any duel shows that he's fighting not just to beat his opponent, but to prove that the identity he's stolen is real. If he can prove himself a hero, the suffering of his childhood will have some

The quest to find a new king is also about creating meaning. A nation needs a founding story, some idea that unifies the people - even if that story is fiction.



Minnie Polson was in some sort of trouble, so a friend recommended the private eye firm of Hap Collins, his wife Brett, and their pal Leonard Pine. But when they meet, Minnie doesn't like their attitude, and they don't like hers.

Hours after they agree to part company, Minnie's mansion burns to the ground – the fire so intense that the only thing left of Minnie is a blackened arm. At first, the authorities deem it an accident, but Hap and company aren't so sure.

Feeling a bit guilty that they'd turned her away, and wondering if she'd be alive if they hadn't, they decide to poke around a little to see what they might turn up. They turn up plenty in "Sugar on the Bones," Joe R. Lansdale's 13th thriller featuring the East Texas private eyes.

Hap and his partners are clever, persistent, politically incorrect, heavily armed and capable of extreme violence when threatened or provoked. They also think they're funny and often are, the humor trending toward irony, wisecracks and sarcasm.

It turns out that Minnie's death was a small cog in a massive conspiracy involving a series of hideous crimes. For a time, the private detectives work with a senior police official, but he can't figure out a legal way to end the carnage. So he tells the detectives he'll look the other way if they take the bad guys off

So Hap and company recruit three old friends who have even fewer compunctions about violence than they do, and they go to war. The result is what may be the best novel in this fine series. The quirky characters are well drawn, the prose is tight, the pace is furious, the surprises keep coming and the violent climax is nothing less than savage.

Dymitr is on a personal mission, and it starts with facing the mythical leszy who's guarding the fern flower as it blooms for the summer solstice.

"When Among Crows," a novella by Veronica Roth - bestselling author of the "Divergent" series - dives into the world of Slavic mythology. A Chicago native tapping into Polish roots, Roth places nightmarish and intriguing creatures alike in the modern-day city. Whether it's the woodland leszy, the tragic wraith or the vampirelike strzyga, they've each found their place among the

mortal humans in the bustle of daily life. It's a world where debts create magic, and Dymtir is about to send a lot of scales tipping. Before long,

he has a motley crew of unexpected allies. There's a Polish saying that opens the book: When among crows, you must caw as one. As Dymitr faces various trials, moving closer to his ultimate, secret goal, the curtains are parted and we see just how many non-crows are hiding among us in plain sight. Their roles in the world are almost as intriguing as Dymitr's plotline, and could easily make for their own stories, but the novella keeps its focus. When we finally do find out what he's after, it means so much

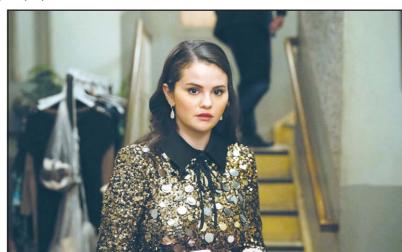
more for the bonds he's forged to get there.
Gruesome yet cavalier, "When Among Crows" has action, romance, family drama, fantasy, and a healthy helping of mythology. Best devoured in one or two sittings, the story is tight, the lore inviting and the characters fun. Roth knows how to cleanly fit an arc in under 200 pages without feeling rushed. It's the perfect length for the story, precisely because it leaves you wanting more.



This image released by FX shows Eita Okuno as Saeki Nobutatsu, (from left), Anna Sawai as Toda Mariko, Hiromoto Ida as Kiyama Ukon Sadanaga in a scene from 'Shogun.' (AP)



This image released by FX shows Jeremy Allen White as Carmen Berzatto, in a scene from 'The Bear.' (AP)



This image released by Hulu shows Selena Gomez in a scene from 'Only Murders in the Building.' (AP)



Sheryl Lee Ralph and Tony Hale announce the 76th Emmy Awards Nominations, live from the Él Capitan Theatre on Wednesday, July 17, in Los Angeles. (AP)

Variety

BERLIN: German police said Thursday that they detained a man suspected of stalking **Taylor Swift** ahead of the first of three shows by the pop star in the western city of Gelsenkirchen.

The man was detained following tips from organizers of the event, police said in a statement. They said he had previously made threats against the singer. German news agency dpa reported. They gave no more details of the man or the background to the incident.

Police said that Wednesday evening's concert, attended by about 60,000 people, went peacefully.

The American superstar has shows in Gelsenkirchen on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday as part of her Eras Tour.

Ahead of the concerts, the city put up signs temporarily renaming itself "Swiftkirchen" and honored the singer on a "Walk of Fame" that commemorates local celebrities. (AP)

NEW YORK: Reactions from select nominees for the 2024 Emmy Awards, including

some first-time nominees. "You want to do it with good people, and I'm happy that I get to be on this journey with good people and celebrate this with good people. So it's not just a celebration of what happened, but who it happened with. " - Williams, nominated for best

supporting actor in a comedy series for "Abbott Elementary." "I'm trying not to let my imposter syndrome sneak in and I'm just trying to embrace it and go, 'Yeah, thank you, I deserve this.' But there's that creeping thing of like, 'Is this a mistake?' But I'm so excited because I worked really hard on this, and it feels good to get acknowledged in this way and it feels good to celebrate it with the team of people that made it with me, as well." - Glaser, nominated for best pre-recorded variety special for "Nikki Glaser: Someday You'll Die.'

"I was so overcome with emotions. I cried. I almost threw up - like a cathartic positive vomit. I was overcome with joy. Now, I feel like I just got out of a boxing match and the adrenaline has crashed. I'm on very little sleep, so I'm going to eat a bowl of spaghetti and take a nap and process this." -André, earning his first nomination for best performer in a short form comedy or drama series for "The Eric Andre Show." He spoke after taking a red-eye flight from Alaska.

"I was crying and my mom said, 'You're crying for your husband, but not for you.' And I said, I don't care about me. I'm excited about him.' So that was a real surprise for us. We did not have his and hers

Emmys

'The Bear' sets comedy series record with 23

'Shogun' leads all Emmy noms with 25

LOS ANGELES, July 18, (AP): "The Bear" went on a tear at Wednesday morning's Emmy nominations with a comedy-series record 23, and "Shogun" led all nominees with 25 in a dominant year across categories for

Nominations for the "The Bear," up for its second season in which its ragtag band of sandwich makers tries to create an elite restaurant, included best comedy series and best actor in a comedy series for Jeremy Allen White both awards it won at January's strikedelayed ceremony - along with best actress for Ayo Edebiri, who won best supporting actress last time around.

It was also boosted by a bounty of guest acting nominations, including Jamie Lee Curtis and Olivia Colman, two of many Oscar winners who landed nominations.

"Shogun" took full advantage of the absence of last year's top three nominees - "Succession," "The White Lotus" and "The Last of Us" - to dominate in drama and give FX, with 93 overall nominations, the kind of strong year often reserved for HBO, which even in this "off" year received 91.

Nominations

Its nominations included best drama series, best actress in a drama series for Anna Sawai and best actor for Hirovuki Sanada.

The show shook up the drama race when its makers said in May that despite reaching the end of the story of James Clavell's novel about political machinations in early 17th century Japan, they would explore making more than one season, shifting the critical darling from the limited series category to the more prestigious drama one.

"True Detective: Night Country" was a bright spot for HBO, which lost "Succession" to retirement and is between seasons on "The White Lotus" and "The Last of Us.

The show, a semi-spinoff of the "True Detective" franchise, led all limited or anthology series nominees with 19, including a best actress nomination for Jodie Foster for playing a police chief investigating mysterious deaths in the darkness of a north Alaskan win-

Kali Reis, who plays Foster's investigating partner and rival on the show and is nominated for best supporting actress in a limited series, joins Lily Gladstone, in the same category for "Under the Bridge," as the first Indigenous women to get Emmy acting nominations. D'Pharaoh Woon-A-Tai

List of top Emmy nominees

LOS ANGELES, July 18, (AP): Partial list of top nominees for the annual prime-time Emmy Awards, announced Wednesday by the Television Arts 8 ences. For the complete list, visit Emmys.com.

"The Crown," Netflix "Fallout," Prime Video "The Gilded Age," HBO/Max
"The Morning Show," Apple TV+
"Mr. & Mrs. Smith," Prime Video "Shogun," FX
"Slow Horses," Apple TV+
"3 Body Problem," Netflix"

"Abbott Elementary," ABC "The Bear," FX "Curb Your Enthusiasm," HBO/

"Hacks," HBO/Max "Only Murders in the Building," Hulu "Palm Royale," Apple TV+

"Reservation Dogs," FX
"What We Do in the Shadows," "Baby Reindeer," Netflix

"Fargo," FX "Lessons in Chemistry," Apple

"Ripley," Netflix
"True Detective: Night Country," HBO/Max Idris Elba, "Hijack" Donald Glover, "Mr. and Mrs.

Walter Goggins, "Fallout" Gary Oldman, "Slow Horses" Hiroyuki Sanada, "Shogun" Dominic West, "The Crown" Jennifer Aniston, "The Morning

Show" Carrie Coon, "The Gilded Age" Maya Erskine, "Mr. And Mrs. Smith

Anna Sawai, "Shogun" Imelda Staunton, "The Crown" Reese Witherspoon, "The Morn-

of "Reservation Dogs" becomes the first Indigenous actor to be recognized for lead with his best actor in a comedy

The only previous Indigenous acting nominee, according to Variety, was August Schellenberg, who received an Emmy nomination in 2007 for his performance as Sitting Bull in the HBO TV movie "Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee.

"True Detective" is expected to vie for the best limited series Emmy with "Fargo," which had 15 nominations ing Show Matt Berry, "What We Do in the Larry David, "Curb Your Enthusi-

Steve Martin, "Only Murders in the Building' Martin Short, "Only Murders in

the Building Jeremy Ăllen White, "The Bear" D'Pharaoh Woon-A-Tai, "Reser-

vation Dogs. Quinta Brunson, "Abbott Elementary"
Ayo Edebiri, "The Bear" Selena Gomez, "Only Murders in

the Building" Maya Rudolph, "Loot" Jean Smart, "Hacks" Kristin Wiig, "Palm Royale" Lionel Boyce, "The Bear" Paul W. Downs, "Hacks" Ebon Moss-Bachrach,

Paul Rudd, "Only Murders in the Building' Tyler James Williams, "Abbott El-

ementary Bowen Yang, "Saturday Night

Carol Burnett, "Palm Royale" Liza Colón-Zayas, "The Bear" Hannah Einbinder, "Hacks" Janelle James, "Abbott Elemen-

tary" Sheryl Lee Ralph, "Abbott Elementary' Meryl Streep, "Only Murders in the Building"

Christine Baranski, "The Gilded Aae Nicole Beharie, "The Morning Show"

Elizabeth Debicki, "The Crown" Greta Lee, "The Morning Show" Lesley Manville, "The Crown" Karen Pittman, "The Morning

Show'

and gives FX a shot at a triple crown if its favorites win drama and comedy

Netflix has its own pair of contenders in the category. "Baby Reindeer" became a minor cultural phenomenon and Emmy upstart in recent months. It got 11 nominations, including best actor for star and creator Richard Gadd. "Ripley," a black-and-white retelling of Patricia Highsmith's novel "The Talented Mr. Ripley," got 13 nominations including acting nods for Andrew Scott and Dakota Fanning.

Emmy nominations on our bingo card for this morning." - Coon, nominated for best actress in a drama series for "The Gilded Age." Coon's husband, Tracy Letts, was also nominated for best guest actor in a drama series for "Winning Time: The Rise of the Lakers Dynasty." "I feel profoundly grateful. It was an

amazing surprise. Everyone in my life knows not to say anything to me as to when this day comes. And so I slept like a baby last night. I knew it was sometime in





mid-July, but I'm working and so I was distracted, thankfully, and it was just such a nice surprise when my husband Simon came in and told me and, yeah, I'm just blown away. I'm really so grateful that the show's been recognized. I'm so happy for Johnny (Jonathan Bailey) and Ron (Nyswaner, series creator and writer) for their incredible work and yeah, just the fact that two openly gay actors in a gay romance with a gay writer is recognized in this way is really profoundly moving to me. (AP)

Prism adaptation therapy improves function and freedom

New therapy helps stroke survivors with spatial neglect

By A.M. Barrett and Kevin Houston

UMass Chan Medical School

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

More than half of stroke survivors do not receive rehabilitation after the first days of advanced stroke care. Instead of living for months or years with visible or hidden disabilities, stroke survivors can take advantage of new techniques of advanced rehabilitation to improve their function and freedom.

One condition, called spatial neglect - in which a person's three-dimensional reality and spatial movements are distorted on one side - is particularly underdiagnosed and undertreated among those who have suffered strokes and other brain injuries

The Conversation asked neurologist A.M. Barrett and optometrist Kevin Houston, both from UMass Chan Medical School, to explain what causes spatial neglect and how to recognize it.

Some stroke survivors struggle when navigating the world around them. They walk, sit or stand in a tilted or unbalanced way. Even looking to the side may be challenging. This condition, known as spatial neglect, is a common occurrence after a brain injury.

About half of those in the first weeks and months of stroke recovery have spatial neglect; it is more common after a right brain stroke. Unlike other paired organs, the brain is functionally specialized, and the right brain is dominant for visual-spatial computations and actions.

Although spatial neglect can be accompanied by visual problems or paralysis, especially on the left side of the body, it is a separate problem that makes driving, reading, returning to work and daily self-care many times more difficult.

Most of us take for granted the ability to move and react effortlessly to what is happening around us. But these things are difficult for people with spatial neglect. Their internal map of the three-dimensional world is unreliable on one side.

In some people, spatial neglect goes away with time. But in the US, 350,000 peo-

ple live with spatial neglect for six months or longer. That number is likely higher - perhaps three times as high - but there's no way to be certain; it's estimated that fewer than half of those with spatial neglect are diagnosed and treated.

A person with spatial neglect may be unable to steer a wheelchair straight ahead and instead may steer to the right in tight circles. When putting a shirt on, they may put their right arm through the sleeve but not the left, or vice versa. Or they may lay out their medications, but only reach to one side, so they may take only half of their medicines for that morning. Someone with spatial neglect may inadvertently sit on their affected arm, or let it hang off the side of the wheelchair.

When chatting with a group, a person with spatial neglect may turn to the wrong person to respond. This is because their spatial system, which tells them who just spoke based on that person's location, is disoriented. The spatial system is also critical when helping us react to a sudden event, like a car swerving out of its lane toward us when we're driving.

One reason why this condition goes undiagnosed is because caregivers don't see the postural and movement changes in spatial neglect as a specific brain problem. Instead, when they see the person sitting persistently turned, or leaning and tilting to the right, they just respond intuitively, with assumptions that the person is unmotivated, depressed or has an intellectual problem caused by the stroke.

Weakness

Caregivers may also think these unusual movements are part of the weakness caused by stroke. However, people who only have weakness will compensate. They usually do not turn or lean to one side persistently.

Most disturbing for those with spatial neglect: The internal alarm system that helps them detect everyday mistakes is off. They are unaware they are having difficulties walking, reacting, moving or responding, so they don't see the need to ask for help. This has a devastating effect, not only on their perception of the world but on their dignity.

There are networks and way stations in the brain, specialized in managing how our body interacts with the three-dimensional world. Spatial neglect occurs when these networks, or the wiring connecting them, go offline after a stroke.

ese networks, or the wiring connecting them, go offline after a stroke.

For example, if someone points to something - like a sign they want someone

else to see - a "ballistic system" in their brain sets a target and bearing so that the movement is aimed correctly. But if a person with spatial neglect tries to point to a sign they may point incorrectly perhaps to the right side of the sign

sign, they may point incorrectly, perhaps to the right side of the sign.

This aiming error can cause falls as stroke survivors try to get up from a chair, walk or turn, sometimes even pulling down the person trying to assist them. These

accidents can devastate their recovery and freedom.

It is not weakness or paralysis on one side of the body that causes unbalanced posture and movements. Instead, someone with spatial neglect is not aware they are

posture and movements. Instead, someone with spatial neglect is not aware they are leaning or veering. From their perspective, movements are targeted straight ahead.

Those with spatial neglect often have vision problems too, but that doesn't mean

Those with spatial neglect often have vision problems too, but that doesn't mean anything is wrong with their eyes. They can see. But because of their stroke, their brain ignores some of the visual information.

If spatial neglect is treated, the patient may be able to adjust for their vision issues and regain independence in daily life much more successfully.

Treating spatial neglect through an approach called prism adaptation therapy actually increases the patient's ability to move and track the affected limb, and can even reduce pain affecting the bad side.

The therapy is simple to administer, using off-the-shelf optical prisms over 10 therapy sessions of 20 minutes each. Essentially, a stroke survivor wears goggles during the session and practices aiming their spatial movements. The therapist will ask the patient to repeatedly point to and touch a dot placed on the table in front of them, or ask the patient to repeatedly mark the center of a line. This appears to correct the rightward-turning tendency after spatial neglect.

Prism adaptation therapy has been recommended by the American Heart Association and American Stroke Association, and our group has provided this treatment to patients for more than 15 years.

After prism adaptation therapy, the ability of most patients to aim movements toward the neglected side is greatly improved. Our therapists have measured the increase in leftward movements after even one treatment session.

Other types of therapy for spatial neglect involves far more than 10 treatments. These sessions are more labor-intensive and require extensive training for providers. Such types of treatment are difficult to scale and unlikely to reach the hundreds of thousands of people diagnosed with spatial neglect. (AP)

NASA to focus on Moon and Mars missions

NASA, SpaceX outline plan to bring down space station when it's retired

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla., July 18, (AP): SpaceX will use a powerful, souped-up capsule to shove the International Space Station out of orbit once time is up for the sprawling lab.

NASA and Elon Musk's company on Wednesday outlined the plan to burn the space station up on reentry and plunge what's left into the ocean, ideally at the beginning of 2031 when it hits the 32-year mark. The space agency rejected other options, like taking the station apart and bringing everything home or handing the keys to someone else.

NASA gave SpaceX a \$843 million contract to bring down the station - the biggest structure ever built off the planet.

Here's a rundown on the work and challenges ahead:

The space station is already is showing signs of age. Russia and the US launched the first pieces in late 1998, and astronauts moved in two years later. Europe and Japan added their own segments, and Canada provided robotic arms. By the time NASA's shuttles retired in 2011, the station had grown to the size of a football field, with a mass of nearly 1 million pounds (430,000 kilograms). NASA figures the station will last until at least 2030.

The goal is for private companies to launch their own space stations by then, with NASA serving as one of many customers. That strategy - already in place for station cargo and crew deliveries - will free NASA up to focus on moon and Mars travel. NASA could decide to extend the station's life, too, if no commercial outposts are up there yet. The aim is to have an overlap so scientific research is not interrupted.

NASA considered dismantling the space station and hauling the pieces back to Earth, or letting private companies salvage the parts for their own planned outposts. But the station was never intended to be taken apart in orbit, according to NASA, and any such effort would be expensive and also risky to the astronauts who would handle the disassembly. Besides, there's no spacecraft as big as NASA's old shuttles to bring everything down. Another option would be to boost the empty station to a higher, more stable orbit. But that, too, was dismissed given the

logistical issues and the increased risk of space junk.

Visiting spacecraft periodically boost the space station so it remains in an orbit approximately 260 miles (420 kilometers) high. Otherwise, it would keep getting lower and lower until it plunged, uncontrolled, from orbit. NASA wants to ensure a safe reentry over a remote section of the South Pacific or possibly the Indian Ocean, so that means launching a spacecraft that will dock to the station and steer it toward a watery grave. NASA expects some denser pieces to survive, ranging in size from a microwave oven to a sedan, in a narrow debris field 1,200 miles (2,000 kilometers) long. NASA and its partners considered using three Russian supply ships for the job, but a more robust craft was needed. The call went out to industry and, in June, SpaceX won the contract for a deorbit vehicle.

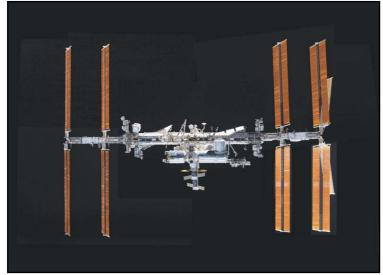
Challenge

SpaceX plans to use an ordinary Dragon capsule - the kind that carries supplies and astronauts to the space station - but with a much bigger trunk housing a record 46 engines and more than 35,000 pounds (16,000 kilograms) of fuel. SpaceX's Sarah Walker said the challenge will be creating a spacecraft

powerful enough to guide the space station while resisting the tugs and forces from increased atmospheric drag during final descent. This spacecraft will require an especially powerful rocket just to get to orbit, according to NASA. The capsule would be launched 1 1/2 years before the station's planned demise. Astronauts still would be aboard as it's gradually lowered. Six months before the station's destruction, the crew would abandon ship and return home. Once the station is down to about 137 miles (220 kilometers), the Dragon would bring it down four days later.

NASA's first space station, Skylab, came crashing down in 1979, with debris raining down onto Australia and the surrounding Pacific. The space agency had hoped one of the first space shuttle crews could attach a rocket to control Skylab's descent or boost its orbit.

But the shuttle wasn't ready by then, with its first flight not until 1981. Ground controllers managed to send Skylab into a slow tumble, aiming for the Indian Ocean. But some pieces also landed in Western Australia. Russia has had more experience with incoming space stations. Mir operated for 15 years before being guided to a fiery reentry over the Pacific in 2001. Before that, several Salyut stations bit the dust.



This photo provided by NASA, taken from the SpaceX Crew Dragon Endeavour, shows the International Space Station on Nov. 8, 2021. (AP)

'War in Gaza' takes a mental health toll, especially on kids

Bedwetting, nightmares and shaking

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip, July 18, (AP): Nabila Hamada gave birth to twin boys in Gaza early in the war, in a hospital reeking of decaying bodies and full of displaced people. When Israeli forces threatened the hospital, she and her husband fled with only one of the babies, as medical staff said the other was too weak to leave. Soon after, Israeli forces raided the hospital, Gaza's largest, and she never saw the boy again.

The trauma of losing one twin left the 40-year-old Hamada so scared of losing the other that she became frozen and ill-equipped to deal with the daily burden of survival.

"I'm unable to take care of my other, older children or give them the love they need," she said.

She is among hundreds of thousands of Palestinians struggling with mental health after nine months of war. The trauma has been relentless. They have endured the killing of family and friends in Israeli bombardments. They have been wounded or disfigured. They have huddled in homes or tents as fighting raged and fled again and again, with no safe place to recover.

Aggression

Anxiety, fear, depression, sleep deprivation, anger and aggression are prevalent, experts and practitioners told The Associated Press. Children are most vulnerable, especially because many parents can barely hold themselves together.

There are few resources to help Palestinians process what they are going through. Mental health practitioners say the turmoil and overwhelming number of traumatized people limit their ability to deliver true support. So they're offering a form of "psychological first aid" to mitigate the worst symptoms.

"There are about 1.2 million children who are in need of mental health and psychosocial support. This basically means nearly all Gaza's children," said Ulrike Julia Wendt, emergency child protection coordinator with the International Rescue Committee. Wendt has been visiting Gaza since the war began.

She said simple programming, such as playtime and art classes, can make a difference: "The goal is to show them that not only bad things are happening."



Palestinian children displaced by the Israeli air and ground offensive on the Gaza Strip take part in an entertaining activity organised by local activists, at a United-Nation run school, in Khan Younis, southern Gaza Strip, Wednesday, June 26, 2024. (AP)

Repeated displacement compounds trauma: an estimated 1.9 million of Gaza's 2.3 million people have been driven from their homes. Most live in squalid tent camps and struggle to find food and water.

Sheltering near the southern city of Khan Younis, Jehad El Hams said he lost his right eye and fingers on his right hand when he picked up what he thought was a can of food. It was an unexploded ordnance that detonated. His children were almost hit.

Since then, he experiences sleepless-

ness and disorientation. "I cry every time I take a look at myself and see what I've become," he said. He reached out to one of the few

mental health initiatives in Gaza, run by the United Nations agency for Palestinian refugees, known as UN-RWA.

Fouad Hammad, an UNRWA mental health supervisor, said they typically encounter 10 to 15 adults a day at shelters in Khan Younis with eating and sleeping disorders, extreme rage and other issues.

Mahmoud Rayhan saw his family shattered. An Israeli strike killed his young son and daughter. His wife's leg

was amputated. Now he isolates himself inside his tent and sleeps most of the day. He talks to almost no one.

He said he doesn't know how to express what's happening to him. He trembles. He sweats. "I've been crying and feel nothing but heaviness in my heart."

A relative, Abdul-Rahman Rayhan, lost his father, two siblings and four cousins in a strike. Now when he hears a bombardment, he shakes and gets dizzy, his heart racing. "I feel like I'm in a nightmare, waiting for God to wake me up," the 20-year-old said.

For children, the mental toll of war can have long-term effect on development, Wendt said. Children in Gaza are having nightmares and wetting their beds because of stress, noise, crowding and constant change, she said.

Nashwa Nabil in Deir al-Balah said her three children have lost all sense of security. Her eldest is 13 and her youngest is 10.

"They could no longer control their pee, they chew on their clothes, they scream and have become verbally and physically aggressive," she said. "When my son Moataz hears a plane or tank, he hides in the tent."







Behind Maghateer Commercial Complex & Opp.Police station - Farwaniya www.shifaaljazeera.com.kw

Americans making Olympic men's 3x3 debut in Paris

U.S. seeking dominance, China eyeing progress

Sullivan the youngest to appear in **MLS** match as Union top Revolution



Inter Miami midfielder Diego Gómez (left), and Toronto FC forward Federico Bernardeschi battle for the ball during the first half of an MLS soccer match

Rookie Redondo sparks Inter Miami to victory over Toronto

CHESTER, July 18, (AP): Cavan Sullivan became the youngest player to appear in an MLS match, Tai Baribo had his first career hat trick and Kai Wagner added three assists to help the Philadelphia Union end a 10-match winless streak with a 5-1 romp over the New England Revolution on Wednesday night.

Sullivan - at 14 years, 293 days - replaced Baribo in the 85th minute, topping the record by 13 days. Freddy Adu set the previous mark at 14-306 when he debuted for D.C. United in 2004.

Baribo staked Philadelphia (5-10-9) to a 1-0 lead in the 29th minute, using assists from Jack Elliott and Wagner to score with a header.

Jakob Glesnes took a pass from fellow defender Wagner and scored in the 39th minute for a two-goal lead. It was the first netter this season for Glesnes.

SOCCER

Baribo scored five minutes later for a 3-0 lead at halftime. Mikael Uhre notched his third assist and Alejandro Bedoya snagged his fourth.

Ian Harkes had the lone goal for the Revolution (7-14-1), scoring for the first time this season, in the 50th minute. Esmir Bajraktarevic picked up his third assist of the season and career.

Baribo polished off his hat trick two minutes later with his seventh goal in seven starts and 11 appearances this season. Baribo did not have a goal contribution in one start and five appearances last season, his first in the league. Wagner earned his 10th assist on the goal and Elliott had his third.

Rookie Federico Redondo scored the first two goals of his career in the second half after assisting on a firsthalf score by Diego Gómez and Inter Miami posted a 3-1 victory over To-

Brian Gutiérrez scored in the second half and Chris Brady made it stand up for the Chicago Fire in a 1-0 victory over FC Cincinnati, which played without reigning MVP Luciano Acosta.

The lone goal came in the 69th minute when Gutiérrez took a pass from Hugo Cuypers and found the net for a fifth time this season. It was the second assist for Cuypers, who signed a clubrecord deal to join the Fire (6-11-7) in the offseason and leads the team with

Brady, a 20-year-old keeper in his second full season with the club, finished with nine saves to earn his fourth clean sheet of the season.

Even with restrictive rules, swimsuit wars heating up in an Olympic year

PARIS, July 18, (AP): The iconic LZR Racer, the swimsuit that Michael Phelps wore while winning eight golds medals at the Beijing Olympics, is still revered around Speedo's design center.

It serves as a reminder of just how much a suit can push a swimmer to greater heights.

"In so many ways, that was the golden era," said Coora Lavezzo, the head of innovation at Speedo's Aqualab in London. "We've got those suits upstairs, and even though I wasn't there at the time, I'm fascinated by them and just how we can get back to a smidge of that former glory.

Of course, the rules these days are much more of a hindrance to swimsuit designers, the result of a wild summer

give DC United (6-11-8) a 1-0 lead and

found the net again in the first minute

of second-half stoppage for the winner.

Benteke has 16 goals this season, pulling

within one of Golden Boot leader Cris-

tian "Chicho" Arango of Real Salt Lake.

in a four-minute span of the second

half to rally DC United to a 2-1 victory

over Nashville SC on Saturday, picked

up his first assist of the season on Ben-

teke's first goal.

Cristian Dájome, who scored twice

15 years ago in which rubberized attire was all the rage, leading to 43 world records being set at the championships

OLYMPICS

The international governing body, now known as World Aquatics, decided the polyurethane suits - many of them covering nearly the entire body - were making a mockery of the sport. So the organization hastily imposed strict new rules requiring textile fabrics and limiting the amount of body coverage from the hip to just above the knees for men, while women's racing attire cannot extend past the shoulder or cover the neck.

Christian Benteke scored the first and last goals of the match and picked up an assist in between to rally D.C. United to a 3-2 victory over Minnesota Benteke scored in the 14th minute to

sist was his second. United a 2-1 lead when he took passes from Robin Lod and defender Michael Boxall and scored in the 80th minute. It was the fourth goal for Pukki. Lod notched his 11th assist of the campaign on the score and Boxall picked up his first of the season and the second of his

career. César Araújo and Ramiro Enrique each scored a goal, Pedro Gallese recorded his fifth shutout of the season

even in the 32nd minute when Tani Oluwaseyi, in his return from playing in the Copa America, used an assist from Hassani Dotson to score his eighth goal of the season. Dotson's as-

Teemu Pukki gave Minnesota

and Orlando City beat Nashville SC



Nashville SC defender Daniel Lovitz, top, heads the ball over Orlando City forward Ramiro Enrique during the second half of an MLS soccer match in Nashville, Tenn. Orlando City won 3-0. (AP)

who worked with Phelps over his entire career and was on hand in Rome for a speed show that bordered on a farce, the rules are just fine the way they are.

For coaches such as Bob Bowman,

"Everybody is on a level playing field," he said. "We're still breaking world records in these suits. The sport is moving forward."

But major swimsuit designers such

as Speedo, TYR and arena are pushing for the guidelines to be liberalized.

They pump millions of dollars into the sport, and would love nothing more than to be allowed to come up with revolutionary new designs that lead to vastly improved performances. But as things stand now, their hands are largely tied. Faster times come in tiny increments.

Orlando (9-9-6) has won four consecutive games by a combined score

Araújo opened the scoring in the 19th minute. Martin Ojeda played a perfectly-placed free kick from 35-yards out on the left side to the back post, where Araújo headed home

of 13-2.

Fafà Picault scored the go-ahead goal in the 79th minute and Yohei Takaoka had five saves to help the Vancouver Whitcaps beat Sporting Kansas City 2-1.

Picault replaced Ali Ahmed in the 67th minute and put away a header, off a cross played by Sebastian Berhalter, to cap the scoring a several minutes later.

Vancouver (11-7-5) is unbeaten, with four wins, in its last five games. Daniel Steres scored his first goal of

the season in the 86th minute to help the Houston Dynamo beat the San Jose Earthquakes 1-0. Steres, who came on in place of Griffin Dorsey in the 73rd minute,

played by Amine Bassi for the game's only goal in the closing minutes.

The Dynamo had 58% possession and outshot San Jose 22-8, 7-0 on tar-

headed home a perfectly-placed ball

San Jose (4-18-2) has lost eight of its last nine games (a 1-0 victory over

the Chicago Fire on July 7) and has

been outscored 25-8 over that span.

Stefan Frei finished with three saves on the way to his 112th career regularseason shutout - tying Kevin Hartman for second place on the all-time list and the Sounders used an own goal in the first half and a Jonathan Bell score against his former team in the second to beat St. Louis City 2-0.

BEIJING, July 18, (Xinhua): The excitement and anticipation are palpable as 3x3 basketball makes its second Olympic appearance in Paris from July 30 to August 5.

The high-energy and fast-paced sport debuted at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics will once again captivate audiences alongside other trendy sports like skateboarding, breakdancing, and BMX freestyle at the Place de la Concorde.

Tournament Format

The 3x3 basketball event in Paris will feature a total of eight teams each in men's and women's categories. The tournament will be divided into three stages: the preliminary group stage, the play-in round, and the knockout stages culminating in the medal matches on August 5.

In the group stage, each team will play against all other teams. The top two teams will advance directly to the semifinals, while the third- to sixthplaced teams will compete in an additional round for the remaining semifinal spots. This structure ensures that every game is critical, adding to the unpredictability of the tournament.

OLYMPICS

Men's Teams To Watch

The United States: Making their Olympic debut in men's 3x3 basketball, the U.S. team is considered a strong contender for the gold medal. The squad, built around the Miami team from the FIBA 3x3 World Tour, features former NBA player Jimmer Fredette, whose scoring ability has been pivotal in securing significant victories, including a silver medal at the 2023 World Cup and gold at the Pan American Games

Serbia: As a powerhouse in 3x3 basketball, Serbia is another top contender. Despite a surprising semifinal loss at Tokyo 2020, the team remains formidable, with a roster that includes experienced players like Dejan Majstorovic. Serbia's players have competed in hundreds of FIBA 3x3 games, showcasing their tactical acumen and versatility.

Latvia: The reigning Olympic champions from Tokyo, Latvia will be aiming to defend their title. Known for their cohesive team play and strategic brilliance, Latvia will be a tough op-

ponent for any challenger.

China: After having finished eighth at Tokyo 2020, China's men are looking for a breakthrough performance in Paris. The team has rapidly improved its FIBA ranking, thanks to consistent performances in international tournaments. Key players like Zhang Ning and Zhao Jiaren have been instrumental in their recent successes, making China a team to watch.

Women's Teams To Watch

United States: The defending Olympic champions are favorites once again despite some roster changes due to Cameron Brink's knee injury. The team includes WNBA stars like Rhyne Howard and Dearica Hamby, alongside collegiate standout Hailey Van Lith. This mix of experience and youthful talent makes the U.S. a formidable force.

China: After securing a historic bronze medal at Tokyo 2020, China's women are determined to climb higher on the podium in Paris. With a strong lineup including Wang Lili and Zhang Zhiting, China are looking to challenge the top teams. Their unconventional "three bigs and one small" lineup, led by the resilient Wang, adds an intriguing tactical element to their play.

France: As the host nation, France automatically qualified for the tournament. The team, comprising a blend of experienced players and rising stars, aim to leverage their home advantage. France's recent performances in FIBA competitions have shown their potential to compete with the best.

No men picked for Paris

Italy's Minisini says he is ending career

ROME, July 18, (AP): With no men picked to compete in artistic swimming at the Paris Olympics, where they are eligible for the first time, a former world champion is ending his career this week.

At the Italian national championships, four-time worlds gold medalist Giorgio Minisini said he is competing for the last time at age 28.

"Obsession is a young man's game," Minisini, who was left off the Italian Olympic team in April, wrote on his Instagram account Tuesday.

Minisini and Bill May of the United States were the two most likely Olympic pioneers aiming to be picked for Paris as the first men to compete in artistic swimming. The sport debuted at the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics as synchronized swimming.

However, the 96 athletes picked by 18 different nations for the Olympics

were all women. "World Aquatics is very disappointed that no male artistic swimmers have been selected for Paris 2024," the governing body said. "This should have been a landmark moment for the

The rules change by World Aquatics in December 2022 allowed up to two men to be selected in an eight-athlete squad for the Olympic open team event. The only other medal event in Paris is women's duet.

Minisini specializes in the mixed duet event which is not yet on the Olympic program, and missed selection to the team event.

OLYMPICS

May was on the U.S. team that won silver and bronze medals in team acrobatic routine at the past two world championships. At age 45, he did not make the Olympic team last month.

"All of us in the artistic swimming community need to work even harder to progress opportunities for male athletes in the sport," said World Aquatics, which hopes to add a mixed duet event for the 2028 Los Angeles Olym-

Best of the Rest

Botafogo extend lead: Tiquinho Soares scored a second-half winner as Botafogo moved three points clear at the top of Brazil's Serie A standings on Wednesday with a 1-0 home victory over

reigning champions Palmeiras. Soares sent a first-time effort into the bottom-left corner after Luiz Henrique's cross from the right side of the penalty box.

The result at Rio de Janeiro's Olympic Stadium leaves Botafogo with 36 points from 17 outings, while second-placed Palmeiras have 33 points. Elsewhere, former Paris Saint

Germain and Tottenham Hotspur attacker Lucas Moura struck early as Sao Paulo edged Gre-Sao Paulo are now fourth in the

20-team standings, six points behind Botafogo, while Gremio are 18th with just 11 points so far. Also on Wednesday, Vasco da

Gama won 1-0 at Atletico Goianiense, while Fortaleza prevailed 3-1 at home to Vitoria. (Xinhua)

Pumas rise to second: Ro-

drigo Lopez scored late as Pumas UNAM recovered from a goal down to beat Juarez 2-1 in their Liga MX clash on Wednesday. Lopez struck 10 minutes from time at the Benito Juarez Stadium after Angel Reyes had cancelled out Diego Campillo's opener.

The result leaves Pumas second in the 18-team standings with seven points from three outings, two points behind leaders Cruz Azul. Juarez are 15th, six points fur-

ther back after three match days. Earlier on Wednesday, Jordi

Cortizo's second-half goal fired Monterrey to a 1-0 victory at Necaxa. Monterrey are now fourth in the title race, while Necaxa are 13th. (Xinhua)

Extension for Vazquez: Real Madrid followed the announcement of a one-year contract extension for Luka Modric on Wednesday, with the confirmation on Thursday that wingback, Lucas Vazquez has also extended his stay at the club for another season.

"Real Madrid C. F. and Lucas Vazquez have agreed an extension to the player's contract, tying him to the club until 30 June 2025," informed the club's official website.

Vazquez arrived at Real Madrid as a 16-year-old in 2007 and progressed through the club's ranks, including a season on loan with Espanyol. (Xinhua)

Villas for Rent

We have Two VIP Villas in Mesila Facing the sea And a Swimming Pool **Special Location** Rent 2250 k.d

55055615

SYDNEY, July 18, (AP): Reds backrower Harry Wilson has been recalled for the

first time since 2022 and a rugby sevens flyer has been given a debut among 10 changes to Australia's starting lineup for Saturday's test against Georgia. Wallabies coach Joe Schmidt continued to rotate through his squad when he announced the 23 on Thursday for his

third test in charge, explaining that it's

all in preparation for his Rugby Champi-

onship kickoff next month against world

champion South Africa

The hard-running Wilson will start at No. 8 in a backrow also featuring Fraser McReight and Rob Valetini, the only two forwards retained in the starting pack.

Veteran prop Allan Ala'alatoa returned as captain in a front row featuring hooker Billy Pollard and Isaac Kailea, while locks Angus Blyth and Nick Frost replaced Lukhan Salakaia-Loto and Jeremy Williams.

James Slipper, who was captain of the

team that last week clinched the 2-0 series win over Wales, Taniela Tupou and Matt Faessler have all been rested. Squads:

Australia make 10 changes for rugby test against Georgia

Australia: Tom Wright, Filipo Daugunu, Len Ikitau, Hunter Paisami, Darby Lancaster, Ben Donaldson, Tate McDermott; Harry Wilson, Fraser McReight, Rob Valetini, Angus Blyth, Nick Frost, Allan Ala'alatoa, Billy Pollard, Isaac Kailea, Reserves: Josh Nasser, Alex Hodgman, Zane Nonggorr, Tom

Hooper, Jeremy Williams, Nic White,

Noah Lolesio, Andrew Kellaway. Georgia (from): Backs: Milkheil Alania, Gela Aprasidze, Vasil Lobzhanidze, Tedo Abzhandaze, Luka Matkava, Tornike Kakhoidze, Giorgi Kveseladze, Giorgi Shvelidze, Demur Tapladze, Shalva Aptsiauri, Aka Tabutsandze, Amiran Shvangiradze, Alexander Todua. Forwards: Vano Karkadze, Luka Noirandze, Luka Petriashvili, Giorgi Akhaladze, Irakli Aptsiauri, Giorgi Dz-

manashvili, Luka Goginava, Alexsandre Kuntelia, Giorgi Mamaiashvili, Mikheil Babunashvili, Lasha Jaiani, Giorgi

RUGBY

Javakhia, Lado Chachanidze, Demur Epremidze, Beka Gorgadze (captain), Ioane Iashaghashvili, Luka Ivanishvili, Tornike Jalaghonia, Beka Saghinadze, Giorgi Tsutskiridze

First rear-wheel-drive Macan delivers high efficiency

Porsche doubles size of the model range for all-electric Macan



Macan 4S Interior



KUWAIT CITY, July 18: The new Porsche Macan with rear-wheel drive is available immediately as the new point of entry to the all-electric SUV model series. It is exceptionally efficient, offering a combined WLTP range of up to 641 kilometres. The new Macan 4S features up to 380 kW (516 PS) and is positioned at the higher-powered end of the model programme. A new offroad design package is also available for all Macan models. Additionally, the Porsche Driver Experience has been comprehensively updated.

Stuttgart/Dubai. Porsche has doubled the size of the model range for its first all-electric SUV. While the focus for the rear-wheel-drive Macan was primarily on high efficiency and range, the new Macan 4S will fill the gap between the Macan 4 and the Macan Turbo.

Like the models introduced at the start of 2024, the 4S is equipped with the electronically controlled Porsche Traction Management (ePTM) system, which distributes the drive power between the front and rear axles around five times faster than a conventional all-wheel-drive system.

Macan: 100 kWh battery and highly efficient power electronics

The new Macan entry model to the all-electric SUV world of Porsche also

gets its energy from a high-voltage battery with a gross energy content of 100 kWh. Propulsion is provided exclusively by the rear-axle motor that is used in the Macan 4, with a diameter of 210 millimetres, an active length of 200 mm and output of 250 kW (340 PS). The electric motor has a 480-amp pulse inverter (PWR) in which the highly efficient semiconductor material silicon carbide (SiC) is used to provide higher efficiency. It significantly reduces switching losses in the PWR and enables higher switching frequen-

In combination with Launch Control, the Macan produces up to 265 kW (360 PS) of overboost power, and the maximum torque is 563 Nm. From a standing start, the car reaches the 100 km/h mark in 5.7 seconds and has a top speed of 220 km/h. By forgoing all-wheel drive, the Macan is 110 kilograms lighter than the Macan 4 and therefore requires less electricity for propulsion. This results in a combined WLTP range of up to 641 km.

Macan 4S: powerful electric motors and PASM as standard

The Macan 4S has a new rear-axle motor and a powerful 600-amp SiC pulse inverter. The electric motor has a diameter of 230 millimetres and an active length of 150 millimetres. To-

gether with the front-axle motor also used in the Macan 4 and the Turbo, this results in a system output of 330 kW (448 PS) with a short power overboost to up to 380 kW (516 PS). With Launch Control, the maximum torque is 820 Nm

The performance figures are correspondingly impressive: with Launch Control, the Macan 4S makes the standard sprint from 0 – 100 km/h in 4.1 seconds and has a top speed of 240 km/h. It has a combined WLTP range of up to 606 km. The Macan 4S is equipped with Porsche Active Suspension Management (PASM) electronic

damping control as standard. The adaptive air suspension with levelling system and height adjustment, the Porsche Torque Vectoring Plus (PTV Plus) and the rear-axle steering allow the chassis to be further optimised for increased performance and comfort.

The two new models have all the qualities of the second generation of the Macan, including the progressive, timeless design with range-optimised aerodynamics (cw = 0.25). The 800-volt architecture of the Premium Platform Electric (PPE) enables a DC charging capacity of up to 270 kW. The high-voltage battery can be

charged from 10 to 80 per cent within around 21 minutes at a suitable fast-charging station.

New colour, new wheels, new off-

New colour, new wheels, new offroad design package

A new exterior colour. Slate Grey

A new exterior colour, Slate Grey Neo, is now available for all Macan models. A 20-inch Macan S wheel has been added to the wheel portfolio.

A new off-road design package is also optionally available for all models, further improving the everyday usability of the Macan. Rough dirt roads and particularly steep climbs and descents can be mastered even more easily than before. The altered geometry of the front bumper has increased the approach angle to up to 17.4 degrees, depending on the model (with the air suspension at a specifically raised level). In combination with the adaptive air suspension, the off-road design package also increases the ground clearance by 10 mm to 195 mm at the normal setting.

normal setting.

Porsche offers the package in two colours: in Vesuvius Grey and in the exterior colour. The front bumper, side skirts, diffuser panels and roof railings are then painted accordingly. Matching 21-inch off-road design wheels in Vesuvius Grey are also offered. For customers who pick the off-road design package variant in the car's ex-

terior colour, the side blades are also painted in the same colour. The roof railings can be ordered in Black, Silver or Turbonite (Turbo only).

For the Macan, Macan 4 and Macan 4S, the off-road front bumper with an inlay in Vesuvius Grey is also available separately. The approach angle increases as with the off-road design package.

Porsche Driver Experience with new design and new function

With the electrification of the Macan, Porsche has introduced a completely new display and control system into its successful SUV model. The Porsche Driver Experience offers a mix of digital and analogue elements. These include an instrument cluster with a 12.6-inch curved display, a 10.9-inch passenger display, a head-up display with augmented reality technology, and ambient lighting with a communication light.

Porsche has once again completely upgraded the design of the screens for all Macan models. It now comprises an emotional welcoming animation, an updated state-of-the-art look, and the new Themes app which can be used to adjust the background colour of the displays and the ambient lighting to match the exterior colour, with twelve colours to choose from.

Kuwait Club to host Arab Handball Championship

The new Macan 4S



A file photo of a winning team celebrating

Al-Nassr sign Brazilian goalkeeper Pinto until 2028

A the prote of a willing team colourating.

Saudi Arabia coach recalls Al-Aqidi after suspension ends

RIYADH, July 18: Italian coach Roberto Mancini, leading the Saudi national team, has opted to call up Nawaf Al-Aqidi, goalkeeper for Al-Nassr, following the expiration of his suspension. Meanwhile, former Al-Hilal captain Salman Al-Faraj remains excluded from the squad.

Mancini sparked controversy in January when he confirmed the dissent of six players, including Nawaf Al-Aqidi and Salman Al-Faraj, who declined to join the national team

SOCCER

for the 2023 Asian Nations Cup. Al-Aqidi received a severe punishment of a five-month suspension and a 300,000 Saudi riyal fine, while Al-Faraj was fined 100,000 riyals.

With Al-Aqidi's suspension ending earlier this July, Mancini has included him in the preliminary squad ahead of the third round of 2026 World Cup qualifiers. The Saudi national team competes in Group Three against Indonesia, Australia, Japan, China, and Bahrain.

The team will face Indonesia on September 5 and China on September 10. Mancini's preliminary squad includes Al-Aqidi and his Al-Nassr teammate Sultan Al-Ghannam.



Saudi Arabia Italian coach Roberto Mancini.



Matheus Pinto with Ibrahim Al-Muhaidib and Fernando Hierro.

However, Al-Faraj, who has been absent from international duty since the dissent incident, has not been

Reports indicate that Al-Aqidi is now eligible to play for the national team and his absence from the Portugal camp was due to passport issues, which are expected to be resolved

Previously, Mancini had also summoned Al-Ghannam, who was fined 200,000 riyals in connection with the dissent, to the final team camp for matches against Pakistan and Jordan in the second round of qualifiers.

Meanwhile, Al-Nassr, the Saudi Professional League runner-up, announced yesterday the signing of Brazilian goalkeeper Matheus Pinto until 2028, joining from Atletico Paranaense.

The contract signing ceremony was held at the first team camp head-quarters in Portugal, with the presence of Ibrahim Al-Muhaidib, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Al-Nassr Club Company, and Sports Director Fernando Hierro.

Al-Nassr, which includes Portuguese star Cristiano Ronaldo, secured second place in the previous Saudi League season, finishing 14 points behind title winner Al-Hilal.

Al-Arabi withdraw as hosts

By Khaled El Anzi

Al-Sevassah/Arab Times Staff **KUWAIT CITY: The Arab** Handball Federation has announced that the 39th Arab Championship for champion clubs, a qualifier for the "Saudi Super Globe 2024," will now be hosted by Kuwait Club from September 15-25. This decision follows Al-Arabi Club's withdrawal as hosts due to delays in completing its new hall, which was not approved by the **Public Authority for Sports** in time. The tournament will take place at the Sheikh Saad

Al Abdullah Complex.

Recently, the Arab Handball Federation revealed the eight participating clubs: defending champion and host Al-Kuwait, alongside Al-Arabi and Al-Qadisiya from Kuwait, Al-Karkh and Al-Hashd from Iraq, Al-Ahly from Qatar, Maliha from the Emirates, and the National Bank of Egypt. Mudar and Al-Huda, Saudi clubs, are awaiting official approval from

the Saudi Ministry of Sports to participate.

In preparation for the Arab Club Championship, Kuwait Club's handball director, Sameh Al-Hajri, announced plans for an external training camp in Croatia from September 1-13. This camp aims to strengthen the team's readiness through rigor-

HANDBALL

ous training and competitive matches ahead of defending their title on home ground.

Meanwhile, Al-Arabi Club is yet to finalize plans for its external camp, having renewed contracts with team coach Dr. Ahmed Foulad and Tunisian professional Osama Jaziri. It is also in negotiations to add two European professionals to its roster.

In youth handball, Kuwait's national team is currently competing in the 18th Asian Youth Handball Championship in Amman. It is set to face Bahrain in the third round of the main round, with matches against Jordan and South Korea to follow. The tournament format will see top finishers from each group qualify for the 2025 Youth World Cup finals in Poland.

Al Arabi begin preseason training camp in Erzurum

By Hassan Musa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 18: The Al Arabi Club delegation departed early this morning for a training camp in Erzurum, Turkey, in preparation for the upcoming season.

SOCCER

Initially planned for Bosnia, the camp location was shifted to Turkey due to visa complications for the team's foreign players.

During its training camp, Al-Arabi is scheduled to play three friendly matches, continuing until the end of this month.

Panked second in the Zain Premier

Ranked second in the Zain Premier League, Al Arabi will also participate in the group stage of the Asian Challenge Cup League.

In related news, Algerian professional Sofiane Bouchard is set to join the team's camp next week, following his recent return from special leave in Algeria. The club clarified there are no financial disputes, reaffirming Bouchard's commitment to continue his career at Al-Arabi.

Bouchard recently completed a loan spell with CS Belouizdad, concluding with the Algerian Cup victory on July

5 against MC Algiers.

Meanwhile, Kuwait Club team continues rigorous training sessions twice daily in Turkey, part of their ongoing



Players training for the upcoming season.

camp until July 29.

Kuwait Club will play its second friendly match against Uzbekistan's Lokomotiv. It began its camp with a victory over Turkey's Amed FK, securing a 2-0 win with goals from Ali Hussein and Amr Abdel Fattah.

The team starts its season against Al-Qadisiya on August 8 in the Zain Premier League. It will then face Al-Ahly of Bahrain in Manama on August 14 in the preliminary round of the AFC Champions League's inaugural Western Region edition.

The preliminary rounds for both East and West regions involve single-match competitions, with winners advancing directly to the group stage and losers moving to the Challenge Cup.



Belgium's Victor Campenaerts celebrates as he crosses the finish line ahead of France's Matteo Vercher, hidden behind Campenaerts, and Poland's Michal Kwiatkowski, left, to win during the eighteenth stage of the Tour de France cycling race over 179.5 kilometers (111.5 miles) with start in Gap and finish in Barcelonette, France. (AP)

Sports

Latest sports scores at — http://sports.arabtimesonline.com

Kuwaitis dominate West Asian Championships

Kuwait Olympic Committee congratulates the champions

AMMAN, July 18: The Kuwaiti Olympic Committee congratulated the champions of Kuwait judo team for their exceptional performance at the West Asian Judo Championship for youth and juniors, held in Amman, Jordan.

Muhammad Ali clinched the gold medal in the under-100 kg category, Shehab Al-Salman secured gold in the under-90 kg category, Fahd Al-Anazi earned bronze in the under-73 kg category, Anas Buqmaz took bronze in the under-81 kg category, and Yousef Al-Barrak won bronze in the under-60 kg category.

JUDO

In the junior category, Khaled Al-Kandari captured gold in the under-60 kg weight class, Abdullah Al-Dehani won gold in the under-90 kg weight class, Hussein Mahawish achieved gold in the under-90 kg weight class, Anas Buqmaz secured gold in the under-81 kg weight class, and Mishari Adel took silver in the under-66 kg weight class. Additionally, Ali Al-Ramzi won silver in the under-55 kg weight class, Sultan Al-Otaibi earned bronze in the under-50 kg weight class, Turki Al-Anazi took bronze in the under-81 kg weight class, and Saud Al-Anazi captured bronze in the under-60 kg weight

Best of the Rest

Dortmund sign Guirassy: Borussia Dortmund finally completed the signing of Guinea forward Serhou Guirassy from Bundesliga rival Stuttgart on Thursday after an injuryrelated delay.

Guirassy's expected trans fer was delayed when a medical examination revealed an injury sustained while playing for Guinea at the end of last season.

Dortmund said on Thursday the injury will "not require an operation" and "medical personnel expect him to be available later in the summer." (AP)

Vieira out as coach: France soccer great Patrick Vieira was out as coach of U.S.owned top-tier club Strasbourg on Thursday just one month before the Ligue 1 season starts.

The club, which is in shared ownership with Chelsea, said in a statement Vieira left by mutual agreement. He was one year into a three-year contract. (AP)

Maximilian signs deal: Maximilian Ibrahimovic, Zlatan's eldest son, has signed his first professional contract with AC

Milan, the Italian club said on

Thursday. Ibrahimovic junior will play with Milan Futuro, Milan's new under-23 team that will feature in Serie C, the third division.

Maximilian, who will turn 18 in September, has previously played with Milan youth teams. (AP)



The Kuwaiti champions celebrate on the podium.

Kuwaiti parkour team competes in the 'inaugural' Arab Championship



Kuwaiti parkour team set for the inaugural Arab Championship.

AFC imposes fines on Al Hilal, Al Nassr for violations

KUALA LUMPUR, July 18: The Asian Football Confederation has imposed financial penalties on Saudi Arabian clubs Al Hilal and Al Nassr for multiple infractions during last season's AFC Champions League qualifying rounds.

Al-Nassr Club has been fined \$30,000 by the Disciplinary Committee for incidents where their fans threw water bottles and projectiles at Al Ain players.

Additionally, Al-Nassr Club faces a \$15,000 fine for its players not adhering to the mixed zone protocol during the AFC Champions League quarter-finals match against Al Ain.

Meanwhile, Al Hilal Club has been fined \$20,000 for failing to prepare the medical room as required for its match against Iran's Sepahan,



Salem Al Dossary

in accordance with Article 71/1 of the regulations.

Furthermore, Al Hilal Club incurred a \$16,750 fine for its fans' misconduct involving throwing water bottles during the match against Sepahan.

SOCCER

Al Hilal Club also received a \$10,000 fine for player Salem Al Dossary's failure to attend a media meeting following the match against Al Ain, UAE.

These penalties were imposed by the AFC Disciplinary Committee following investigations into various incidents during the AFC Champions League competitions.

Copa America champs top FIFA men's rankings

Govt hits back at critics of Argentina racist France song

Led by Nasser Al-Helfi, Treasurer of both the Kuwaiti and Arab Gymnastics Federations, the delegation includes Coach Suleiman Abdul-Rida, referee Muhammad Al-Attar, and athletes Ali Al-Shatti and Khalifa Al-Asfar. The Kuwait Gymnastics Associa-

tion expressed gratitude to the Public Authority for Sports, under Acting Director General Bashar Abdullah, for his steadfast support and approval of the parkour team's participation in this landmark event. He wished the team success in achieving a notable Arab performance in this modern discipline, slated to debut in the Olympic Games at "Los Angeles 2028'

KUWAIT CITY, July 18: The Kuwaiti

parkour team has embarked on their

journey to participate in the inaugu-

ral Arab championship for the sport, which commenced in Amman, Jordan

yesterday and will continue until next

Parkour, supervised by the Kuwait Gymnastics Association alongside artistic gymnastics and rhythmic gymnastics, represents a strategic focus for the association as it aims to establish a robust presence in the sport.

ZURICH, July 18, (AP): Argentina was confirmed as the world's No. 1 team in the FIFA men's rankings on Thursday, as the national government doubled down on defending the players who celebrated winning the Copa America by singing a racist song targeting No. 2-ranked France.

The fallout of the chant sung late on Sunday in Miami - which mocked the African heritage of some France players - continued four days later, including a rebuke to Argentina's critics by the vice president in its far-right gov-Argentina's government on Wednes-

day fired one of its leading sports officials who urged Lionel Messi and the president of the Argentine Football Association to apologize.

The sports under-secretary, Julio Garro, spoke after FIFA said it was looking into the incident and English club Chelsea started a disciplinary process against its midfielder Enzo Fernandez. He broadcast the footage on social media from the Argentina team bus in Florida.

SOCCER

Fernandez later published an apology on his Instagram account, which disappeared by Thursday, saying he was "truly sorry. That video, that moment, those words, do not reflect my beliefs or my character.'

However, a defiant post by the vice

president of Argentina, Victoria Villarruel, on social media hit back at the country's critics.

"No country with a colonial history is going to put us down for a song sung on a field nor for speaking a truth that nobody wants to admit," Villarruel wrote.

"Enough of pretending to be offended, hypocrites. Enzo I am with you, Messi thanks for everything! Argentines always keep your heads high! Long live Argentina!'

Villarruel said Argentina's history had been forged by people of all races: "We never forced our way of life on anyone, nor will we tolerate that someone tries to do the same to us." The song refers to France players being "all from Angola," having par-

ents from Nigeria and Cameroon, and also includes an offensive reference to Kylian Mbappé. One of Fernandez's French teammates at Chelsea, Wesley Fofana, who is Black, described the video as

posted critical comments about the Argentina incident. The chant was first sung by Argentina fans in Qatar ahead of the 2022 World Cup final against France. Argentina won a penalty shootout after

"uninhibited racism." France players Jules Koundé and Mike Maignan also

a thrilling 3-3 draw. FIFA President Gianni Infantino has said soccer and its 211 national federations must have a zero tolerance approach to racism and in May committed to relaunching a task force to

monitor incidents. Argentina has topped the FIFA rankings since April 2023 and has extended its lead over second-placed France, which lost in the European Championship semifinals to Spain.

Euro 2024 winner Spain rose five places to No. 3. Beaten finalist England moved up one place, swapping with No. 5 Brazil. Copa America beaten finalist Colombia rose three places

Morocco is at No. 14, with the 2022 World Cup semifinalist dropping two places as Africa's top-ranked men's team. The United States dropped five places to No. 16, one ahead of its CONCACAF regional rival Mexico.

No. 18 Japan is the highest-ranked

Campenaerts wins 3-man sprint to take stage 18

BARCELONETTE, France, July 18, (AP): Belgian rider Victor Campenaerts posted the biggest win of his career Thursday as he claimed the tough and hilly 18th stage of the Tour de France after a three-man sprint.

Two-time Tour champion Tadej Pogacar kept the race leader's yellow jersey as the top of the overall standings remained unchanged with just three days of racing left.

Campenaerts spent most of the day at the front and jumped away from a breakaway group some 35 kilometers (22 miles) from the finish together with Frenchman Matteo Vercher and former world champion Michal Kwiatkowski of Poland.

Campenaerts, who won a Giro stage in 2021, patiently waited behind his rivals in the last kilometer and did not panic when Vercher attacked. He stayed in the wheel of Kwiatkowski, then launched his sprint from behind.

The Lotto Dstny rider celebrated his win with his partner and baby on a video call straight after the finish.

There was a flurry of attacks at the start of the rollercoaster stage featuring five climbs as riders tried to break away before the first ascent, the Col du Festre. But the peloton rode at a high speed, thwarting all those early efforts. About 20 riders finally managed to

open a gap during that climb and were

joined by Wednesday's stage winner Richard Carapaz and other talented contenders for the stage win, including Ben Healy and Geraint Thomas.

With the best-placed rider in that large group already lagging nearly 34 minutes behind race leader Tadej Pogacar overall, the pack let the break get away. The main contenders for the overall win, including Pogacar and his rivals Jonas Vingegeaard and Remco Evenepoel, finished 13 minutes and 40 seconds behind Campenaerts.

Earlier, Healy attacked twice from the leading group in the Cote de Saint-Apollinaire but his move eventually backfired as the Irishman got dropped when others upped the pace.

HE FIRST ENGLISH LANGUAGE DAILY IN FREE KUWAIT



the ball with Exequiel Zeballos of Argentina's Boca Juniors during a Copa Sudamericana playoffs soccer match at Banco Guayaquil stadium in Quito, Ecuador. The match ended 0-0. (AP)

Telephone: 24813566 & 24849144 Fax: 24818267

Advertising: Tel: 24813815 Fax: 24845708

Annual Subscriptions: Individuals KD 45/- Companies and Official

Tel: 24919620

Editor-in-Chief AHMED AL JARALLAH

Editorial Office: Airport Road, Shuwaikh

P.O. Box 2270, 13023 Safat, Kuwait E-mail: arabtimes@arabtimesonline.com E-mail: advt@arabtimesonline.com

Departments KD 75 Airmail charges extra for overseas Fax: 24839487