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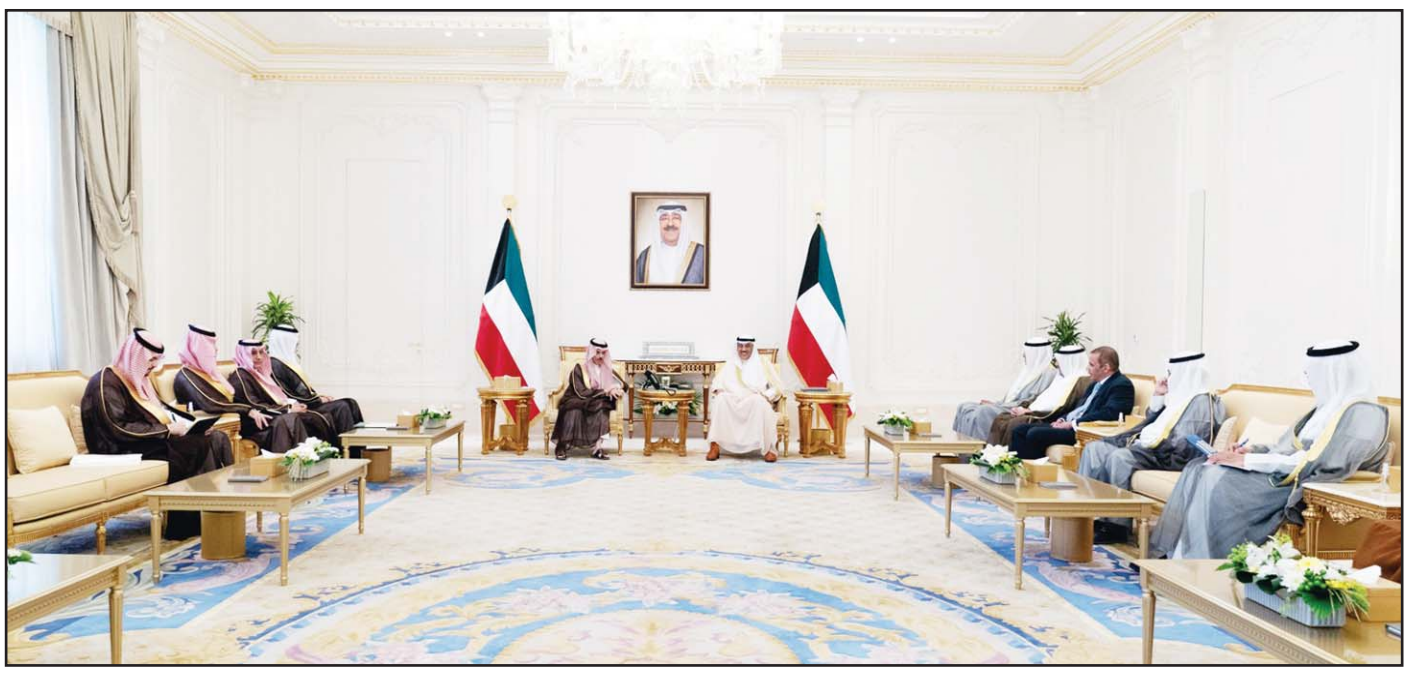
Kuwait Amir, Crown Prince receive Saudi FM and delegation



Amiri Diwan and Crown Prince Diwan photos

Left: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives the Saudi Minister of Foreign Affairs Prince Faisal Bin Farhan Al-Saud. Right: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah receives Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister Faisal Bin Farhan Al-Saud and accompanying delegation.

3 deals inked

KUWAIT CITY, June 3, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received on Monday at Bayan Palace the Saudi Minister of Foreign Affairs Prince Faisal Bin Farhan Al-Saud and his accompanying delegation on an official visit to Kuwait.

He conveyed to His Highness, the greetings of the Saudi King Salman Bin Abdulaziz, and the Crown Prince, and Prime Minister Prince Mohammad Bin Salman, in which they wished His Highness further progress and prosperity to Kuwait and his people.

His Highness expressed his utmost appreciation to the Saudi King Salman Bin Abdulaziz and the Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Salman for the heartfelt sentiments, and wished them good health and Saudi Arabia further progress and prosperity.

The meeting was attended the country's top officials.

Also on Monday, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan Al-Saud and accompany delegation on occasion of official visit to the country.

The Foreign Minister relayed to His Highness the Crown Prince the greetings and congratulations of Saudi's King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud and Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammad bin Salman Al-Saud on occasion of his appointment by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

The Saudi sovereigns wished His Highness the Amir and His Highness the Crown Prince good health, and the people of Kuwait lasting progress and prosperity under their wise leadership.

His Highness the Crown Prince conveyed his greetings to King Salman and the Crown Prince, wishing them good health and the people of Saudi further development and prosperity. Senior officials attended the meeting.

Saudi Arabia Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan bin Abdullah Al-Saud arrived in Kuwait in official visit on Sunday.

Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya received the Saudi minister and his accompanying delegation.

Meanwhile, a joint coordination committee linking Kuwait and Gulf Arab neighbor Saudi Arabia held a new round of talks on Monday, which produced three fresh agreements aiming to

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Kuwait okays unrestricted hiring of overseas workers

Caps removed

KUWAIT CITY, June 3: The Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) has opened the door for the issuance of work permits by 100 percent for all companies, reports Al-Shahed daily.

With such a decision, employers can now bring workers from abroad according to the estimated numbers.

According to the decision issued by PAM, the fee specified for the issuance of a work permit is KD 150.

Through this decision, PAM has cancelled the previous conditions that used to classify the companies into three groups - first group that were eligible for receiving work permits for 100 percent of their estimated labor need, second group that could receive work permits for 50 percent of their need, and the third group that could obtain work permits for 25 percent of their need.

Global felicitations as Kuwait's Crown Prince assumes post

KUWAIT CITY, June 3, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received on Monday a cable from Chief of the Kuwait National Guard (KNG) Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah, congratulating him on the occasion of appointing His Highness Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah as Crown Prince.

Meanwhile, Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya congratulated on Monday His Highness Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah on being appointed as Crown Prince by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

The Foreign Minister wished His Highness the Crown Prince success in his post, which would increase Kuwait's prosperity and development.

Kuwaiti Minister of Justice, Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Dr. Mohammad Al- Wasmi on Sunday congratulated His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah on winning the trust of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah by naming him as Crown Prince.

Kuwaiti Minister of Information and Culture Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi congratulated, Sunday, His Highness Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah for being nominated as the Crown Prince by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

In a statement to KUNA, Al-Mutairi remarked His Highness the Crown Prince's achievements to his country and his exemplar representation in local, regional, and international spheres.

Governor of Kuwait Capital City Sheikh Abdullah Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah congratulated on Sunday His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah on assuming office.

A press release by the governate said that Sheikh Abdullah Salem Ali sent a congratulatory cable to His Highness the Crown Prince, wishing him good health and success.

Governor of Hawally Ali Salem Al-Asfar congratulated on Sunday His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah on assuming office.

A press release by the governate said that Ali Al-Asfar sent a congratulatory cable to His Highness the Crown Prince wishing him good health and success.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah received on Monday a phone call from the Father Amir of Qatar Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al-Thani, congratulating him on being appointed as Crown Prince by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, wishing him and his people further progress and development.

In return, His Highness expressed his utmost appreciation, wishing him good health and Qatar further progress and prosperity.

The Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi Sheikh Khaled bin Mohammad Al-Nayhan congratulated in a call on Monday His Highness Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah on being appointed as Crown Prince by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

Sheikh Khaled wished His Highness the Crown Prince continued good health and prosperity and development for Kuwait and its people under his leadership.

In turn, His Highness the Crown Prince thanked Sheikh Khaled on his kind gesture to enrich relations between the two countries, as well as wishing him continued good health and prosperity and development to the United Arab Emirates and its people under his leadership.

Secretary General of OPEC Haitham Al-Ghais congratulated on Monday His Highness Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah on being appointed as Crown Prince by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

In a statement to KUNA, Al-Ghais also conveyed congratulations from members of OPEC.

Al-Ghais expressed wishes of success towards His Highness the Crown Prince, hoping the future would be bright for the Kuwaiti leadership and people.

The United States congratulated late Sunday

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GCC chief welcomes US ceasefire initiative

Kuwait urges global action on Gaza crisis at ILO conference

VIENNA, June 3, (KUNA): Kuwait's Permanent envoy to the UN and other international organizations in Geneva, Ambassador Nasser Al-Hayen, called on the international community to take responsibility towards the catastrophic situation in Gaza Strip saying that the labor sector faired major damage due to continuous Israeli aggression.

Al-Hayen stated this to KUNA on Monday on sidelines of 112th annual International Labor Organization conference with participation of 187 countries.

He underscored the augmenting humanitarian crisis in Gaza, the forced eviction of two million Palestinian citizen, Israeli occupation hindering the entry of aid, as well as the mounting rate of unemployment.

He stressed that this conference must send a forceful message to Israeli occupation to adhere to international laws regulating labor, adding that Kuwait is demanding the rights of Palestinian workers as per labor agreements.

The Kuwaiti diplomat spoke of the maltreatment Palestinian workers are subjected to including unfair suspension of permits and material and moral damage.

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Cybersecurity cornerstone of nat'l security, states AL chief

CAIRO, June 3, (KUNA): Secretary-General of the League of Arab States (LAS) Ahmad Abul-Gheit stated on Monday that cybersecurity has become a fundamental pillar of national security for all states and economic entities.

Abul-Gheit

Abul-Gheit made the remark in a speech during the opening session of the 3rd International Conference on Information Security and Cybersecurity, titled "Cyber & Information Security Exhibition & Conference," held under the patronage of Egyptian Prime Minister Mostafa Madbouly, and organized by the league's Arab Information and Communication Technologies Organization.

Abul-Gheit said that cyber wars have become a reality and a weapon used by states and non-state actors, including groups with destructive criminal activities, adding that this was highly effective due to the reliance of modern systems on technology and networks, making them vulnerable to ransomware attacks.

He pointed out that cybersecurity has become a concept that goes far beyond the issues of protecting messages, financial transactions and administrative operations, but also includes data security and storage, a lot

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Ministry of Social Affairs photo

Kuwait's Minister of Social Affairs, Children and Family Affairs, and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Amthal Al-Huwaila holds a meeting with the ministry's development and planning sector to discuss the plan of digital transformation.

Minister Al-Huwaila promotes Cabinet's goals

Social Affairs Ministry set for digital overhaul

KUWAIT CITY, June 3, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Minister of Social Affairs, Children and Family Affairs, and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Amthal Al-Huwaila said Sunday digitizing all the Ministry of Social Affairs' sectors is necessary to offer outstanding services to citizens.

Al-Huwaila made the statement during a meeting she held with the ministry's development and planning sector to discuss the plan of digital transformation, said a statement by the ministry, adding that Acting Undersecretary Dr. Khaled al-Ajmi was present.

The minister stressed the need of accelerating digital transformation at all sectors and modernizing e-gate as well as providing a plan of action, in line with a pacific timetable, it stated.

The move aims to transform all services provided to citizens into smart applications connected directly with "Sahel" app., in accordance with the country's plan for digital transformation, it noted.

Speaking to KUNA in a statement, the minister also stressed that she is keen on providing support to overcome obstacles through activating the plan of implementing digital transformation, calling for concerted efforts at the ministry's sectors.

Al-Huwaila further urged accelerating the transformation of services and action mechanisms into digitization, in implementation of the directives of the Cabinet Council regarding digital transformation in all State's sectors.

Newswatch

Address status now on 'Sahel'

KUWAIT CITY, June 3: The Public Authority for Civil Information has announced the launch of the 'Address Availability' service on the Sahel unified government application, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

This service allows users to inquire about the availability status of their residential address with the civil registry to avoid any financial penalties.

The authority aims to facilitate the process of updating addresses, ensuring compliance with regulations and avoiding penalties.

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TOKYO: The Kuwaiti delegation, headed by Kuwait Business Council Chairman Engineer **Feras Al-Salem** and representatives from the Ministry of Oil, participated in the Japan Energy Summit and Exhibition in Tokyo on Monday.

At the conferences, the delegation demonstrated Kuwait's oil sector's achievements in reducing green house gas (GHG) emissions by transforming to a more efficient energy system and implementing the Zero Flaring initiative and soil remediation projects valued at USD two billion, Al-Salem said in a statement to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA).

"As part of Kuwait's commitments towards the global community, it intends to further reduce its GHG emissions by increasing the contribution of renewable energy sources by greater involvement in its energy mix, as well as implementing more environmentally friendly practices in its oil and gas sector as part of its 2035 vision," Al-Salem said.

"The oil sector achievements are a cornerstone to achieve such GHG emission reduction targets, especially with the flaring rates reaching less than 1 percent and more volumes of associated gas are utilized locally, which are of great economic impact as well," he noted.

The delegation was also received by Kuwaiti Ambassador to Japan **Sami Al-Zamanan**. (KUNA)

Prayer Timings

Fajr	03:15	Asr	15:20
Sunrise	04:49	Maghrib	18:44
Zohr	11:46	Isha	20:15

Local

Weather

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:
By Day: Very hot with light to moderate freshening at times northwesterly wind, with speeds of 15-45 km/h with a chance for rising dust over open areas.
By Night: Rather hot with light to moderate northwesterly wind, with speeds of 12-35 km/h.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	45	32
Kuwait Airport	46	32
Abdaly	46	26
Jahra	46	31
Salmiyah	40	31
Nuwaisib	43	29
Wafra	45	31

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

UK and Kuwait enhance defense capabilities against emerging threats: Lewis

'UK remains steadfast, committed to stability of Kuwait and region'

KUWAIT CITY, June 3: The British Ambassador to Kuwait, Belinda Lewis, said her country will remain steadfastly committed to the stability and prosperity of Kuwait and the region, reports Al-Qabas daily.

She told the daily, "We will continue working with our Kuwaiti friends and other partners in the Gulf Cooperation Council to address threats as they emerge while at the same time pointing out the intensive efforts to support maritime freedom of navigation in light of Houthi attacks on international shipping."

Lewis

The British envoy emphasized that Kuwait, like the United Kingdom, is a strong supporter of the rules-based international order and has a moderate influence in international forums. She welcomed Kuwait's ongoing efforts to encourage de-escalation in the region and pledged the UK's support through diplomatic and military channels.

Collaborates

She went on to say, "The United Kingdom also collaborates with Kuwait on major emerging threats such as cybersecurity and works closely with the National Cyber Security Centre to enhance its capabilities in line with the memorandum of understanding signed during His Highness the Amir's visit to the UK last summer."

"Moving forward," she said, "the UK will continue to discuss, partner, and exchange knowledge with Kuwait to address challenges and support the development of defense and security capabilities through providing globally leading technologies for equipment, training, and joint exercises."

Lewis stressed that medical cooperation is a fundamental element of the partnership between the UK and Kuwait, where thousands of Kuwaitis seek treatment in world-leading medical facilities in the UK every year. The UK also exported medical and pharmaceutical products worth £35 million to Kuwait in 2023.

Lewis revealed the signing of a memorandum of understanding with Great Ormond Street Hospital, specializing in the treatment of rare and complex childhood diseases in London, during a recent visit by the Kuwaiti Health Minister. The memorandum outlines cooperation in 11 priority areas over three years, which will assist Kuwait in developing and providing care for children.

She mentioned that training and education are at the core of our defense and security cooperation, with a number of officers from Kuwait and GCC countries benefiting from global training provided by British and Kuwaiti trainers at the Mubarak Al-Abdullah Joint Command and Staff College.

Courses

Additionally, 100 members of the Kuwaiti Armed Forces are expected to attend military courses in the UK this year, with another 100 set to study civilian courses in UK universities and colleges.

The UK is scheduled to deploy over 30 short-term training teams in Kuwait by 2024 to deliver courses covering all components of modern combat capability.

The British ambassador spoke about her country's readiness to welcome tourists from all over the world, expecting an increase in interest from Kuwaitis and Gulf citizens to visit Britain this summer, especially with the launch of the Electronic Travel Authorization (ETA), which has contributed to reducing costs and facilitating procedures.

She pointed out that the application process is easy and takes only 10 minutes, with a cost of 10 British pounds, and that the number of applicants for the authorization has reached more than 180,000 requests, most of them from Gulf countries such as Kuwait and Jordan.

In addition, she emphasized Britain's readiness to facilitate procedures for Kuwaiti students who wish to continue their education in British universities, by providing customized services to facilitate their visa issuance in a timely manner.

PM Diwan photo

HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah receives Saudi Minister of Foreign Affairs Prince Faisal Bin Farhan Al-Saud and his accompanying delegation.

Kuwait's PM receives Saudi FM, delegation

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, in the presence of Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya, received on Monday at Bayan Palace the visiting Saudi Minister of Foreign Affairs Prince Faisal Bin Farhan Al-Saud and his accompanying delegation. The meeting was attended by senior officials from Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. (KUNA)

Kuwait's KFAED and Pakistan sign KD 7.5m loan funding dam project

Project consists of construction of hydropower scheme

KUWAIT CITY, June 3, (KUNA): The Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) and Pakistan signed on Monday a KD 7.5 million (USD 24.4 million) loan agreement to fund the Mohmand Hydropower Dam project.

According to a KFAED statement, the loan agreement was signed by Malik Muhammed Farooq -- Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to State of Kuwait -- whereas Waleed Al-Bahar, Acting Director-General of KFAED, signed the loan agreement on behalf of the fund.

"The project aims to support the economic and social development by enhancing national energy generation from the available hydro resources to meet the increasing electricity demand, improve the region's resilience to flooding, provide sustainable water resources for agriculture and drinking water for the region of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province (KPP), and creating new job opportunities."

The KFAED went on to say that the project consisted of the construction of a hydropower scheme, on the Swat River located in the northeast of Pakistan about 200 KM west of Islamabad.

"It comprises a concrete-faced rockfill dam with a height of about 213 meters and a length of about 718 meters creating a reservoir with a total length of about 56 km, an area of about 24 km2, and a volume of about 1.6 billion m3. The scheme will include a powerhouse with 4 electricity-generating units with a total installed capacity of about 800 MW capable of producing about 2,862 GWh a year."

The project would include flood protection, irrigation infrastructure, and an intake for future drinking water facilities.

The project also includes consultancy and project management services. The project is expected to be completed by December 31, 2025.

The total cost of the project is estimated at about 322.8 billion Pakistani rupee, equivalent to approximately KD 900.6 million.

The first Kuwait fund's loan covers about 0.83 percent of the project costs, in addition to the contribution of the Islamic Development Bank in an amount equivalent to about KD 56.3 million, the OPEC Fund for Development in an amount equivalent to about KD 22.5 million, and the Saudi Fund for Development in an amount equivalent to about KD 75 million, while the Pakistani government will cover the remaining costs or any other increase that may occur in the project costs.

The loan is made for a term of 25 years, including a period of grace of about 5 years, and will be amortized by 40 semi-annual installments, the first of which will be due on the first date on which or any interest or other charges on the loan shall fall due after the elapse of the grace period. Loan will bear interest at two percent per annum in addition to a charge of 0.5 percent for meeting administrative costs and the expenses of implementation of the loan agreement.

The fund loan is the nineteenth loan provided by the KFAED to Pakistan, as the fund had previously provided eighteenth loans to Pakistan, in various sectors, totaling approximately KD 129.788 million.

KUNA photo

Acting Director-General of KFAED Waleed Al-Bahar and Pakistan's Ambassador Malik Farooq after signing of the agreement.

KUNA photo

A photo from the celebration of Kuwait Women's Day.

'Defence' celebrates Kuwait Women's Day

Kuwait's Ministry of Defence held a celebration on Sunday titled (women ... protectors of the nation) coinciding with Kuwaiti Women's Day, patronized and attended by the Ministry's Assistant Undersecretary Sheikha Dr. Shamayel Ahmad Al-Sabah.

In a statement by the ministry, Sheikha Shamayel hailed the ministry's leadership for supporting and encouraging women to take on more challenging roles within the ministry.

Sheikha Jawaher Ibrahim Al-Sabah, Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs for Human Rights, attended the celebration and expressed her gratitude and appreciation to the ministry for encouraging women to help build the nation. (KUNA)

KUDLO signs sub-agreement

Recruitment of Ethiopian domestic workers expected soon: Dakhnan

KUWAIT CITY, June 3: Kuwait Union of Domestic Labor Offices (KUDLO) Chairman Khalid Al-Dakhnan said the union's delegation that is currently in Ethiopia has signed the sub-agreement derived from the main agreement on regulating the recruitment of Ethiopian domestic workers to Kuwait, which was previously suspended as per the decision of the Ethiopian Ministry of Labor, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Al-Dakhnan confirmed that an agreement has been reached about the salary of the worker -- KD90 including all the privileges stipulated in Kuwaiti law number 68/2015 like the indemnity, leave days and others.

He expects the arrival of Ethiopian domestic workers soon, especially after the recent decision allowing the issuance of visas for foreigners. He said the signed sub-agreement will be sent to the Ethiopian Embassy in Kuwait for referral to the labor attaché to take the necessary action.

He stated that the recruitment of domestic workers will be done online; that is, after filling up the job order. He added the domestic labor offices will be given special codes to deal directly with the Ethiopian Ministry of Labor.

On the other hand, Managing Director and consultant of union Abdulaziz Al-Ali said the agreement stipulates regulations and conditions; such as the need for the workers to complete a 21-day training course in their country supervised by the Ethiopian Ministry of Labor. He revealed any worker who exhibits violent or aggressive behavior will be rejected before coming to Kuwait.

He stressed that the Ethiopian workers will contribute to addressing the domestic labor shortage resulting from the ban on workers from the Philippines. He is hoping for the settlement of disputes soon to resume the recruitment of workers from the Philippines.

Meat prices down in local markets: official

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

KUWAIT CITY, June 3: Munawar Al-Wawan, the Executive Director of Al-Wawan Livestock Trading Company, has confirmed a decrease in meat prices in local markets, approximately 10 percent lower than their rates during the same period last year.

He highlighted the recent arrival of approximately 2,000 Arabian sheep from Jordan.

In an exclusive statement to Al-Seyassah newspaper, Al-Wawan disclosed the revival of sheep imports from Syria after a prolonged hiatus.

Despite the visible decline in meat prices and ample meat supply in local markets, demand for sheep remains sluggish.

Al-Wawan stressed that the average price of Arabian sheep stands at 115 dinars per head. He attributed the sporadic price hikes of some sheep in the market to small traders assembling limited batches, ranging from 200 to 400 heads, for sale during the Eid Al-Adha season.

These locally bred sheep typically command higher prices than imported ones, leading to occasional price fluctuations in the meat market.

Other Voices

Boubiyan, Noura and the general manager

By Ahmed alsarraf

When discussing the pivotal role of a "director general" or similar leadership figures in any political or economic administration, I often cite compelling examples such as Lee Kuan Yew in Singapore, Hamad Al-Joaan with the Public Institution for Social Security (PIFSS), and the management of Sheraton and Hilton hotels in Egypt.

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Lee Kuan Yew stands as a beacon of transformative leadership, having spearheaded a political, engineering, social, and economic miracle in Singapore, effectively shaping the nation's destiny from humble beginnings. His visionary leadership has not only inspired emulation but has also set a standard for effective governance.

Similarly, the PIFSS, under the stewardship of the late Hamad Al-Joaan, serves as a testament to the impact of individual leadership on organizational success. Al-Joaan's remarkable efforts transformed the corporation from its nascent stages into a formidable institution, demonstrating the power of focused and determined leadership.

In contrast, Egypt's experience with the Sheraton and Hilton hotels during the socialist era under Nasser provides a stark illustration of the influence of management on organizational performance. Despite both hotels enjoying similar advantages, including location and clientele, the Sheraton consistently thrived under the management of a Lebanese hotel specialist, while the Hilton incurred significant losses under less effective leadership.

These examples underscore the critical importance of capable and visionary leadership in driving success and prosperity within institutions and organizations. Whether it be in politics, economics, or other domains, the impact of a skilled director general cannot be overstated, as they possess the ability to catalyze growth, inspire innovation, and steer organizations towards excellence.

The conversation centers on the recent government activity concerning the completion of construction work on Mubarak Port, located on Boubiyan Island, which is not only the largest island in Kuwait but also the second largest in the Gulf region after Iran's Qeshm Island.

Covering an area equivalent to 5% of the country's total land area (890 square kilometers), it is connected to the mainland by a bridge. Notably, 60% of Boubiyan Island is designated as protected areas.

Formed primarily by river sediments from the Shatt al-Arab and Shatt al-Basra, the island spans 42 kilometers in length and 25 kilometers in width, with a maximum surface elevation of just 4 meters. Its landscape is characterized by abundant swamp-lands, while it grapples with issues such as adverse weather conditions, natural drainage challenges, and highly saline soil -- attributed to the Gulf waters, which rank among the most saline globally.

During the scorching summer months, particularly in July and August, temperatures soar, often surpassing 50 degrees Celsius. Coupled with high humidity levels, the climate becomes stifling and uncomfortable for many residents.

There have been projects proposed for 15 years to build a port in addition to an airport and a residential city, but work on them was very slow, but action was finally made in conjunction with the intention of the new government administration to revive the project, and this coincided with an Emirati - Qatari - Iraqi - Turkish project to build a huge project. It connects the four countries through a port built on the Iraqi side of the Gulf.

The Kuwaiti Port Project consists of 3 phases, the first includes the construction of nine berths, then seven more berths, and the last eight berths and the number can reach 60 berths, the construction of new bridges, and the establishment of a city for light industries to support the port, in addition to some government buildings.

Boubiyan overlooks Khor Abdullah, which controls navigation between the Arabian Gulf and the port of Umm Qasr, located on Khor Al-Zubair, and almost all of them complain about the lack of depth of their waters.

The conclusion we would like to reach is that a project of this magnitude, which will forever confirm our historical, internationally recognized rights over all our lands, needs someone to manage this project with high efficiency. The current minister of works enjoys great credibility and a desire to leave her mark on the ministry, and the project will be in safe hands as long as she remains in office, but what about the future?"

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diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

'Retroactive measures vital to root out corruption in society'

"HOW did we reach this level, and this degree of falsity in our lives? The forgery of nationalities and academic certificates, cheating during exams, cheating on debts, and dishonesty at work all add up to this phenomenon," columnist **Iqbal Al-Ahmad** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

"We find ourselves in a troubling state where cheating is alarmingly prevalent, and the perpetuation of what is incorrect often takes precedence over what is right, in a society that claims to be governed by the rule of law, with mechanisms in place for accountability and punishment.

Iqbal Al-Ahmad

"What's particularly concerning is the extent to which citizens, government institutions, and the values they uphold are implicated in this dilemma. It's alarming to witness various forms of forgery emerging: from patriotism and culture to science, work, and even intentions.

"The root of this problem lies in the absence of effective oversight, a lack of integrity in work, and a deficiency in conscience. But what does conscience truly entail?

"Conscience ceases to be conscience unless it serves as a tool for reflection and accountability, acting as a deterrent against wrongdoing and fear of error. Those who engage in deceit, dishonesty, or exploitation cannot be considered to possess a true conscience.

"It's imperative to acknowledge that the state, through its officials, cannot evade responsibility. Every official, at every level of governance, bears accountability for the conduct within their jurisdiction, be it a department, administration, ministry, or institution.

"However, the gravest concern arises when these officials themselves become the architects of corruption. They must be held directly accountable, with the full force of the law applied to them without compromise.

"Fortunately, under our new determined leadership, we are witnessing a proactive stance towards cleaning up and enforcing the law.

"This includes retroactive measures to uncover instances of forgery, meticulous scrutiny of academic credentials to distinguish between genuine and fraudulent ones, and a concerted effort to deter deceit across all sectors.

"This initial step has reignited a sense of hope and optimism within us, replacing despair and frustration with a belief in the possibility of positive change. It's my earnest hope that law enforcement efforts will escalate steadily until we can declare victory in purging our nation's body from the scourge of fraud and moral bankruptcy, akin to a cancer patient ringing the bell to signify their triumph over the disease."

Also:

"Gathering at the designated spot in the late afternoon, people from various towns and cities across the small island assembled, witnessing its changing landscape as the sea relentlessly eroded its shores," columnist **Khawla Matar** wrote for **Al-Jarida** daily.

"Among them were women, children, men, the elderly, and even the disabled, united in purpose as they prepared for what lay ahead.

"Palestinian flags were distributed, alongside banners denouncing genocide, normalization, colonialism, and domination.

"A large Palestinian flag soared above the crowd as they began their march, echoing the fervent slogans often heard among Bahrainis, both publicly and in their hearts, lamenting the plight of their Palestinian brothers and sisters.

"Under the Gulf afternoon sun, the march commenced with vigor, voices raised in solidarity with Gaza and all of Palestine, standing defiant against the Zionist-American agenda.

"Despite facing formidable odds, the spirit of resistance burned bright, as even children proudly waved flags and chanted slogans of victory and remembrance for the martyrs.

"The people of Gaza, armed not only with resolve but also with an acute understanding of their struggle, defied the empty promises and deceptive projects touted by their oppressors.

"These projects, designed to deceive the Arab masses, were laid bare by the resolute actions of Gaza's inhabitants, who saw through the veneer of deceit and emerged triumphant in their resilience.

"As Gaza's steadfastness continues to inspire, those standing in solidarity reaffirm their unwavering support, declaring that their hearts beat alongside the besieged enclave. Amidst tears and prayers, they draw strength from the courage displayed by their Palestinian brethren, echoing the steadfast mantra of 'victory or martyrdom'.

"With each step of the march, fatigue may set in, but the collective determination to stand with Gaza, Palestine, Lebanon, and all lands rising against oppression is renewed. Even as onlookers peer from behind the windows of passing vehicles, a mix of emotions fills the air – shame, fear, pride, and hope – all intertwined in the struggle for justice and liberation."

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"Al-Hajjaj and his son … A popular legend says: 'Allah spared the pilgrims from his son.' I do not know how true it is historically, but it is circulated in the Gulf and the Arabian Peninsula," columnist **Talal Al-Saeed** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"It is said that when Al-Hajjaj passed away, he instructed his son to carry him to the cemetery in a straight line and destroy any house that got in his way.

"The boy adhered to the instruction and demolished every house that got in the way of the funeral, until he reached the cemetery. People said: 'May Allah forgive Al-Hajjaj for his son. He intended for the people to forgive him after they saw the injustice done to his son!'

"The Kuwaiti street says: 'We expected that the government would be more merciful to us than the National Assembly, which passed away without regret, and that there will be decisions issued in the interest of the citizen, including increments, loans and others.'

"Leaked information states that the first task of the government is the new unfair Traffic Law that was rejected by the Assembly. With this law, the government is pushing us to have mercy on the days of the Assembly after we applauded the solution!

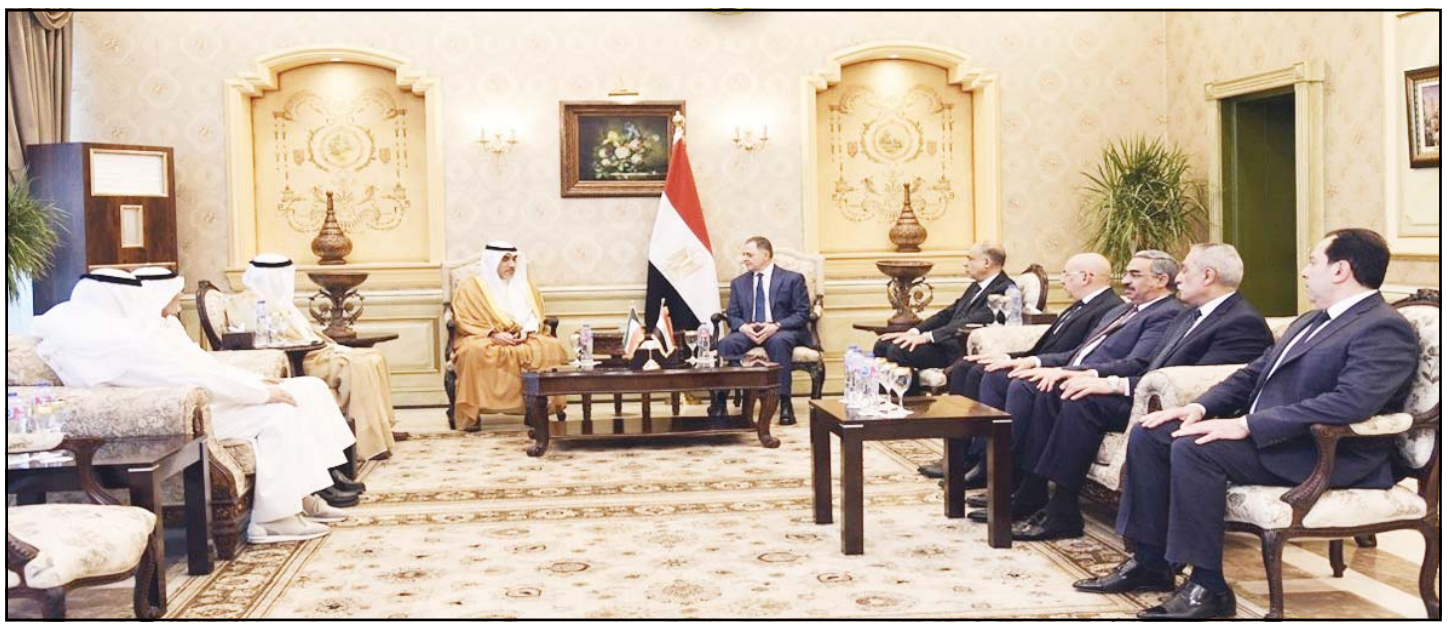
"According to leaked information, the new Traffic Law stipulates harsh penalties -- the least of which is imprisonment for a month and a fine of KD500. It does not distinguish between those who intentionally violate the law and those who commit violations because they do not know the law, as if they are waiting for us to make a mistake so that they can take revenge on us! What is worse is that some violation books, if not all of them, are in the hands of the sons of Kuwaiti women married to non-Kuwaitis who prey on the mistake of the Kuwaiti and even magnifies the violation. Therefore, the punishment is magnified in a manner similar to what a hateful and vengeful person does, except those who obtained the mercy of my Lord!

"For example, if you park in a 'no parking' area, you will be issued a ticket for obstructing traffic. The new Traffic Law requires them to be honest and the violator (with an open letter 'L') must prove otherwise!

"Oh government, you put our necks in the hands of those who do not have mercy on us. You have imposed harsher penalties on us. We are certain that the ordinary citizen is the one 'who eats them', because of teenagers who handed them the violation books!

"It is assumed that for a major violation, the only person authorized to lift it is someone with a high rank to ensure there is no injustice. However, the matter is in the hands of the sons of Kuwaiti women married to non-Kuwaitis. The violations are very serious, so peace be upon us and our pension. May Allah pardon Al-Hajjaj for his son."

— Compiled by PFX Fernandes



KUNA photo

First Deputy PM, and Minister of Defense and Interior Sheikh Fahad Yusuf Saud Al-Sabah meets with his Egyptian counterpart Mahmoud Tawfiq.

Kuwait's Sheikh Fahad Yusuf pays his first visit to Egypt

First Deputy PM lauds security co-op with Egypt

CAIRO, June 3, (KUNA): First Deputy Prime Minister, and Minister of Defense and Interior Sheikh Fahad Yusuf Saud Al-Sabah commended on Sunday security collaboration between Egypt and Kuwait's Ministry of Interior.

Paying his first visit to Egypt, Sheikh Fahad discussed with his Egyptian counterpart Mahmoud Tawfiq the most important security issues and means of enhancing ties between the two sides, according to a statement received by Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) following a meeting between the two ministers.

Egypt has recently extradited a defendant to Kuwait, in line with security cooperation between the two sides.

The two ministers discussed the latest security issues of common concerns, in addition to cooperation mechanism and sharing expertise to benefit from training capacities in all security fields, the statement added.

They further dealt with obstacles facing citizens and Kuwaiti students studying in Egypt, and facilitating all measures as well as disclosing currencies at airports, it stated.

Furthermore, they covered the causes of delaying registering Kuwaiti citizens' property in Egypt, in addition to reaching a deal to set a mechanism with the concerned bodies to regulate and accelerate ending the measures of security agreements, it noted.

Meanwhile, the Egyptian minister extolled the meeting and what has been discussed, referring to security sharing, and deep-rooted and historic relations between the two sisterly countries.

The meeting featured Kuwait's Ambassador to Egypt Ghanim Al-Ghanim and a high-level delegation accompanying Sheikh Fahad Yusuf.

Appeals cancels bankruptcy ruling for consultant doctor

Court adjourns case against former MP until June 24

By Jaber Al-Hamoud, Munif Naif
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 3: The Court of Appeals, presided over by Justice Professor Mutlaq Hamoud Al-Mutairi, issued a final ruling to cancel the bankruptcy of a consultant doctor and dismissed the lawsuit filed against him in the public session held on May 21, 2024.

Lawyer for the consultant doctor, Attorney Dr. Fawaz Khaled Al-Khatib, stressed that doctors are exempted from bankruptcy, because they do not engage in commercial activities.

The ruling included important legal principles like filing an appeal by the Bankruptcy Department as a regulatory procedure. If the appellant files the appeal at the court docket, this does not affect the validity of the appeal.

The ruling indicated that even though the Bankruptcy Department receives appeals as an agent, this does not take away the jurisdiction of the Court of Appeals over these appeals.

The ruling also indicated that a bankruptcy verdict would be invalid if it is not preceded by the issuance of a bankruptcy decision; adding in the reasoning that if a ruling was previously issued canceling the bankruptcy decision, it is an essential part of declaring bankruptcy,

This leads to the disappearance of the effects of the bankruptcy proceedings, thus, the ruling is invalid and the case is declared inadmissible.

Dr Al-Khatib

The ruling also confirmed an important legal principle stating that doctors cannot be declared bankrupt, given that they do not practice professional commerce and do not engage in commercial business on a regular basis -- a principle that was confirmed in a previous ruling.

Al-Khatib pointed out that the ruling cannot be appealed at the Court of Cassation in accordance with the Bankruptcy Law, so the court establishes basic legal principles, which contribute to protecting the rights of doctors and individuals, and emphasizes the importance of sound legal procedures in bankruptcy cases.

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Ruling set for June 24: The Criminal Court, headed by Judge Nayef Al-Dahoum, adjourned the case filed by the Public Prosecution against former MP Dr. Walid Al-Tabtabaei until June 24 for ruling, as it rejected his request to be released on bail.

The trial sessions witnessed Al-Tabtabaei being confronted with charges of challenging the powers of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, against the backdrop of his tweet following the speech that His Highness the Amir delivered regarding the dissolution of the National Assembly. However, he denied those accusations and said that the tweet in question was attributed to him and did not come from his account on the X platform.

Al-Tabtabaei's defense team demanded that he be released on any bail decided by the court.

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Fashionista's release rejected: The Court of Appeals has decided to issue ruling on the case filed against a broadcaster and fashionista, accused of immorality and debauchery, on June 9, and refused to release her.

She had appealed the ruling issued by the Criminal Court which had sentenced her to two-year imprisonment with hard labor and imposed a fine of KD 2,000 for incitement to immorality and debauchery, and misuse of a smartphone due to the presence of photographs and video clips.

❑ ❑ ❑

Vote buying case on June 9: The Court of Appeals has decided to reserve the session of June 9 for the case filed against a former MP who was accused of buying votes, and refused to suspend the implementation of the ruling.

During the court session yesterday, the former MP was brought from the Central Prison to the Court of Appeals in his first session in the vote-buying case, after he surrendered himself yesterday to the Enforcement Department in implementation of the ruling issued against him by the Criminal Court to imprison him for two years with hard labor for buying votes for the National Assembly elections.

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Drug addict held: A young Kuwaiti citizen was arrested for using and possessing drugs in Taima, Jahra.

According to security sources, Jahra security officers were patrolling Taima area when they suspected a young man who was behaving in a disoriented manner. They stopped him for investigations and discovered that he was under the influence of drugs.

When they tried to arrest him, he resisted. They checked him and found paraphernalia used for consuming crystal meth and narcotic pills.

He was referred with the seized items to the concerned authorities for necessary legal action.

Exam paper 'leakage' incident condemned

By Abdul Rahman Al-Shimmari
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 3: Dr. Adel Al-Adwani, the Minister of Education, has wrapped up the duties assigned to all members of the examination committee, laying the groundwork for the appointment of a new team to oversee the process in the aftermath of an examination leakage incident.

According to informed sources, Dr. Al-Adwani has formed an extensive investigation committee as a prelude to taking decisive action against those responsible for the leakage.

Earlier reports from Al-Seyassah newspaper detailed the Ministry of Education's decision to reschedule the Islamic Education exam for second-grade students in both scientific and literary sections to a later date, designating Tuesday as a day of rest.

According to educational sources, the Islamic Education exam for second-grade students, encompassing both literary and scientific sections, was canceled today and postponed to an unspecified future date due to the leakage incident.

'License plate numbers being deleted'

Crushing of cars legal procedure by MoI

KUWAIT CITY, June 3: According to informed sources, the recently launched process of destruction or crushing of cars by the Ministry of Interior is a legal procedure that is implemented when the cars are either too old, or neglected, or used for showing off and driving recklessly, or belong to owners who are unknown, reports Al-Qabas daily.

They explained that the details and license plate numbers of the wrecked vehicles are deleted. Some of these cars had been taken by traffic authorities and left unclaimed for over a year, despite being advertised in the official gazette.

According to the traffic regulations, if a vehicle remains unclaimed for a year after being seized, it becomes public property. Therefore, these impounded cars are auctioned off as scrap, and the proceeds are referred to the State Treasury.

The source affirmed that it is crucial to crush or destroy these cars primarily for security purposes, rather than just traffic concerns, adding that the ministry plans to include the car crushing charges in the upcoming amendment to the pertinent law with the aim of reducing and discouraging reckless drivers who create excessive noise, endanger others' lives, and disrupt traffic.

Demolition of illegal structures in Jahra

KUWAIT CITY, June 3: The Kuwait Municipality branch in Jahra Governorate has launched an intensive campaign to remove encroachments on State properties, reports Al-Jarida daily quoting sources.

Sources confirmed that the campaign led to the demolition of the biggest illegal structure on a State property -- a 'market' for second-hand trucks near Doha.

Sources said the campaign also resulted in the removal of illegal structures on empty plots that some individuals built and rented to others.

Sources stated that the campaign is in compliance with the directives of State Minister for Municipal Affairs Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan and Director General of the Municipality Eng Saud Al-Dabbous; adding it was conducted under the supervision of Deputy Director General for Capital and Jahra Affairs Eng. Thamer Al-Dhefairi.

Meanwhile, the Public Relations Department in the Municipality stated that the campaigns targeting illegal structures are carried out in collaboration with the Public Sanitation and Violation Removal departments.

Italian Embassy commemorates National Day

Ambassador Morini pledges to strengthen bilateral ties with Kuwait

By Paul Francis X. Fernandes
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 3: The Italian Ambassador to Kuwait, HE Lorenzo Morini, Sunday affirmed the strong bilateral ties between Kuwait and Italy, which he said, has lasted for more than 60 years based on mutual trust and cooperation between both nations.

Morini was speaking on the occasion of his country's National Day celebrations organized by the Italian Embassy in Kuwait. The event was graced by Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs HE Ambassador Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Assistant Foreign Minister for European Affairs Ambassador Sadeq Marafi, and several heads of diplomatic missions and diplomats accredited to Kuwait, dignitaries, invited guests and media fraternity.

The Italian Ambassador emphasized his intention to pursue various avenues to strengthen bilateral cooperation between the two countries in the coming months.

Specifically, he highlighted the importance of enhancing scientific, academic, and cultural relations, facilitating the exchange of students, researchers, and professors, promoting language learning initiatives, and boosting tourism to Italy.

He described these efforts as essential pillars for fostering a stronger friendship and deeper cooperation with the State of Kuwait.

Seventy-eight years ago, the Italian envoy said, on June 2, 1946, Italy courageously embraced a new future, leaving behind the dark chapter of fascism and embracing progress. Since then, Italy has emerged as a proactive advocate for peace, dialogue, and multilateralism on the international stage.

"We're proud," he said, "to be among the top contributors to UN peace and security efforts, including our significant presence in Kuwait as part of Operation Inherent Resolve against ISIS. Additionally, Italy is committed to supporting developing countries and combating climate change and biodiversity loss. "Our economic and social growth since 1946 has been remarkable, positioning Italy among the world's most advanced economies and leading manufacturers.

"Today, as we celebrate the 60th anniversary of bilateral relations between Italy and Kuwait, our partnership stands as a shining example of trust and collaboration. Our political dialogue, security cooperation, and economic ties continue to strengthen.

He went on to say, the presence of 'Made in Italy' products throughout Kuwait underscores the mutual admiration between our peoples. Kuwaitis' passion for Italian goods and lifestyle is evident in the growing number of tourists visiting Italy each year.

Most importantly, there's a growing interest among Kuwaiti youth to explore all facets of Italy, from its food and art to its cultural heritage and traditions. This curiosity fosters a deeper understanding and friendship between our nations.

In the coming months, I'm committed to enhancing people-to-people contacts, academic and cultural exchanges, language learning, and tourism promotion to further strengthen our bond.

"I look forward to continuing our collaboration with Kuwaiti authorities and appreciate the support we've received since day one," he concluded.

HE Lorenzo Morini with HE Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah during a cake cutting ceremony.

Photo by Mahmoud Jadeed

Invited guests during the Italy's National Day celebrations organized by the Italian Embassy in Kuwait.

Several heads of diplomatic missions and diplomats to Kuwait.

KRCS & API sign MoU for research, advisory co-op

Collaboration to strengthen national capabilities

KUWAIT CITY, June 3, (KUNA): The Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) and the Arab Planning Institute (API) signed on Sunday a memorandum of understanding for cooperation in economic and social planning and in the field of preparing advisory and research studies.

The Chairman of KRCS, Dr. Hilal Al-Sayer stated to KUNA after the signing that this memorandum will contribute to the development and support of human cadres in the society through cooperation in capacity building and training fields.

Al-Sayer added that another aim of the memorandum was to establish a general framework for cooperation between the two parties in areas and priorities of mutual interest, praising the role played by the institute in supporting Kuwaiti institutions in all forms by providing projects, studies, and ideas that contribute to the development and enhancement of national capabilities.

He mentioned that KRCS looks forward through this cooperation to benefit from the expertise of API in the field of human resource development and capacity building for the staff working in the society.

On his part, Director of the API, Dr. Abdullah Al-Shami said in a similar statement to KUNA that this memorandum aimed to build capacities, training, holding developmental forums, providing technical and institutional support to KRCS and preparing its strategic plan for the upcoming period.

Dr. Al-Shami added that the signing of this memorandum comes within the framework of the developmental efforts and services provided by the institute aiming enhance the benefit of state ministries and institutions from these services.

He mentioned that API would provide training opportunities for the KRCS' staff in training programs and workshops, and design and implement specialized training programs for the society in line with its social role in humanitarian and volunteer work.

KUNA photo

Kuwait Red Crescent Society and Arab Planning Institute sign a memorandum of understanding.

Empowering needy families

UNHCR and KANF ink letter of intent

KUWAIT CITY, June 3, (KUNA): The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Kuwait Association for Needy Families (KANF) signed, Sunday, a letter of intent, empowering families in need. In a press statement, UNHCR Representative in Kuwait Nisreen Rubaian said that letter of intent coincides with World Refugee Day on June 20 under the slogan "A worldwide Refugee welcome," representing the UNHCR's milestone in their efforts of improving lives.

The joint effort between UNHCR and KANF, added Rubaian, is the first of its kind that focuses on enabling people under the UNHCR's care in Kuwait, providing pre-paid cards to widen their choices and receive aid. In a similar statement, KANF's Chairman of the Board of Directors Bader Al-Mubarak said this agreement seeks to support and enable individuals in need through offering training spaces for youths that do not contradict Kuwaiti law.

Al-Mubarak pointed out that Kuwait and the UN's relationship had lasted for decades, embodying the emboldened bilateral relations they share, including bestowing Kuwait and its late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah with titles regarding humanitarianism.

The UNHCR's office in Kuwait is interested in creating and nurturing community partnerships with Kuwaiti charities.

KUNA photo

UNHCR Representative with KANF's Chairman during the signing of letter of intent.

Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait introduces '24 summer student internship program

KUWAIT CITY, June 3: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) is delighted to announce the launch of its summer student internship program, set to commence in June 2024. This immersive initiative is crafted to provide participants with a holistic blend of structured learning, hands-on experience.

Al Arbash

The program is designed to help students gain practical experience in the banking industry, explore diverse career options within the bank to clarify future career paths and build a professional network with industry experts.

Afrah Al Arbash, General Manager of Human Resources at ABK stated, "We are thrilled to offer students a unique opportunity to gain practical insights into the banking industry through our summer internship program, and we are committed to nurturing talent and fostering the next generation of banking professionals."

The Program includes 3 training courses for students with a period of two weeks for each one, participating students will embark on a journey where they will gain practical hands-on experience in the dynamic realm of the banking industry. This is in addition to the opportunity to explore diverse career options, enabling them to clarify their aspirations and chart a course for their professional growth.

Al Arbash added, "By engaging with industry experts and professionals, interns will also have the chance to develop a robust professional network that can catalyze their career progression and open doors to new opportunities."

The summer student internship program at ABK promises to be a transformative experience for aspiring students seeking to build a strong foundation in the banking sector. Interested students are encouraged to apply and embark on a journey of growth, learning, and professional development with ABK starting 2 June 2024 to 25 July 2024, where the program will start in 30 June 2024.

HH Amir Rep attends El Salvador Prez swearing-in

KUWAIT CITY, June 3, (KUNA): Representative of His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Ambassador to Mexico and non-resident Ambassador to El Salvador Saleh Al-Haddad attended the swear-in ceremony of Salvadorian President Nayib Bukele.

In a statement by the Kuwaiti Embassy in Mexico, Ambassador Al-Haddad conveyed greetings and wishes of success from His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal to President Bukele. The Kuwaiti diplomat also reflected his country's keenness on bolstering ties with El Salvador on all possible levels.

Bukele is embarking on his second term lasting five years. He was sworn in as President on June 1 at the Presidential Palace in the capital San Salvador.

Kuwait Amir,

Continued from Page 1

keep bilateral relations on an upward trajectory.

The talks, presided over by Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya and his Saudi counterpart Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al-Saud, delved into bilateral relations and the progress ties have seen across a myriad of fields, said a foreign ministry statement.

Kuwait and Riyadh, amid the session, clinched a memorandum of understanding dealing with the mutual recognition of seafarers' certificates, in addition to another pair of similar agreements over environment conservation and diplomatic cooperation, respectively, added the statement.

Cybersecurity

Continued from Page 1

can be extracted from the available data by analyzing an individual's behavior and the content consumed through social media platforms.

Abul-Gheit noted that social media platforms can have dangerous consequences and impacts when misused, such as spreading false information, calls for violence and hatred and speeches questioning the integrity of individuals and national institutions, which would give criminal and terrorist organizations exceptional capabilities and skills to carry out cyberattacks and misinformation campaigns.

Abul-Gheit emphasized the need to build new capabilities to strengthen the technological defense line with innovative approaches that are continuously updated to match the nature of emerging threats and called for launching awareness campaigns to alert Arab citizens and various Arab institutions about the importance of data protection from cybercrime risks.

He noted that the conference would witness the launch of the Arab Strategy for Cybersecurity prepared by the organization and approved by the Council of Arab Ministers for Communication and Information at its recent meeting in Abu Dhabi.

He added that the last Arab summit approved the Saudi initiative to establish an Arab ministerial council for cybersecurity, supported by a permanent technical secretariat based in Riyadh, expressing his hope that it would be launched as soon as possible to undertake its assigned tasks.

On his part, Secretary-General of the Arab Organization for Communication and Information Technologies, Mohammad bin Omar stated that the Arab region was witnessing several challenges in the field of cybersecurity, including rapid technological development, lack of awareness about cyber issues and the development and complexity of threats and legal and regulatory challenges.

He noted that the continued evolution of cyber threats in terms of complexity and frequency, implementing strong security measures was extremely important to protect individuals, companies and government entities from harmful activities and pointed out the importance of proactive and comprehensive cybersecurity strategies to mitigate risks and maintain trust in digital ecosystems.

The Arab Cybersecurity Strategy, prepared by the Arab Information Technology Organization, would be launching as a roadmap for countries to develop and improve their national cybersecurity strategies.

Kuwait urges

Continued from Page 1

The 112th meeting holds a special importance as its agenda is filled with hefty topics and is held in the midst of ongoing aggression on Gaza Strip.

Over the span of 11 days it will be handling issues concerning laborers including protection criteria, basic rights and principles as well as work suitability and care economy.

Meanwhile, Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Secretary-General Jasem Al-Budaiwi welcomed Monday the initiative of US President Joe Biden for a ceasefire, release of prisoners, safe return of displaced persons, withdrawal of Israeli occupation forces and humanitarian aid.

Al-Budaiwi, in a press statement, praised the efforts made by Qatar and Egypt to achieve a ceasefire and halt the Israeli aggression against the Gaza Strip.

He emphasized the importance of building upon this declaration to reach a political framework for resuming negotiations towards achieving comprehensive peace based on the two-state solution, in accordance with the Arab Peace Initiative and international legitimacy resolutions.

Elsewhere, Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry called the Palestinian and Israeli parties to accept the US proposal for a ceasefire in Gaza, stressing that the continuation of the war is unacceptable.

In a joint press conference with Spain's Foreign Minister Jose Manuel Albarez in the Spanish capital, Madrid, Shoukry said "We are looking at Israel's response after reports that the Hamas movement received the proposal positively," while he stressed continuing to work with Qatar, the US, and European partners to motivate both parties to accept the plan.

He stressed that the Israeli occupation military presence in Gaza is completely rejected by Egypt and also by most of the international community, noting that Egypt looks forward to a future in which peace prevails, a two-state solution and the establishment of a Palestinian state based on the 1976 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital.

For his part, Albarez said that Spain officially recognized the State of Palestine last week because it is time to stop talking and start implementing the two-state solution, pointing out that Spain is counting on Egypt's support to advance in this field and strengthen international recognition of the State of Palestine.

He considered that his Egyptian counterpart's visit today is support for the implementation of the two-state solution, pointing to the constructive position of the Egyptian government in defending peace and stability in the region.

Global felicitations

Continued from Page 1

His Highness Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah on being appointed as Crown Prince, wishing Kuwait's and its people further progress and development.

In a press statement, State Department spokesman Mathew Miller said "The United States congratulates His Highness Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Sabah for his appointment as the new Crown Prince of Kuwait."

"His Highness Sheikh Sabah has a distinguished background of public service for his country, which includes previously serving as the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister, he added.

"The United States values our strategic partnership with the State of Kuwait. We look forward to deepening our friendship with Kuwait and His Highness Sheikh Sabah as we work toward a peaceful and prosperous Middle East region."

His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah issued an order on Sunday appointing His Highness Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah as Crown Prince.

Kuwait-Saudi statement lauds strength of bilateral relations

More co-op, measures to clamp down extremism

KUWAIT CITY, June 3, (KUNA): A joint statement released after fresh talks involving a coordination committee linking Kuwait and Saudi Arabia heaped praise on the "strength" of bilateral ties, citing more room for progress across numerous fields.

The respective political leaders of the Gulf Arab neighbors share a common desire to propel these ties to even greater levels, the statement underlined, saying the two nations routinely draw up fresh plans and strategies to help usher in growth in relations, as "per the instructions" of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz.

Economy

The aforementioned committee, which is comprised of smaller groups focusing on matters that run the gamut from politics and security to the economy, was created with the express purpose of bringing that goal to fruition, added the statement after talks presided over by Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya and his Saudi opposite number Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al-Saud.

These goals include more cooperation on counter-terrorism efforts and measures aiming to clamp down on extremism, while recent round of talks yielded substantial progress on plans to establish a rail link between the Gulf Arab states, a marquee endeavor that is expected to see the light of day in the near future, it said.

Kuwait and Riyadh also have other similar plans in the works, including forging a "shared vision" on issues ranging from culture and the media to tourism and social development, in addition to greater healthcare and educational cooperation, according to the statement.

The statement went on to give due credit to the Kuwaiti-Saudi joint coordination committee for its contributions towards keeping relations on an upward trajectory, revealing that the next round of talks are slated for next year in the Saudi capital.

Kuwait's PM receives new Chairman and board of Public Tenders agency

KUWAIT CITY, June 3, (KUNA): His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received at Seif Palace Sunday Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Shareeda Abdullah Al-Mousherji, who introduced to him the chairman and board of Central Agency for Public Tenders.

His Highness the Prime Minister expressed his sincere congratulations to the agency's chairman and members of the Board of Directors on assuming their new posts and wished them good luck and success, calling on them to exert more efforts to accomplish the tasks entrusted to them for the interest of the dear nation.

He stressed that many important projects are awaiting consideration and approval of relevant tenders, adding that the state has already allocated the required budgets to the ministries and various institutions. and which are awaiting their turn before the tendering committee.

His Highness the Prime Minister directed the Committee to redouble the effort while adhering to the applicable laws and regulations in order to advance the country and achieve the aspirations of people, under the directives of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

Message from Korean ambassador

Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to the State of Kuwait HE Chung Byung-ha said on behalf of the Government and the people of the Republic of Korea, "I have the honor to extend to His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah my sincere congratulations and best wishes on the occasion of His Highness's appointment as the Crown Prince of the State of Kuwait.

HE Chung Byung-ha – Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to the State of Kuwait

"His Highness's appointment as Crown Prince signals His Highness the Amir's trust in his powers and capabilities in assuming responsibilities as a Crown Prince in pursuing the successful career of development and prosperity in the State of Kuwait.

"I am certain that the State of Kuwait will prosper under the wise guidance of His Highness the Crown Prince who has been at the service of the country over the past decades.

"I once again would like to congratulate His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and wish him good health, well-being and greater success in his supreme duties, as well as more progress and prosperity for the people of Kuwait."

World News Roundup

Europe

Germany floods kill 2

France's 'far right' may win big in poll

PARIS, June 3, (AP): French far-right leader **Marine Le Pen** isn't on the ballot at the weekend's European Parliament election, but she's likely to emerge as one of its biggest winners.

Polls expect her National Rally party to be the top vote-getter in France, trouncing President Emmanuel Macron's moderate pro-business party. And across Europe, the anti-immigration, nationalist ideas Le Pen has long championed are gaining ground.

The June 6-9 elections in all 27 EU countries will shift the makeup of the European Parliament and policy-making in the European Commission, the EU's executive arm, likely toward the right and far right. That could have lasting impact on the EU - and boost Le Pen's chances of winning France's presidency in 2027, a long-time dream.

Le Pen

The National Rally's lead European Parliament candidate Jordan Bardella is riding high on promises to limit free movement of migrants within the EU's open borders, ease up EU pressure on Russia and dial back EU climate rules.

"We stand by the idea of rethinking the European model around the idea of nations. Macron's Europe is a model of the past," Bardella said at a Paris rally Sunday.

Macron's pro-EU movement meanwhile is flailing, and its chief candidate Valerie Hayer has struggled to make a mark. That's troubling for Macron as he tries to lead Europe-wide efforts to defend Ukraine and boost the EU's own defenses and industry.

Rising

More popular Prime Minister Gabriel Attal is now joining Hayer at rallies, warning voters that hard-fought post-war European unity - and democracy itself -- is under threat by rising authoritarianism.

''Europe is mortal, because war knocks on our door as bombs are being dropped on Ukraine, on democracy, on our values, and because we know that if Russia wins it won't stop there," Attal said at a rally last week.

He said Europe knows "it can't rely on the U.S. eternally and needs to protect itself ... because challenges are multiplying, climate change, big tech, AI, and we can only face them together, the 27 of us."

While EU voters are choosing members of the European Parliament, many are making decisions based on national concerns - and in France, many are expected to use their ballots to express frustration with Macron's management of the economy, the farm sector, or security in a country about to host the high-risk Paris Olympics.

On the left, polls show a surprising resurgence of France's Socialist Party behind its lead candidate Raphael Glucksmann, who pledges more ambitious climate policy and protections for European businesses and workers.

Russia's president, Gulf leaders and other oil powers "can well cut supplies of gas or oil, but they can't prevent the wind from blowing in (the French Atlantic town of) Saint-Nazaire and the sun from shining in Marseille.

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Tomasdottir wins in Iceland poll: Halla Tomasdottir, a businesswoman and investor, has won Iceland's presidential election, topping a crowded field of candidates in which the top three finishers were women, the country's national broadcast service reported.

Tomasdottir was elected to the largely ceremonial post with 34.3% of the vote, defeating former Prime Minister Katrin Jakobsdottir, with 25.2%, and Halla Hrund Logadottir, with 15.5%, RUV said Sunday.

Tomasdottir, 55, campaigned as someone who was above party politics and could help open discussions on fundamental issues such as the effect of social media on the mental health of young people, Iceland's development as a tourist destination and the role of artificial intelligence.

She will replace President Gudni Th. Johannesson, who did not seek re-election after two four-year terms. Tomasdottir will take office on Aug. 1.

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Serbia populists declare victory: Serbia's ruling populists declared victory at tense municipal elections in dozens of cities and towns throughout the Balkan country Sunday, including a rerun vote in the capital, Belgrade, as opposition claimed major irregularities.

The victory claim, which was likely to be confirmed by the state electoral commission, would cement the right-wing Serbian Progressive Party's hold on power in the country that is a candidate nation for European Union membership.

Prime Minister Milos Vucevic told reporters that the party swept the election and that the victory is "pure and convincing."

Preliminary results for each city and municipality were expected later Sunday. Official results were expected Monday.

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Georgia speaker signs bill into law: The speaker of Georgia's parliament said he gave the final endorsement on Monday to a divisive "foreign agents" bill that has prompted weeks of protests by critics who say it will restrict media freedom and jeopardize Georgia's chances of joining the European Union.

Shalva Papuashvili signed the bill into law after the legislature, controlled by the ruling Georgian Dream party, dismissed the veto of President Salome Zourabichvili.

Zourabichvili, who is increasingly at odds with the governing party, vetoed it, accusing the governing party of jeopardizing the country's future and "hindering the path toward becoming a full member of the free and democratic world." The government argues that the law is needed to stem what it deems to be harmful foreign actors trying to destabilize the South Caucasus nation of 3.7 million.

❑ ❑ ❑

Germany floods kill 2: The death toll in floods across a large part of southern Germany rose to two on Monday as the body of a missing woman was found. Chancellor Olaf Scholz visited the flooded region and officials warned that water levels could rise further in some areas.

The body of the 43-year-old, whom rescuers had been looking for since Sunday morning, was found in a basement in the Bavarian town of Schrobenhausen, police told German news agency dpa. A firefighter was found dead in nearby Pfaffenhofen on Sunday after an inflatable boat he and colleagues were using capsized.

Brownsville Mayor John Cowen delivers remarks during a visit to the southern border on Feb 29 in Brownsville, Texas, as US President Joe Biden looks on. Cowen is headed to Washington on Tuesday, June 4, when Biden is expected to announce an executive order that will mark his latest and most aggressive plan to curtail the number of migrants allowed to seek asylum in the US. (AP)

Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic speaks at his party's headquarters during local elections in Belgrade, Serbia on June 2. Serbia's ruling populists declared victory at tense municipal elections in dozens of cities and towns throughout the Balkan country Sunday, including a rerun vote in the capital, Belgrade, as opposition claimed major irregularities. (AP)

Malik

Evers

America

'Help find shooters': The mayor and police chief of Akron called on witnesses to come forward with any information about who carried out a mass shooting in the Ohio city that killed one person and wounded 24 others, some critically, just after midnight Sunday.

"This was a tragic incident which impacts our entire community," Mayor **Shammas Malik** said. "The sheer number of victims is shocking and disconcerting. I want to be very clear: Anyone who was involved in last night's shooting will be held accountable to the fullest extent of the law."

The shooting killed a 27-year-old man, whose identity was not immediately released. The wounded ranged in age from 19 to 43, Police Chief Brian Harding said.

There were 25 victims, including the man who died, and at least two wounded victims remained in critical condition. Others had non-life-threatening injuries, Akron police Capt. Michael Miller said Sunday.

No arrests were immediately reported and police asked anyone with information to call detectives. (AP)

❑ ❑ ❑

Shark attacks swimmer: A swimmer was seriously injured in a shark attack on the Southern California coast Sunday, prompting temporary beach closures, authorities said.

The attack happened Sunday morning at Del Mar City Beach in Del Mar, about 20 miles (32 kilometers) north of San Diego, local officials said.

The 46-year-old man, an ocean swimmer who regularly trains at the beach, suffered significant but not life-threatening injuries. He was taken to a hospital for treatment, city officials said.

The attack happened about 100 yards (91 meters) from a beach lifeguard station. The swimmer was bitten in the torso, left arm and hand.

Authorities said the beach will remain closed for surfers and swimmers until Tuesday morning. (AP)

❑ ❑ ❑

Ex-NJ officer gets 27 yrs: A former New Jersey police officer has been sentenced to a total of 27 years in prison in the shooting death of one man and the wounding of another during a high-speed car chase 5 1/2 years ago in the city of Newark.

Superior Court Judge Michael Ravin, citing a need to deter officers from what he called a "shoot-first, ask-questions-later" mentality, sentenced former Newark officer Jovanny Crespo on Friday to 20 years for aggravated manslaughter and seven years for aggravated assault in the January 2019 chase, NJ.com reported.

Those sentences will run consecutively; the judge imposed six-year official misconduct terms that will run concurrently to the other sentences. NJ.com reported that 31-year-old Crespo sunk back into his chair and members of his family wept as the judge told him he would not be eligible for parole for 22 years and 11 months. (AP)

❑ ❑ ❑

Wisconsin prison warden quits: The warden at a troubled Wisconsin prison will step down later this month amid lockdown conditions, an ongoing federal investigation and multiple inmate deaths.

Waupun Correctional Institution Warden Randall Hepp announced his resignation on Tuesday, the Wisconsin State Journal reported. The newspaper obtained an email Hepp sent to prison staff in which he wrote his decision wasn't easy but he believes it will serve the institution well. He added that the prison has moved closer toward improving safety.

State Department of Corrections spokesperson Beth Hardtke told The Associated Press on Sunday that Hepp actually announced his retirement, not his resignation. She did not respond to a request for a copy of his Tuesday email. Gov **Tony Evers** spokesperson, Britt Cudaback, referred questions to DOC officials.

Brad Mlodzik, who previously worked as deputy warden at Waupun, will take over as warden there on June 30, the State Journal reported.

A chronic lack of guards forced the state Department of Corrections to institute a lockdown at Waupun as well as at prisons in Green Bay and Stanley. (AP)

Politics

Border mayors head to DC

GOP makes Biden's EV push election-year issue

TOLEDO, Ohio, June 3, (AP): Donald Trump says the Biden administration's policy to promote electric vehicles is a "radical plan" that would kill the economy in automaking states. Republican allies in the petroleum industry have spent millions on ads that say President Joe Biden's tax credit for EV buyers will cost Americans their freedom.

For voters this election year like Jim Cagle, a retired Jeep assembly-line worker from Toledo, Ohio, the concerns about all-electric vehicles are more practical, such as how he would charge it. Cagle parks his car on the street because he does not have a garage.

"Can you imagine having a cord running out to the street?" Cagle said as he cleaned his minivan at a car wash near a General Motors transmission plant that later this year is set to begin building electric drive units.

Trump, the presumptive Republican presidential nominee, and others say Biden's push for EVs is unfair for consumers and amounts to government overreach, and ultimately will be a liability for Democrats. Trump even squeezed in an attack at the top of his remarks Friday after his criminal conviction in New York.

Promoting

Democrats have been less vocal and more nuanced, advocating Biden's climate reduction goals while promoting homegrown technology over competition from China.

But interviews with about 20 voters in the pivotal industrial heartlands of Ohio and Michigan reveal a more complicated dynamic among people who may decide the winner of November's presidential and Senate elections.

The Toledo area is itself a crossroads for the issue. It's an automotive city making the shift from the internal combustion engine to electric power, like neighboring Michigan, a presidential swing state that is synonymous with the auto industry.

Toledo has not only produced Jeeps since World War II, but it is also home to oil refineries that supply gasoline across the Midwest and to parts manufacturers for gas and diesel vehicles.

It's here where people like Cagle say issues such as the cost of gas and groceries will be more important than EVs when they vote. But during the interviews with people across the political spectrum, many were skeptical of the vehicles and critical of the Democratic president's tax credits.

"You cannot be shoving EVs down our throat," said Joe Dempsey of Oregon, Ohio, who drives a Toyota gas-electric hybrid that does not require charging. "Let the American people decide if it's going to happen."

The issue has put some Democrats in a tricky spot - perhaps none more so than Ohio Sen. Sherrod Brown, one of the Republicans' top targets as the GOP looks to win Senate control.

Changing

He is having to navigate a changing auto industry and his support for the president's environmental goals in a state that Trump carried twice by 8 percentage points.

A petroleum manufacturing industry group has spent about $16 million on advertising criticizing Biden's policy to promote EVs, and that total includes about $1.5 million in Ohio criticizing Brown for his support, according to AdImpact and the group's reporting. In addition to Ohio, the ads are airing in six other swing states and Montana, a GOP-leaning state where Democratic Sen. Jon Tester is seeking reelection.

Republicans, long unable to crack Brown's blue-collar backing, see linking him to Biden's sweeping 2022 Inflation Reduction Act, which created tax credits for EV buyers, as one way to do it in an election year.

Brown voted for the act, aimed at fighting climate change in part by providing a $7,500 tax credit for new EV sales to spur steps toward the president's goal of making EVs 50 percent of all new vehicle sales by 2030. Republicans and their allies routinely refer to the policy incorrectly as a government mandate.

But Brown has pledged to oppose a rule change this summer proposed by Biden to allow EVs that are built in the United States but include Chinese-made components to qualify for the credit.

Brown, a progressive with a pro-worker mantra, has little to worry about in maintaining his party's base. But he appears to be aware of the risks of being seen as allying too strongly with Biden, who is unpopular in Ohio, said former Ohio Rep Tim Ryan, a fellow Democrat.

Biden has visited EV plants and grinned as he test drove the new electric Cadillac at the Detroit Auto Show. His chief surrogate in Michigan, Gov Gretchen Whitmer, has advocated for Biden's policy, but with an eye on protecting the industry vital to her state.

Also:

McALLEN, Texas: At least two Texas border mayors are headed to **Washington** on Tuesday when President **Joe Biden** is expected to announce an executive order that will mark his latest and most aggressive plan to curtail the number of migrants allowed to seek asylum in the US.

Brownsville Mayor **John Cowen** and **Edinburg** Mayor **Ramiro Garza** both confirmed they were invited by the White House for an immigration announcement on Tuesday. Cowen told the Associated Press that he plans to attend, while Garza said he would have more details on Monday about his plans.

Notably, the Democratic mayor of **Eagle Pass,** the **Texas-Mexico** border town where the number of migrants led to a state-federal clash over border security, had not received an invitation as of Sunday. The mayor from McAllen said he was invited, but could not attend because of a prior commitment.

A White House spokesman did not immediately return a request for comment on other mayors who were invited to the announcement.

The AP reported last week that the White House was finalizing an executive order that could shut off asylum requests and automatically deny entrance to migrants once the number of people encountered by **US** border officials exceeded a new daily threshold.

The unilateral action is expected even as the number of border crossings at the southern US border has declined since December, due in large part to Mexico's escalated enforcement efforts. But Biden wants to head off any potential spike in crossings that could occur later in the year, as the fall election draws closer, when the weather cools and numbers tend to rise.

Immigration remains a concern for voters ahead of the November elections, with Republicans eager to punish Biden electorally over the issue.

Children paint during a cultural event organized by the Chinese Embassy in Cyprus to mark the International Children's Day in Limassol, Cyprus on June 1. (Xinhua)

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, (left), talks with Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. at the Malacanang presidential palace in Manila, Philippines on Monday June 3. (AP)

Lat/Am

'1st woman president'

Sheinbaum 'wins' in Mexico election

MEXICO CITY, June 3, (Agencies): Mexico's projected presidential winner **Claudia Sheinbaum** will become the first woman president in the country's 200-year history.

"I will become the first woman president of Mexico," Sheinbaum said with a smile, speaking at a downtown hotel shortly after electoral authorities announced a statistical sample showed she held an irreversible lead. "I don't make it alone. We've all made it, with our heroines who gave us our homeland, with our mothers, our daughters and our granddaughters."

"We have demonstrated that Mexico is a democratic country with peaceful elections," she said.

The National Electoral Institute's president said Sheinbaum had between 58.3% and 60.7% of the vote, according to a statistical sample. Opposition candidate Xóchitl Gálvez had between 26.6% and 28.6% of the vote and Jorge Álvarez Máynez had between 9.9% and 10.8% of the vote. Sheinbaum's Morena party was also projected to hold majorities in both chambers of Congress.

Sheinbaum

The climate scientist and former Mexico City mayor said that her two competitors had called her and conceded her victory.

The official preliminary count put Sheinbaum 28 points ahead of Gálvez with nearly 50% of polling places reporting.

History

The fact that the two leading candidates were women had left little doubt that Mexico would make history Sunday.

She will start her six-year term Oct. 1. Mexico's constitution does not allow re-election.

The leftist has said she believes the government has a strong role to play in addressing economic inequality and providing a sturdy social safety net, much like her political mentor President Andrés Manuel López Obrador.

Sheinbaum's her victory suggests that the political movement López Obrador created will live on after his presidency.

His anointed successor, the 61-year-old Sheinbaum led the campaign wire-to-wire despite a spirited challenge from Gálvez. This was the first time in Mexico that the two main opponents were women.

"Of course, I congratulate Claudia Sheinbaum with all my respect who ended up the winner by a wide margin," López Obrador said shortly after the electoral authorities' announcement. "She is going to be Mexico's first (woman) president in 200 years."

If the margin holds it would approach his landslide victory in 2018. López Obrador won the presidency after two unsuccessful tries with 53.2% of the votes, in a three-way race where National Action took 22.3% and the Institutional Revolutionary Party took 16.5%.

Enjoy

Still, Sheinbaum is unlikely to enjoy the kind of unquestioning devotion that López Obrador has enjoyed.

In Mexico City's colonial-era main plaza, the Zocalo, Sheinbaum's win did not draw the kind of cheering, jubilant crowds that greeted López Obrador's victory in 2018. Those present were enthusiastic, but comparatively few in number.

"I promise that I am not going to let you down," Sheinbaum said, once she arrived in the plaza.

Sara Ríos, 76, a retired literature professor at Mexico's National Autonomous University, celebrated after hearing that Gálvez had conceded.

"The only way that we move forward is by working together," Ríos said. "She is going to work to bring peace to the country, and is going to manage to advance, but it is a slow process."

Fernando Fernández, a chef, 28, acknowledged challenges ahead while waiting to hear the results in the square.

"You vote for Claudia out of conviction, for AMLO," Fernández said, referring to López Obrador by his initials. But his highest hope is that Sheinbaum can "improve what AMLO couldn't do, the price of gasoline, crime and drug trafficking, which he didn't combat even though he had the power."

Also:

SAN SALVADOR: At the invitation of **El Salvador**'s President **Nayib Bukele**, Chinese President **Xi Jinping**'s Special Envoy and Minister of Culture and Tourism **Sun Yeli** attended the inauguration ceremony of his second term here on Saturday.

At a brief meeting with Bukele, Sun conveyed Xi's warm congratulations and best wishes to him.

Since the establishment of diplomatic ties nearly six years ago, under the guidance of the leaders of two states, **China**-El Salvador relations have developed in an all-round and rapid way, with a consolidated foundation and enriched dimensions, demonstrating great vitality and broad prospects, Sun said.

China is willing to work with El Salvador to forge greater synergy of development strategies, firmly support each other, upgrade practical cooperation, expand people-to-people exchanges and push for sustained and in-depth development of China-El Salvador relations, Sun said.

For his part, Bukele thanked Xi for sending a special envoy to attend his inauguration ceremony and asked Sun to convey his cordial greetings and best wishes to Xi.

❑ ❑ ❑

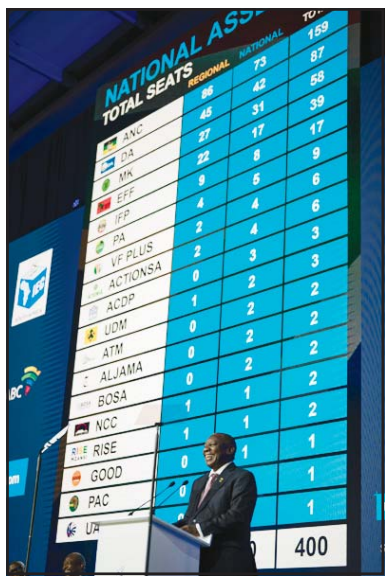
SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico: Puerto Rico congressional representative **Jenniffer González** defeated Gov. **Pedro Pierluisi** in a surprise upset during a primary election held Sunday by their pro-statehood party.

The two ran on the same ticket four years ago under the New Progressive Party, but González, a Republican, announced her plan to challenge Pierluisi, a Democrat, in early December. Public jabs between the two turned acrimonious.

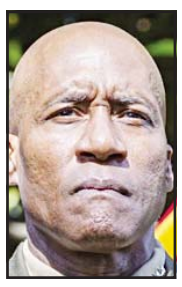
"What happened is very painful, and I didn't expect it, but let no one think that I'm going to slow down in the remainder of this four-year period," Pierluisi said late Sunday as he congratulated González.

He addressed his supporters briefly as González celebrated with hers while results continued to trickle in.

González obtained 56% of the vote compared with Pierluisi's 44%, with an estimated tens of thousands of votes still uncounted. She is the first female gubernatorial candidate to secure a primary win for the New Progressive Party since **Sila María Calderón**, who became Puerto Rico's first female governor in 2000.



South African President Cyril Ramaphosa speaks during the announcement of the results in South Africa's general elections in Johannesburg, South Africa on June 2. (AP)



Langley

Mandela

Africa

Cameroonian official killed: A Cameroonian official was killed in an ambush by suspected separatist fighters in Cameroon's restive Anglophone region of Northwest, local and military sources said on Sunday.

Derick Fonye, chief of sports and physical education in Donga Mantung division of the region, was killed Saturday night, said an army official in the region who opted for anonymity.

"He was driving along a hill in Ntaba locality when the separatist terrorists waylaid and attacked him. They killed him in a most cruel manner. Our brave soldiers will hunt and catch the terrorists who have now taking killing of civilians as a game," the official told Xinhua.

Since 2017, separatist fighters have been clashing with government forces in Cameroon's two Anglophone regions of Northwest and Southwest, where they want to create an independent nation. (Xinhua)

❑ ❑ ❑

'Overcome differences': President Cyril Ramaphosa called Sunday for South Africa's political parties to overcome their differences and find "common ground" to form the first national coalition government in its young democracy.

His comments came in a speech straight after final election results were announced confirming that no party won a majority in last week's vote. Unprecedented coalition talks were set to start to find a way forward for Africa's most industrialized economy.

Ramaphosa's African National Congress party had already lost its 30-year majority after more than 99% of votes were counted by Saturday and showed it couldn't surpass 50%. The ANC received 40% of the votes in last week's election in the final count, the largest share.

Without a majority it will need to agree on a coalition with another party or parties for the first time to co-govern and reelect Ramaphosa for a second term. South Africa's national elections decide how many seats each party gets in Parliament and lawmakers elect the president later.

The ANC was the party of **Nelson Mandela** and freed South Africa from the apartheid system of white minority rule in 1994. It had governed with a comfortable majority since then, but this election saw an unprecedented slump in its support as voters deserted the party due to its failure to solve widespread poverty, extremely high unemployment levels and problems with delivering basic government services to many in a nation of 62 million.

The ANC had said earlier Sunday that it was starting its negotiations with all major parties. More than 50 parties took part in the election, and at least eight had significant shares of the vote. (AP)

❑ ❑ ❑

US completes drill in Africa: High-ranking military officials from the US and its top African allies watched intently as dust and flames shot up from pieces of the Sahara Desert hit by tank and artillery fire. They looked up as pilots flew F-16s into formation. And they listened intently as Moroccan and American personnel explained how they would set up beachheads to defend the Atlantic coastline in the event of a potential invasion.

The practice scenario was among those discussed during Africa Lion, the United States' largest annual joint military exercise on the continent, which concluded Friday in Morocco.

Over the past two weeks, roughly 8,100 military forces from nearly three dozen maneuvered throughout Tunisia, Ghana, Senegal and Morocco as part of the war games held this year as militaries confront new challenges in increasingly volatile regions.

Generals from the United States and Morocco, which hosted the finale of the two-week event, celebrated Africa Lion's 20-year anniversary and how partnerships between the US and African militaries have expanded since it began.

"This exercise has grown over the years since 2004, not only have the number of multinational service members that we train with, but also the scope of the training as well, which has expanded to more than just security," said Gen **Michael Langley**, the head of the United States' Africa Command.

But despite the spectacle of live-fire demonstrations and laudatory remarks about partnerships by Langley and Col Maj Fouad Gourani of Morocco's Royal Armed Forces, parts of Africa are getting much more dangerous. (AP)

Asia

SKorea plans to nullify peace deal to punish North

Zelenskyy in Manila to promote peace summit

MANILA, Philippines, June 3, (AP): Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy met with the Philippine president on Monday in a rare Asian trip to urge regional leaders to attend a Swiss-organized global peace summit on the war in Ukraine that he accuses Russia, with China's help, of trying to undermine.

Zelenskyy arrived unannounced and under heavy security in Manila late Sunday after speaking over the weekend at the Shangri-La defense forum in Singapore. He was given a red-carpet welcome with military honors Monday at the presidential palace before meeting with President Ferdinand Marcos Jr, after which he left the Philippines.

Marcos pledged that his country would take part in the peace summit, Philippine Communications Secretary Cheloy Garafil said.

"I'm happy to hear today from you that you'll participate in our peace steps," Zelenskyy told Marcos. "It's a very strong signal."

Zelenskyy said Ukraine needs more mental health workers for its soldiers. Marcos promised to help and welcomed a decision by Ukraine to open an embassy in Manila this year which would hasten efforts to deliver assistance.

"We have ourselves been trying to promote the continuing adherence to international law in our part of the world," Marcos said. "The issues that you are facing are similar and in parallel to ours and, therefore, the position the Philippines takes is always to promote peace."

Both leaders spoke critically of China at the Singapore forum, which was attended by top defense and government officials from around the world, including from Washington and Beijing. The talks were held amid the raging wars in Gaza and Ukraine as well as growing tensions and rivalry for influence between the United States and China in the Indo-Pacific region.

Also:

SEOUL, South Korea: South Korea announced Monday it'll suspend a rapprochement deal with **North Korea** to punish it over its launches of trash-carrying balloons, even after the North said it would halt its balloon campaign.

Over several days, North Korea flew hundreds of balloons to drop trash and manure on South Korea in an angry reaction against previous South Korean civilian leafleting campaigns. On Sunday, South Korea said it would take "unbearable" retaliatory steps in response, before North Korea abruptly announced it would stop flying balloons across the border.

On Monday, South Korea's presidential national security council said it has decided to suspend a 2018 inter-Korean agreement aimed at easing frontline animosities, until mutual trust between the two Koreas is restored, according to the presidential office.

The security council said the suspension would allow South Korea to resume military drills near the border with North Korea and take effective, immediate responses to provocations by North Korea. It said a proposal on the suspension will be introduced at the Cabinet Council on Tuesday for approval.

Observers say South Korea needs the deal's suspension to restart blasting anti-Pyongyang propaganda broadcasts, K-pop songs and outside news from border loudspeakers. They say such broadcasts have previously stung in the rigidly controlled North, where most of its 26 million people are not allowed official accesses to foreign news.

❑ ❑ ❑

TAIPEI, Taiwan: **Beijing** has accused two Chinese citizens of spying for **Britain**, in the latest test of a relationship that has grown increasingly fraught.

China and the **UK** have clashed over Beijing's clampdown on free speech and open elections in **Hong Kong**, a former British territory that was guaranteed its own economic and political freedoms for 50 years after its handover to Chinese rule in 1997.

In a message on social media on Monday, the Ministry of State Security, China's main intelligence service, said it uncovered a major espionage case involving a couple identified only by their surnames, Wang and Zhou, who were allegedly recruited by Britain's foreign intelligence agency, MI6. It said Wang had gone to Britain as a student in 2015 and was later joined by his wife. It said Wang was given hotel rooms, trips around the country and financial incentives.

It said the couple worked for the Chinese government in a "central state agency" and handled government secrets, which they passed to MI6. No information was given about what specific information the couple may have provided. The ministry said the case was still under investigation and gave no word on the location of the couple.

Jets make emergency landing

Earthquakes strike Japan; no damage

TOKYO, June 3, (AP): Earthquakes early Monday again struck Japan's north-central region of Ishikawa, still recovering from the destruction left by a powerful quake on Jan. 1, but the latest shaking caused no major damage.

A magnitude 5.9 temblor on the northern top of the Noto Peninsula was followed minutes later by a 4.8 and then several smaller quakes within the next two hours, the Japan Meteorological Agency said. There was no tsunami.

Five houses that had been damaged in the Jan. 1 quake collapsed in Wajiima city, but no major damage or life-threatening injuries were reported, according to Ishikawa prefecture. A quake alarm in the town of Tsubata, about 100 kilometers (60 miles) southwest of the epicenter, surprised a resident in her 60s who fell from her bed but the injury was not life-threatening, prefectural officials said.

JMA seismology and tsunami official Satoshi Harada said Monday's quakes were believed to be aftershocks of the magnitude 7.6 earthquake on Jan. 1. Seismic activity has since slightly subsided, but Harada urged people to be cautious, especially near buildings that were damaged earlier.

Shinkansen super-express trains and other train services were temporarily suspended for safety checks but most of them resumed, according to West Japan Railway Co.

Also:

TOKYO: Two Japanese F-35A stealth fighter jets made emergency landings at a commercial airport in northern **Japan** on Monday, but there were no injuries or damage, officials said.

The fighter jets were on a training flight from Misawa Air Base and landed safely at nearby Aomori Airport after one developed an unspecified mechanical problem and requested an emergency landing, airport officials said.

Japan's Air Self Defense Force declined to provide details, including the cause of the emergency landing.

The airport said its runway was closed for about 20 minutes because of the emergency landing before operations returned to normal.

President-elect Claudia Sheinbaum addresses supporters at the Zocalo, Mexico City's main square, after the National Electoral Institute announced she held an irreversible lead in the election on June 3. (AP)

KPC sets gas price

Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) announced Sunday the new June prices for the liquefied petroleum gases, propane and butane.

In a statement to KUNA, KPC said that a metric ton of propane would be sold for USD 580, while a metric ton of butane will be sold for USD 565, the liquefied petroleum gas prices are affected by the increase and decrease of oil prices in markets globally.

Kuwait applauds OPEC+ prod cut extension

Kuwait on Sunday welcomed a decision taken by OPEC and its allies, including Russia, to prolong oil production cuts of up to 1.65 million barrels per day (bpd) into the end of next year, saying the measure aims to support market stability and balance.

As per the measure, taken amid OPEC Plus ministerial-level talks in Saudi Arabia's capital Riyadh, voluntary cuts of 2.2 million bpd, agreed upon in November of 2003, will be extended into the end of September 2024, according to an OPEC Plus statement.

These 2.2 million bpd output slashes will be gradually "reinserted" into total production on a monthly basis until the end of Septmber 2025, added the statement, underlining that any output increases will depend on "market developments." The statement acknowledged the "total commitment" to output cuts on the part of OPEC Plus member states Iraq, Russia and Kazakhstan, saying it would be instrumental in boosting cooperation within the group. (KUNA)

Kuwait's oil revenue exceeds budget projection

The recent report issued by Al-Shall highlighted the significant increase in the average price of a barrel of Kuwaiti oil in May 2024, reaching approximately $85.2. This marks a substantial rise of $15.2 per barrel or 21.7 percent higher than the estimated price assumed in the current budget, which is set at $70 per barrel, reports Al-Jarida daily.

In the previous fiscal year 2023-2024, which concluded in March, the average price per barrel of Kuwaiti oil was about $84.4. May 2024's average price was slightly higher, approximately 1.0 percent above the previous fiscal year's average. However, it remains $5.5 per barrel lower than the new parity set for the current budget, which is estimated at $90.7.

According to the Ministry of Finance's estimates, Kuwait's oil revenues for May are expected to be around 1.672 billion dinars. Assuming production levels and prices remain stable, total oil revenues for the entire fiscal year are projected to be approximately 20.380 billion dinars after deducting production costs.

Market Movements 03-06-2025

			Change	Closing pts
SAUDI	-	TASI	+183.15	11,808.25
DUBAI	-	DFMGI	+15.10	3,993.03
JAPAN	-	Nikkei 225	+435.13	38,923.03
PHILIPPINES	-	PSEi	+37.64	6,470.74

			Change	Closing pts
EGYPT	-	EGX 30	-35.38	26,834.47
PAKISTAN	-	KSE 100	-297.10	75,584.75

Business

Finance minister highlights Sheikh Sabah's competence during COVID-19

Economists optimistic about future with Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled as Crown Prince

KUWAIT CITY, June 3: Following the appointment of His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah as the Crown Prince, economists expressed optimism for Kuwait's economic and developmental prospects, reports Al-Qabas daily.

They highlight Sheikh Sabah's broad popularity, diplomatic finesse, and managerial acumen, predicting his support for Kuwait's renaissance and growth alongside Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

Chairman of the National Bank of Kuwait, Issam Al-Saqr, praised the choice, citing Sheikh Sabah's history of integrity and leadership, essential for navigating Kuwait through regional and global challenges.

Others, like Mohammed Abdulaziz Al-Shaya, Chairman of the Mabanee Company, recalled Sheikh Sabah's meticulousness and leadership during official visits, noting his commitment to Kuwait's representation.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Anas Al-Saleh, extended congratulations, emphasizing Sheikh Sabah's proven competence and leadership, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. Dr. Khaled Al-Fadil, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs, hailed the appointment as a milestone in Kuwait's political history, lauding Sheikh Sabah's understanding of governance intricacies and crisis management.

Fahd Al-Sharayan, former Minister of Commerce and Industry, highlighted Sheikh Sabah's leadership qualities and respect for colleagues, while business leaders like Dirar Al-Ghanim of Kuwait Financial Center (Markaz) underscore Sheikh Sabah's potential in realizing Kuwait's development vision 2035.

Sheikh Nawaf Al-Sabah, CEO of Kuwait Petroleum Corporation, acknowledges Sheikh Sabah's pivotal role in supporting the oil sector and managing crises, pledging to continue aligning with Kuwait's growth strategy under Sheikh Sabah's guidance.

Amid hopes for economic advancement, Sheikh Ahmed Al-Duaij, Chairman of the Commercial Bank of Kuwait, underscored Sheikh Sabah's resilience and aptitude for steering Kuwait through challenges.

Others, such as former General Manager of the Credit Bank, Salah Al-Mudhaf, expressed gratitude for the Amir's choice, citing Sheikh Sabah's integrity and professionalism.

Kamco Invest CEO, Faisal Sarkhou, echoes these sentiments, emphasizing the need for concerted efforts towards sustainable development under Sheikh Sabah and Sheikh Meshaal Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah's leadership.

As Kuwait looks ahead, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah's appointment heralds optimism for a prosperous future guided by seasoned leadership and a clear vision for growth and stability.

Al Awadhi emphasizes KIPCO's commitment

KIPCO releases '23 sustainability report

KUWAIT CITY, June 3: KIPCO – Kuwait Projects Company (Holding) – published its 2023 Sustainability Report. This is the company's third report and is in line with the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), taking into account national and international sustainability frameworks.

The report outlines KIPCO's achievements and progress in the environmental, social and governance (ESG) areas for the year 2023.

The report highlights the development of a comprehensive ESG Framework and the formation of an ESG Committee to ensure alignment with objectives. This showcases KIPCO's commitment to continue advancing towards sustainability.

On this occasion, Ms Eman Al Awadhi, Group Senior Vice President – Corporate Communications and Investor Relations at KIPCO, said:

"We are delighted to publish our third Sustainability Report, which covers our commitments to the ESG pillars in 2023. In this report, we highlight the milestones of our sustainability journey, reflecting KIPCO's ongoing commitment to responsible business practices and meaningful impact.

Eman Al Awadhi

To preserve and grow stakeholders' value is a priority for us at KIPCO, and one way of ensuring this is to safeguard our operations and environment, thereby fostering a culture of responsibility and resilience throughout our organization."

Iraq's Al-Faw port poses potential competition

Kuwait revives Mubarak Al-Kabeer Port Project with China partnership

KUWAIT CITY, June 3: According to Bloomberg, Kuwait has reignited efforts to establish the Mubarak Al-Kabeer Port in partnership with China, aiming to position it as a pivotal hub for commerce and logistics along the northern route of the Arabian Gulf, reports Al-Qabas daily.

A recent visit by a Chinese delegation to Kuwait marked the beginning of extensive technical and on-site discussions with Kuwaiti officials regarding the construction of Mubarak Al-Kabeer Port and other infrastructural ventures within the country.

The decision to revive the Mubarak Al-Kabeer Port project, which had been halted for nearly a decade following partial completion, comes in response to an ambitious Iraqi initiative to establish a "development road" -- comprising road and railway networks valued at $17 billion -- to bolster regional trade, in collaboration with Turkey, Qatar, and the Emirates.

Christine Smith, a resident researcher at the Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington, emphasized Kuwait's commitment to advancing its projects to align with regional counterparts.

She noted Kuwait's strategic focus on initiatives like the Mubarak Al-Kabeer Port and the Silk City in the north, aimed at catalyzing trade-driven growth within the country and solidifying its developmental leadership in the Gulf. However, challenges persist, particularly concerning maritime border disputes with Iraq.

Despite Kuwait's substantial financial and oil reserves, the country has faced persistent delays in project execution. Bloomberg highlighted potential obstacles facing the Mubarak Al-Kabeer Port project, especially given the presence of established ports across the Gulf, notably in Dubai and Abu Dhabi.

Moreover, the project may encounter competition from Iraq's expansive Al-Faw port, particularly after Baghdad rescinded a maritime agreement granting Kuwait access through the Khor Abdullah waterway.

Kuwait markets show resilience amidst GCC equities downturn, reports Markaz

S&P GCC composite index down 6.0% in May

KUWAIT CITY, June 3: Kuwait Financial Centre "Markaz" released its Monthly Market Review report for May 2024. Kuwait's equity index remained flat for the month with a positive bias, supported by the optimism over implementation of business reforms and the Sovereign credit rating affirmation by Moody's. GCC markets were mostly negative, weighed down by weak oil prices and uncertainty over Fed rate cuts. The moderation of U.S inflation and strong earnings season boosted the U.S. equity markets although the Fed flagged that high inflation readings could delay interest rate cuts.

Kuwait equity market remained flat for the month, however remained the best performing GCC market on year-to-date basis supported by Kuwait Emir's comments that have called on the new government to accelerate the implementation of strategic development projects and infrastructure projects.

Moody's has affirmed Kuwait's credit rating at A1 with a stable outlook citing strong balance sheet and fiscal buffers.

The Banking index gained 0.6% during the month with Al Ahli Bank and Kuwait International Bank gaining the most, at 14.2% and 8.7% respectively supported by strong corporate earnings in Q1 2024.

Al Ahli Bank has reported a 35% y/y rise in net profit amounting to KD 14.5 million for Q1 2024.KIB registered a net profit of KD 6 million in Q1 2024, up by 74% y/y compared to KD 3.5 million in Q1 2023.

Among Premier Market stocks, Alimtiaz Investment Group gained the most,rising 26.8% during the month. Kuwait-based conglomerate Beyout Investment Group's IPO on Boursa Kuwait has been priced at 500 fils per share, equating to market valuation of KD 150 million (USD 488 million).

The company has offered 30% of its share capital and would be raising KD 45 million.

The company's shares were oversubscribed by 17x.

Kuwait's consumer price inflation rose to 3.2% y/y in April, compared to 3.0% y/y in March driven by the rise in food prices.

According to Kuwait Purchasing Managers' Index, the country's non-oil economic growth index dropped to 51.5 in April from 53.2 in March on the back of lower job creation, shortage of raw materials and sharp rise in input costs.

Most of the GCC stock market indices ended negative during the month amid volatility in oil price, geopolitical concerns and uncertainty over interest rate cuts.The S&P GCC composite index registered a decline of 6.0% for the month. Weak corporate earnings in Q1 2024 due to the impact of higher for longer interest rates added pressure to the markets.

Markaz logo

Hawkish comments from the U.S. Fed fueled negative market sentiment as investors started to dial back their bets on early interest rate cuts in 2024.

Saudi equity index fell by 7.2% during the month as Tadawul-listed companies registered a decline in aggregate net profits of 8% y/yto SAR 135.83 billion in Q1 2024 from SAR 147.62 billion in Q1 2023.Saudi Arabia's Q1 2024 real GDP shrunk by 1.8% y/y on the back of lower oil output. SNB share price fell 7.7% during the month after reporting a marginal increase of 0.4% y/y in net profits for Q1 2024. Saudi Aramco fell 2.1% during the month following a 14.5% y/y fall in net profits to USD 27.3 billion in Q1 2024.

The Dubai equity index declined 4.3% during the month, weighed down by the performance of the real estate sector.

Share prices of Emaar Development and Emaar Properties fell as Emaar Group reported weaker than expected earnings during Q1 2024.

The Abu Dhabi equity index fell 2.3% in May due to weakness in blue chips. Etisalat shares fell by 3.0% despite beating analysts' estimates and recording a 7% y/y rise in net profits owing to the increase in subscribers.

Qatar equity index declined 4.2% during the month despite the rebound in natural gas prices during the month.

Supported by a rebound in growth in both oil and non-oil sectors, World Bank expects real GDP growth in GCC to grow at a rate of 2.8% and 4.7% in 2024 and 2025 respectively.

Kuwait's economy is expected to grow at a rate of 2.8% and 3.1% during 2024 and 2025 respectively.According to S&P Global, the profitability of GCC Banks is expected to remain strong in 2024 and their asset quality is likely to stay robust despite higher-for-longer rates due to supportive economies, contained leverage, and a high level of precautionary reserves.

Global and U.S. markets ended positive despite hawkish comments from U.S Fed, supported by strong corporate earnings of U.S. Technology stocks.

U.S.inflation rose 3.4% y/y in April, in line with market expectations.

Markets reacted positively due to the increased probability of interest rate cuts in September.

S&P 500 ended May with monthly gains of 4.8% while the technology-heavy Nasdaq index rose 6.3% in May driven by steep gains in the share price of AI chipmaker NVIDIA.

The Federal Reserve has opted to keep interest rates unchanged within the range of 5.25%-5.5% during the May FOMC meeting.

However, U.S Fed Chair Powell reiterated the possibility that rates could remain elevated until inflation subdues.

The MSCI EM index gained 0.3% during the month.

The Chinese equity index was mildly down by 0.6% for the month despitethe government measures to stabilize the country's ailing property sector.

The yield on the 10-year U.S. Treasury note remained volatile during the month and closed at 4.51%.

However, yields fell from the previous month's close of 4.69% due to downside inflation and growth surprises.

Oil price settled at USD 81.6 per barrel, recording a monthly decline of 7.1% due to uncertainty over global oil demand, and rising production from the United States.

The market is waiting for the OPEC+ producer group meeting on June 2 where the decision to extend (or phase out) the voluntary oil output cuts of 2.2 million barrels per day.

Gold prices recorded an increase of 1.8% closing at USD 2,326.97/oz. as the demand for safe haven rose after the escalation in geopolitical conflicts.

Natural gas prices registered a sharp rise of 29.9% from USD 1.99/mmbtu to USD2.59/mmbtu during the month due to anticipation of increased demand and warmer weather in the coming months.

Investors are expected to look forward to U.S key economic data releases such as inflation and labour market statistics for cues on the timing of interest rate cuts.

Additionally, escalation in geopolitical tensions is expected to weigh down on market sentiment in the GCC region.

About Kuwait Financial Centre "Markaz"

Established in 1974, Kuwait Financial Centre K.P.S.C "Markaz" is one of the leading asset management and investment banking institutions in the MENA region with total assets under management of over KD 1.30 billion (USD 4.24 billion) as of 31 March 2024.

Markaz was listed on the Boursa Kuwait in 1997. Over the years, Markaz has pioneered innovation through the creation of new investment channels.

These channels enjoy unique characteristics and helped Markaz widen investors' horizons. Examples include Mumtaz (the first domestic mutual fund), MREF (the first real estate investment fund in Kuwait), Forsa Financial Fund (the first and only options market maker in the GCC since 2005), and the GCC Momentum Fund (the first passive fund of its kind in Kuwait and across GCC that follows the momentum methodology), all conceptualized, established, and managed by Markaz.

Dubai International Airport plans $35 bln expansion

Global aviation faces cost pressures amid fuel prices

DUBAI, June 3, (AP): The cost of your next flight is likely to go up.

That's the word from the International Air Transport Association, which held its annual meeting Monday in Dubai, home to the long-haul carrier Emirates.

While carriers recover from the groundings worldwide from the coronavirus pandemic, industry leaders told journalists that there are several costs likely to push those ticket prices ever higher.

Part of that comes from worldwide inflation, an ongoing problem since the pandemic started. Jet fuel costs, roughly a third of all airline expenses, remain high. Meanwhile, a global push for the aviation industry to decarbonize has more carriers fighting for the little amount of so-called sustainable aviation fuel, or SAF, available in the market.

"The airlines will continue to do everything they can to keep costs in control as much as possible for the benefit of consumers," said Willie Walsh, the director-general of the the International Air Transport Association, an industry-trade group.

"But I think it's unrealistic to expect that airlines can continue to absorb all of the costs. ... It's not something we like to do, but it's something we have to do."

Also pressuring the industry is a pandemic hangover in aircraft production as well, they say. Carriers now keep older planes that burn more fuel flying longer. There also aren't enough new aircraft to expand routes and increase supply to bring down overall prices.

That warning comes as the IATA estimates globally, airline revenue will reach nearly $1 trillion in 2024, a record high.

There will be 4.96 billion travelers on airplanes this year, with total expenses for carriers reaching $936 billion - another record high.

But industry profits also are expected to be nearly $60 billion this year.

In particular, Emirates, a main driver for Dubai's economy, saw record profits of $4.7 billion in 2023 off revenues of $33 billion.

The Emirates' results track with those for its base, Dubai International Airport. The world's busiest airport for international travelers had 86.9 million passengers last year, surpassing numbers for 2019 just before the coronavirus pandemic grounded global aviation.

The airport now plans to move to the city-state's second, sprawling airfield in its southern desert reaches in the next 10 years in a project worth nearly $35 billion.

Tim Clark, the airline's president, obliquely acknowledged that Monday by saying that he didn't want people to "get boxes of tissues out and play the violins" when warning that the industry's profit margins sit in the low single digvits.

However, he contended that as airlines have grown larger and carriers consolidated, cost savings have quietly been passed onto consumers now able to book flights across the world.

"It is quite amazing that ticket prices are where they are today," Clark said

"I think the value-for-money proposition that the consumers have had the benefit from for many decades is something that is one of those hidden bits of the narrative."

Yvonne Manzi Makolo, the CEO of RwandAir, also highlighted the taxes and fees imposed on carriers by the countries they operate in. She specifically cited those paid by carriers flying out of African nations as "already ridiculous."

Warba Bank appoints Nasser Al-Mutawa as Head of the Digital Group

Warba Bank announced obtaining approval of the Central Bank of Kuwait to appoint Nasser Maher Al-Mutawa as the Head of the Digital Group at Warba Bank, which is a major addition to the administrative development strategy and meeting the requirements of the next stage that the Bank is working on in various sectors.

The Bank stated in a press statement that the appointment of Al-Mutawa to this important position comes as part of the Bank's policy adopted during recent years in seeking the help of national talents in leadership positions, in addition to strengthening its position in the field of digital services, especially since the digital group plays a vital role in achieving the goals of banks in general and in implementing their digital initiatives.

The Bank explained that the position's responsibilities include directing and leading the Group and its strategy and its alignment with Warba Bank's objectives, which contributes significantly to enhancing the level of customer service, enriching and improving their experiences, as well as continuing work to develop operational efficiency.

In addition,it includes supervising the development and implementation of functional and operational policies, procedures and standards to ensure achieving the highest level of performance while adopting a culture of innovation in accordance with the vision and strategic objectives of Warba Bank.

The Bank added that the appointment of Al-Mutawa also comes within its strategy that aims to appoint and empower national leaders who contribute to the growth and prosperity of the Bank's business. It also reflects the Bank's insightful vision in strengthening its human resources with professionals, especially leadership positions.

The Bank noted that Al-Mutawa joined Warba Bank with many experiences gained during his work in many institutions. Al-Mutawa, who holds a university degree in Business Administration –Administrative Information System, has diverse experience in the field of digital work for more than 17 years, as he began his career with local telecommunications companies in information technology management. Then he joined a local bank to work in the field of digital services. He also occupied several positions, the most recent of which was Assisting Undersecretary for Technical Support and Planning Affairs at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, responsible for implementing many digital projects towards digital transformation.

Nasser Al-Mutawa

Japan's weak economic landscape likely to weigh on BoJ's policy tightening

US interest rates could stay higher for longer, but ECB cut looks imminent

By National Bank of Kuwait

The IMF projects global economic growth to be steady yet relatively slow at 3.2% in each of 2024 and 2025, matching the 2023 expansion. But the outlook has diverged across countries, with US growth expectations in 2024-2025 still far ahead of other major developed markets (table 1). This, combined with slower disinflation in the US, could result in the Fed keeping interest rates higher for longer – a stark contrast to market hopes a few months back of aggressive rate cuts this year. In the Eurozone, soft growth and a sharp pullback in inflation has brought the ECB closer to its first interest rate cut, very likely at the bank's meeting this week. The falling yen and elevated inflation make a case for more Bank of Japan hikes this year, though this must be balanced against ongoing weakness in household spending. China's industry-oriented policy push has boosted the near-term outlook, but growth still faces several medium-term headwinds. Finally, India continues to enjoy solid economic growth, the highest among major economies.

US economic momentum drifts but Fed to maintain rates for longer

After posting two consecutive quarters of consensus-beating growth, the expansion in GDP slowed to 1.3% (annualized) in Q1 2024 down from 3.4% in Q4 2023, on a widened trade deficit and slower growth in government and household spending (chart 1). The consensus expectation for Q2 is for an improved growth figure of 2% or more – albeit still representing a loss of momentum from H2 2023. But recent high-frequency indicators paint a mixed outlook, with retail sales and industrial production stagnating in April while the S&P composite PMI in May (at 54.3, a two-year high) improved on a broad-based expansion in activity. One key area to watch is the labor market, which is showing signs of fracture, with job growth in April easing to 175K m/m from +315K in March, the unemployment rate ticking up (3.9%) and wage growth decelerating (3.9% y/y – the slowest rise since June 2021).

Meanwhile, after hotter inflation prints in Q1, the April CPI report soothed some nervousness as inflation moderated to 3.4% y/y from 3.5% in March with the core rate also easing to a three-year low of 3.6%. The Fed in May, while keeping the policy rate steady at the 5.25-5.5% range, trimmed the pace of its balance sheet reduction (quantitative tightening) from $95 billion to $60 billion a month, effective June, to balance liquidity conditions. Still, the heavy-weight shelter component in the inflation basket has shown a modest easing in price rises – partly due to calculation methodology – and along with still-elevated inflation in other services, will push the Fed to adopt a cautious approach at its June 11-12 meeting. Currently, markets are pricing in one to two 25 bps rate cuts by year-end.

Europe exits recession, interest rate cuts on the horizon

The Eurozone exited recession in Q1, with GDP growing by 0.3% q/q after a drop of 0.1% in each of the previous two quarters, as investment and exports rebounded, likely indicating that the worst of the export slump seen in 2023 may be behind us. The IMF recently downgraded the bloc's GDP growth from 0.9% to 0.8% for 2024 and from 1.7% to 1.5% for 2025 due to higher interest rates and fiscal consolidation in some countries. On a positive note, inflation has broadly moderated despite some setback in May (headline and core at 2.6% y/y and 2.9%, chart 2), coming closer to the ECB's 2% target, allowing the ECB to cut interest rates sooner rather than later, with a high likelihood for a first cut at the bank's meeting this week. Lower rates should improve economic confidence and expectations, especially for the weak manufacturing sector.

Table 1: Real GDP growth

% y/y

	2023	2024f	2025f
US	2.5	2.7	1.9
Eurozone	0.4	0.8	1.5
UK	0.1	0.5	1.5
Japan	1.9	0.9	1.0
China	5.2	5.0	4.5
India*	8.2	6.8	6.5

Source: IMF Note: *FY ending March of the following year

The UK economy is also seeing signs of a recovery, growing 0.6% q/q in Q1 2024 versus -0.3% in Q4 2023 as private consumption rebounded. The IMF's latest forecasts see GDP growth of 0.5% in 2024 strengthening to 1.5% in 2025, a sharp acceleration from almost no-growth in 2023. Meanwhile, inflation dropped sharply but still came above market expectations at 2.3% y/y in April versus 3.2% in March as a lower cap on energy tariffs helped ease price rises, but service prices remained stickier. A slower drop in inflation could delay interest rate cuts by the Bank of England, possibly until August or even later. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak has set July 4 as the date for the general election, earlier than many political analysts had expected. Although his governing Conservative Party is well behind in the opinion polls, an improving economy could offer some hope of an unlikely political revival.

Japan's weak economic landscape likely to weigh on BoJ's policy tightening

Japan's economy in Q1 contracted by a more-than-forecast 0.5% q/q, from no change in the previous quarter. The fall was accentuated by a large drop of -0.7% (-0.4% in Q4 2023) in private consumption, extending its decline for a fourth straight quarter (chart 3). Higher prices of imported goods after the yen's massive drop against the USD (11% y/y in Q1 2024 – and further since) has adversely impacted consumption, offsetting the beneficial effect on the country's export competitiveness. Retail sales volumes fell by an average 0.3% y/y in Q1 as consumer spending couldn't match the pace of rising prices. However, May's PMI readings indicated an ongoing expansion in the service sector (53.6) along with growth in manufacturing activity for the first time in a year (50.4), which alleviated some concerns about the deteriorating economic conditions.

Core consumer price inflation continued to soften in April, down to 2.2% y/y from 2.6% in March, as demand remains muted especially with falling real wages biting consumer wallets. However, the falling yen fueling inflationary pressures has pushed the Bank of Japan closer to another rate hike. The BoJ, after a historic rate hike in March, held its policy rate steady in April (0.0%-0.1%) but reduced government bond purchases. The bank now faces a complex policy decision to avoid overtightening given a faltering economic landscape amid weakening household demand.

Chinese economic activity picks up in Q1, but growth seems uneven

GDP growth picked up slightly in Q1, rising 5.3% y/y from 5.2% in the previous quarter and exceeding market expectations (chart 4). In April, growth in the export-oriented manufacturing sector quickened as industrial production rose 6.7% y/y. Exports and imports in April also rebounded from the previous month's sharp drops. The latest improvement prompted the IMF to upgrade its GDP growth forecast for 2024 to 5% from 4.6% earlier, slowing to an also-improved 4.5% in 2025. Meanwhile, exports of new technology and green energy-based goods have been seeing a substantial rise lately. Growing concern about China using excess capacity to dump these goods in global markets triggered the introduction of higher import tariffs on such products by the US, although direct export of such goods to the US is relatively limited. Industrial sector expansion highlights local imbalances as domestic consumption remains tepid: retail sales growth further decelerated (2.3% y/y) in April while CPI inflation was subdued at 0.3% y/y.

The near-term economic outlook was helped recently by the government's unveiling of a $41 billion financing package to support the moribund property sector, for local public authorities to buy unsold residential units and use them as affordable housing projects. The central government is also aiming to issue around $140 billion in ultra-long, special bonds this year to finance investments that could help achieve the GDP growth target of 5% for 2024. But on a more medium-term basis, given the scale of unsold as well as unfinished inventory, such efforts may still be insufficient. Moreover, other long-term structural issues including ageing demographics continue to weigh on growth.

India's growth seen elevated as recent indicators show robust momentum

The economic growth continued to surprise positively, coming in at a very solid 7.8% in Q4 FY2023-24, with the full year growth at 8.2% on a substantial increase in government capital outlays. Recent indicators point towards momentum largely being sustained, with the composite PMI staying elevated at 61.7 in May, slightly better than April's 61.5. The ongoing general election, which current PM Modi is widely expected to win, has helped maintain the buoyancy given the usual increase in spending during election time. However, private consumption has shown signs of emerging fatigue amid some weaknesses in the agriculture-based rural segment, as highlighted in the latest GDP data. The external sector also disappointed in April, with a higher merchandise trade deficit on rising commodity imports. Given higher prices of key import commodities such as crude oil and gold, the current account deficit could expand over the coming months from around 1% of GDP in FY2023-24. Still, the outlook for FY2024-25 is relatively strong, with the IMF recently upgrading its GDP growth forecast to 6.8% from 6.5% earlier. Meanwhile, consumer price inflation remained broadly stable at 4.8% y/y in April, but food prices continued to accelerate (+8.7%), with extreme weather events in recent weeks indicating more uncertainty going forward. Accordingly, the Reserve Bank of India could keep the repo rate steady at 6.5% at its June MPC meeting.

Granholm celebrates $35b Georgia reactors

Energy Sec calls for more N-power

WAYNESBORO, Ga., June 3, (AP): U.S. Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm has called for more nuclear reactors to be built in the United States and worldwide. But the CEO of the Georgia utility that just finished the first two scratch-built American reactors in a generation at a cost of nearly $35 billion says his company isn't ready to pick up that baton.

Speaking in Waynesboro, Georgia, where Georgia Power Co. and three other utilities last month put a second new nuclear reactor into commercial operation, Granholm said the United States needs 98 more reactors with the capacity of units 3 and 4 at Plant Vogtle to produce electricity while reducing climate-changing carbon emissions. Each of the two new reactors can power 500,000 homes and businesses without releasing any carbon.

"It is now time for others to follow their lead to reach our goal of getting to net zero by 2050," Granholm said. "We have to at least triple our current nuclear capacity in this country."

The federal government says it is easing the risks of nuclear construction, but the $11 billion in cost overruns at Plant Vogtle near Augusta remain sobering for other utilities. Chris Womack is the CEO of Southern Co., the Atlanta-based parent company of Georgia Power. He said he supports Granholm's call for more nuclear-power generation, but he added that his company won't build more soon.

"I think the federal government should provide a leadership role in facilitating and making that become a reality," Womack said. "We've had a long experience, and we're going to celebrate what we've gotten done here for a good little while."

Friday's event capped a week of celebrations, where leaders proclaimed the reactors a success, even though they finished seven years late.

On Wednesday, Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp floated the idea of a fifth Vogtle reactor. Although the Republican Kemp rarely discusses climate change, he has made electric vehicles a priority and has said new industries demand carbon-free electricity.

"One of the first questions on their minds is: Can we provide them with what they need?" Kemp said. "We can confidently answer 'Yes!' because of days like today."

The new Vogtle reactors are currently projected to cost Georgia Power and three other owners $31 billion, according to calculations by The Associated Press. Add in $3.7 billion that original contractor Westinghouse paid Vogtle owners to walk away from construction, and the total nears $35 billion.

Electric customers in Georgia already have paid billions for what may be the most expensive power plant ever. The federal government aided Vogtle by guaranteeing the repayment of $12 billion in loans, reducing borrowing costs.

On Wednesday, President Joe Biden's administration held a meeting to promote nuclear power, saying it would create a working group to ease the challenges that dogged Vogtle.

Djibouti poised to diversify its economy amid 'win-win' cooperation with China

DJIBOUTI CITY, June 3, (Xinhua): Djibouti, with its strategic advantage connecting Africa to Asia and Europe by sea, is poised to diversify its economy to become a regional hub for logistics, finance, tourism and information and communications technology (ICT) as cooperation with China injects crucial impetus to the Red Sea nation's development ambitions, a senior official has said.

In a recent interview with Xinhua, Slim Feriani, chief executive officer (CEO) of the sovereign wealth fund of Djibouti, said that as the gateway to Africa, Djibouti is endowed with significant development potential, and the country's drive to become the logistical hub for the region and beyond "is moving full-steam ahead."

"Our biggest advantage is the strategic location of the country controlling the entry into the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea and linking the African mainland to the Middle East and beyond," Feriani told Xinhua.

Djibouti has been consolidating its position as a regional logistics hub through substantial development initiatives, including Chinese-built development projects such as the Doraleh Multi-Purpose Port (DMP), the Djibouti International Free Trade Zone (DIFTZ), and the 752-km electrified transnational railway connecting ports in Djibouti to the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa, among others.

"Djibouti provides vital service to land-locked African countries -- for example, around 90 percent of Ethiopia's trade passes through here. But that is only half the port's activities, which are wide-ranging, including trans-shipment to serve the whole sub-region in Africa, as well as the Gulf states, Europe and elsewhere. So, yes, it is truly the gateway to Africa and bridge between the region and the Middle East, a market of over 400 million people," the CEO said.

The country, through its development blueprint Vision 2035, aspires to create an attractive investment climate across various economic sectors, including port development, logistics, finance, tourism and ICT, with an overarching goal of diversifying its economy beyond from logistics and ports.

Highlighting Djibouti's socio-economic and political stability, albeit its location in the volatile Horn of Africa region, as an important economic advantage, Feriani underscored that the country is fast becoming an attractive destination to international investors, eventually fueling its economic diversification aspirations.

Noting the country's "huge tourism potentials," Feriani stressed that cooperation with China and other partners will play a crucial role in harnessing the country's aspirations of becoming a major international tourism destination.

"We are investing in wind and solar energy. Geothermy and waste-to-energy are other renewable sources of energy. We are aiming to become a digital economy hub in the region. The Djibouti Data Center is among the first data center facilities in East Africa, with access to all major international fiber-optic systems, connecting Europe, the Middle East and Asia Pacific regions with Africa," Feriani said, as he highlighted the country's ongoing economic diversification efforts.

Courtesy of its robust cooperation with China in realizing flagship development projects over the years, the country's economic diversification ambition is further propelling its win-win cooperation with China and other development partners.

Mortgage rates snap three-week pullback

Carpenters work on a home on Sept. 19, 2023, in Marshall, N.C. On Thursday, May 30, 2024, Freddie Mac reported on the week's average U.S. mortgage rates. (AP)

Average rate on a 30-yr home loan back above 7%

LOS ANGELES, June 3, (AP): The average rate on a 30-year mortgage moved back above 7% this week, a setback for home shoppers a time when the U.S. housing market is already slowing under the strain of elevated home loan borrowing costs and rising prices.

The rate rose to 7.03% from 6.94% last week, mortgage buyer Freddie Mac said Thursday. A year ago, the rate averaged 6.79%.

This is the first increase after a three-week pullback. Higher mortgage rates can add hundreds of dollars a month in costs for borrowers, limiting homebuyers' purchasing options.

Borrowing costs on 15-year fixed-rate mortgages, popular with homeowners refinancing their home loans, also rose this week, pushing up the average rate to 6.36% from 6.24% last week. A year ago, it averaged 6.18%, Freddie Mac said.

Mortgage rates are influenced by several factors, including how the bond market reacts to the Federal Reserve's interest rate policy and the moves in the 10-year Treasury yield, which lenders use as a guide to pricing home loans.

Yields climbed earlier this week on worries about tepid demand for Treasury bonds following several U.S. government auctions and a surprising report showing confidence among U.S. consumers is strengthening. Economists had been expecting it to show a drop in confidence.

The Fed has been holding the federal funds rate at the highest level in more than two decades in hopes of grinding down on the economy enough to get high inflation fully under control. The central bank has maintained it doesn't plan to cut interest rates until it has greater confidence that price increases are slowing sustainably to its 2% target.

"This reality, as well as economic signals that have moved sideways over the last few weeks, have resulted in mortgage rates drifting higher as markets continue to dial back expectations of interest rate cuts," said Sam Khater, Freddie Mac's chief economist.

After climbing to a 23-year high of 7.79% in October, the average rate on a 30-year mortgage stayed below 7% this year until April. Even with the declines earlier this month, the rate remains well above where it was just two years ago at 5.09%.

The overall uptick in rates have been an unwelcome development for home shoppers in the midst of the spring homebuying season, traditionally the busiest time of the year for home sales. On average, more than one-third of all homes sold in a given year are purchased between March and June.

Consumer spending rose but at a slower pace than previously thought

US economic growth for Q1 is revised down from 1.6% rate to 1.3%

WASHINGTON, June 3, (AP): The U.S. economy grew at a sluggish 1.3% annual pace from January through March, the weakest quarterly rate since the spring of 2022, the government said Thursday in a downgrade from its previous estimate. Consumer spending rose but at a slower pace than previously thought, a sign that high interest rates and lingering inflation are pressuring household budgets.

The Commerce Department had previously estimated that the nation's gross domestic product - the total output of goods and services - expanded at a 1.6% rate last quarter. The first quarter's GDP growth marked a sharp slowdown from the vigorous 3.4% rate in the final three months of 2023.

But last quarter's pullback was due mainly to two factors - a surge in imports and a reduction in business inventories - that tend to fluctuate from quarter to quarter. Thursday's report showed that imports subtracted more than 1 percentage point from last quarter's growth. A reduction in business inventories took off nearly half a percentage point.

By contrast, consumer spending, which fuels about 70% of economic growth, rose at a 2% annual rate, down from 2.5% in the first estimate and from 3%-plus rates in the previous two quarters. Spending on goods such as appliances and furniture fell at a 1.9% annual pace, the biggest such quarterly drop since 2021.

Still, services spending rose at a healthy 3.9% clip, the most since mid-2021. And an uptick in business investment, led by housing, software and research and development, added more than 1 percentage point to first-quarter annual growth.

Exclusive rewards and benefits await allowance students

Weyay Bank launches exclusive SELECT card and community for allowance students

KUWAIT CITY, June 3: Weyay Bank, the first digital bank in Kuwait, today announces the first-in-market digital prepaid card that is especially designed to cater the needs of allowance students. The cardholders will be eligible to join the Weyay's exclusive community, avail cashback offers,and enjoy instant discounts at top brands and popular delivery apps in Kuwait.

All Weyay's allowance customers are entitled to be part of the SELECT community and set up their digital prepaid card in their Weyay app. Similarly, to all the other Weyay's pioneering moves to enhance customer experience and convenience, this cutting-edge customer-centric prepaid card aims to further empower allowance students, allow them smooth access to special discounts and events, and usher in a new era of digital banking services.

SELECT, the name itself is so bound up with what this exclusive community is all about. Student customers who are loyal and banking with Weyayas well as transferring their allowances to Weyay are selected to be part of the SELECT community and to exclusively earn the first-of-its-kind prepaid card in the market. These students can set up their card digitally in the app and unlock their new world with the ease of a tap.

"The idea behind creating the exclusive SELECT card and community is to uplevel the student life experience and to reinforce this demographic community with exclusive benefits that are constantly enhanced to meet their lifestyle, emphasizing their distinctive needs," mentioned Mohammad Al-Hunaidi, Product Owner at Weyay Bank."Weyay Bank strives to be a destination for the youth not only to achieve their individual goals, but also come together and be part of something big that is paired with their ambitious standards goal."

The SELECT exclusive community covers everything that these students need. They can access their digital prepaid card in their Weyay app to avail a bunch of exclusive rewards (Terms and conditions apply) ranging from cashback offers on Cari, Jahez,Trolley, and other food aggregator apps orders to instant discounts and special offers featuring top brands and merchants such as stc Telecom Company, SPARK Athletic Center, Oula Fuel Station, VOX Cinemas,Motery for a monthly free car wash, The Burrow Life, and STAX app, where students can access the best gyms in Kuwait like Oxygen, Flare Fitness, and Platinum.

Joining the Weyay's exclusive community guarantees allowance students full access to all the special discounts, cashback offers, very first non-convoluted, constant, and reliable reward program, and events where their SELECT cards pay them back and bring them the convenience they deserve. These students can use their SELECT prepaid card locally and internationally, which makes it easier for them to make payments during travel.

Weyay Bank not only does offer the best digital banking experience to its customers, but also brings them products that fit into their lifestyle. It continues to embed up-to-date features in its mobile application to ensure that each demographic is fairly provided with what they need when it comes to digital banking.

For more information about SELECT or if you are interested to be part of the SELECT community, visit www.weyaybank.comor download the Weyay Bank mobile app.

Mohammad Al-Hunaidi

SELECT program

Al Wahda Mall ribbon cutting image.

Kareena Kapoor Khan inaugurates showroom concept outlet

Malabar Gold & Diamonds redefines jewellery shopping at Al Wahda Mall

ABU DHABI, June 3: Malabar Gold & Diamonds, the sixth-largest jewelry retailer worldwide, has introduced their innovative showroom experience concept at Al Wahda Mall in Abu Dhabi, UAE, transforming the experience of jewellery shopping. With more than 350 outlets spanning across 13 countries, Malabar Gold & Diamonds continues to redefine the way customers engage with fine jewellery.The new showroom was inaugurated by Indian actress and Brand Ambassador of Malabar Gold & Diamonds, Kareena Kapoor Khan in the presence of Mr. Shamlal Ahamed, MD-International Operations, Malabar Gold & Diamonds;Mr. Ameer C.M.C, Director of Finance & Administration, Malabar Gold & Diamonds; Mr. Faisal A.K, Head of Manufacturing, Malabar Gold & Diamonds;other senior management team members from Malabar Gold & Diamonds, customers and well-wishers. The impending appearance of Kareena Kapoor Khan drew massive crowds of Abu Dhabi residents to Al Wahda Mall, eager to catch a glimpse of the Bollywood diva in her full splendor.

The new showroom, established by revamping and relocating Malabar Gold & Diamonds' existing outlet in Al Wahda mall, marks the brand's 15th showroom in the Abu Dhabi & Al Ain region and 63rd in the UAE. Designed to offer jewellery enthusiasts a completely new shopping experience, the showroom houses a host of never-before-seen designs in Gold, Diamond and Precious gems across Malabar Gold & Diamonds numerous exclusive brands such as Mine, Era, Viraaz, Precia, Ethnix & Divine. Comprising traditional jewellery, modern jewellery, daily wear jewellery and much more, the designs in 18K, 21K& 22K Gold jewellery have been curated from over 20 countries.

"At Malabar Gold & Diamonds, we are committed to continually enhancing the jewellery shopping experience of our immense customer base, which is why we are extremely thrilled to present our new concept showroom at Al Wahda Mall to all the jewellery connoisseurs in Abu Dhabi.As a brand, we strive to adapt to the ever-changing preferences of our customers, right from innovative designs to robust after-sales services while upholding sustainability and transparency. With each showroom launch, we are inching closer to our goal of being the world's number 1 jewellery retailer", commented Mr. M.P Ahammed, Chairman of Malabar Group.

The showroom hasalso been equipped with acustomized jewellery designing facility, which offers customers the opportunity to design their own jewellery and bring it to life with the assistance of expert jewellery designers and craftsmen.

"With 15 world-class showrooms, the Abu Dhabi & Al Ain region is one of our strongest regions of operations, not only in the UAE but also amongst all the countries outside of India that we operate in. From jewellery designs to amenities, every element of the new concept showroom has been fine-tuned to meet the refined and ever-changing tastes of our customers,and we are certain that jewellery lovers in Abu Dhabi will wholeheartedly accept the transformation", commented Mr. Shamlal Ahamed, MD-International Operations, Malabar Gold & Diamonds. "Having our brand ambassador Kareena Kapoor Khan inaugurate the showroom made this occasion even more special. As one of the prominent global faces of Malabar Gold & Diamonds, her ethereal grace & beauty have significantly contributed to our recognition as a global brand", he continued.

"The exquisite range of jewellery designs that we offer and our stringent commitment towards 100% transparent and ethical operations have been the primary reason behind Malabar Gold & Diamonds' rise as the most prominent Indian jewellery retailer in the UAE. The vast opportunities in Abu Dhabi & the UAE have been the motivating factor behind our decision to introduce a new concept showroom at Al Wahda Mall, thereby transforming and elevating the concept of jewellery shopping. The huge crowd that gathered to witness the launch is testament to the fact that our confidence in the market has been well placed". commented Mr. Abdul Salam K.P, Vice Chairman of Malabar Group.

Malabar Gold & Diamonds is renowned globally for offering an unparalleled jewellery buying experience with convenience and customer-friendly policies along with the 'Malabar Promise' of incomparable quality and service assurance. Apart from this, the Malabar Promise also includes transparent pricing, assured lifetime maintenance from any of the showrooms across 13 countries, guaranteed buyback, tested and certified diamonds, 100% value on diamond and gold jewellery exchange, 916 hallmarked jewellery, responsible sourcing, fair price policy, and fair labour practices.

Editor's Note:

Malabar Gold & Diamonds was established in 1993 and is the flagship company of Malabar Group, a leading diversified Indian business conglomerate.

With an annual turnover of $6.2 billion, the company currently ranks as the 6th largest jewellery retailer globally and today has a strong retail network of over 350 outlets spread across 13 countries in addition to multiple offices, design centres, wholesale units, and factories spread across India, Middle East, Far East, the USA, the UK, Canada & Australia. The group, owned by more than 4,000 shareholders, has more than 21,000 professionals from over 26 countries working towards its continued success. Malabar Gold & Diamonds also features an online store www.malabargoldanddiamonds.com providing customers the opportunity to purchase their favorite jewellery at any time and on any day from the comfort of their homes.

ESG (Environmental, Social & Governance) has been the primary commitment of the group since its inception. The key ESG focus areas of Malabar Group are Health, Housing, Hunger Free World, Education, Environment and Women empowerment. Integrating the principles of responsibility and sustainability into its core business, Malabar Group periodically strengthens its ESG goals to remain a socially conscious and responsible organization. The group contributes 5% of its profit to such initiatives in the same country of operation.

CEO Kyle Gendreau excited about collaboration

BOSS and Samsonite launch 'Departures' campaign for capsule luggage collection

KUWAIT CITY, June 3: BOSS and Samsonite launch the new "Departures" campaign to highlight its capsule luggage collection which radiates a shared passion for premium quality, innovation, and timeless design with a distinctive twist.

This campaign is brought to lifein an unexpected way thanks to a specially crafted set where stylish travelers don't merely board a plane, but an oversized suitcase, illustrating the limitless possibilities of this unique collaboration.

BOSS|Samsonite luggage perfectly blends style and functionality to let travelers experience the joy and spontaneity of travelling, with boldness and confidence.

The design of the BOSS|Samsonite capsule seamlessly complements BOSS' most recent collections, resonating with the BOSS ethos of self-determination and sophisticated tailoring.

Designed for fashion-forward travellers, the BOSS|Samsonite collection will appeal to those who have a passion for exploration, but refuse to compromise on style.

The sleek BOSS|Samsonite collection made of high-quality aluminium - is embellished with an anodized signature BOSS monogram pattern. This precise process embeds the tone-on-tone black motif in the aluminium shells, ensuring a pristine, long-lasting, and unique finish.

The suitcases soft-textured interior linings feature the iconic BOSS camel colour and prominent BOSS branding. Spacious compartments with adjustable packing straps allow travellers to pack and organise their belongings with ease. The collection's distinctive tailored look is further enhanced through co-branded leather handles which feature throughout.

The captivating suitcases will be available in limited edition in selected BOSS and Samsonite stores, and on the brands' respective websites. The collection offers a choice of four models, including a cabin, two check-in suitcases, and a trunk.

Discover the capsule here: local website URL

Photos during the event.

CEO Samsonite - Kyle Gendreau

We are thrilled to collaborate with BOSS as both brands are committed to delivering high-performance products achieved through extensive research, exceptional quality, engineering, and craftsmanship.

CEO Samsonite Middle East – Shaheen Jamil

We are excited to launch this collaboration between 2 market leaders in their respective fields that stand for style, innovation, eye for detail and quality. This collaboration also embodies the two core values of Samsonite namely innovation and sustainability while ensuring comfort and ease of usage for the most discerning traveler. These products are available at Samsonite boutiques in Kuwait and also on Samsonite's official webstore.

Damiani debuts first Kuwait boutique at 360 Mall

KUWAIT CITY, June 3: Damiani, the world renowned Italian fine jewellery house proudly inaugurated its first boutique in Kuwait, in the prestigious 360 Mall.

Damiani and Morad Yousuf Behbehani cordially cooperated to introduce the "hand-made in Italy" house in the state of Kuwait. Both the families "Behbehani" and "Damiani" run family-owned companies established from the early 19th century and had successfully navigated through generations in the luxury retail industry, aiming to cater exquisite products with unique client experiences.

The Damiani boutique is impressive by appearance,designed to detail to allow fine jewellery enthusiasts discover the house's unique storytelling and timeless creations that blend exquisite craftsmanship with rare gemstones, capturing the essence of elegance and luxury.

This new opening confirms Damiani's desire to further expand in an area of strategic importance such as the Middle East. Kuwait boasts a sophisticated clientele who love novelty, fashion and are willing to invest in brands that live up to its high standards of design and quality. The Maison, with the style, design and craftsmanship that characterizes its jewellery offering is set to become the new must-go destination of this highly sought-after audience.

Damiani jewels, unique masterpieces meticulously handcrafted by experienced goldsmiths in Valenza, radiate uniqueness through their exceptional designs, meticulous attention to detail, and the use of high-quality gemstones.

Cherished by A-list celebrities and embraced by the younger generation of international stars, Damiani's century-long legacy continues to evoke emotions, captivate attention, and assert its presence.

Photos by Iehab Qurtal

Photos during the event.

New releases struggle

‘Garfield,’ ‘Furiosa’ stay on top as summer box office lags

LOS ANGELES, June 3, (AP): It was a quiet weekend at North American movie theaters, dominated once again by Sony’s “The Garfield Movie,” Warner Bros.’ “ Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga “ and a slew of holdovers. Flipping the script from their Memorial weekend openings, the animated orange cat crept ahead of the wasteland warrior in their second outing.

“The Garfield Movie” earned a chart-topping $14 million in ticket sales while “Furiosa” settled into third place in a close race with “IF,” according to studio estimates on Sunday. Both “IF” and “Furiosa” are estimated to have earned $10.8 million, with “IF” getting the slight edge.

“Garfield” fell only 42% in its second weekend in North America. It also topped the global box office adding $27 million from international territories, bringing its running worldwide to $152.2 million. The animated pic featuring the voice of Chris Pratt will essentially have the market to itself until “Inside Out 2” arrives on June 14.

“Furiosa,” meanwhile, fell 59% from its first weekend, adding just under $10.8 million from 3,864 locations in the US and Canada. That puts its running domestic total at $49.7 million and its global sum at $114.4 million against a $168 million production budget.

There were several new releases that opened on over 1,000 screens this weekend: Sony/Crunchyroll’s anime “Haikyu!! The Dumpster Battle”; IFC’s horror “In a Violent Nature”; Roadside Attractions’ Diane Keaton-Alfre Woodard-Kathy Bates comedy “Summer Camp”; And Bleecker Street’s father-son drama “Ezra.” None managed to crack the top five, however.

Disney also released the well-reviewed “Young Woman and the Sea,” starring Daisy Ridley as the first woman to swim the English Channel, but did not report its ticket sales. Likewise, Richard Linklater’s “ Hit Man ” is currently playing in select theaters around the country before it comes to streaming next week, but Netflix does not release box office numbers.

Second place went to Paramount’s “ IF,” with $10.8 million in its third weekend. John Krasinski’s imaginary friends fantasy starring Ryan Reynolds and Cailey Fleming has now made over $80.4 million domestically and $138 million worldwide. Disney/20th Century Studios’ “ Kingdom of the Planet of the Apes ” landed in fourth place in its fourth weekend with $8.8 million. It has now made $140 million domestically and $337.1 million globally.

Domestic

And the Ryan Gosling and Emily Blunt action-comedy “The Fall Guy, ” which is currently available to purchase at home, rounded out the top five with $4.2 million, bringing its domestic total to $80.3 million. Globally, the Universal release has made $157.9 million.

“Haikyu!! The Dumpster Battle,” based on the Japanese high school volleyball series, made an estimated $3.5 million from 1,119 locations. The slasher “In a Violent Nature” opened to $2.2 million from 1,426 locations (a massive release for IFC Films and Shudder). And, “Ezra,” about a stand-up comedian (Bobby Cannavale) and his autistic son, earned $1.2 million from 1,320 screens.

The 2024 box office is struggling compared to both last year (down 23.9%) and pre-pandemic standards (down 42.2% from 2019 and 46.4% from 2018), according to data from Comscore. On this weekend last year, “Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse” opened to $120.7 million while “The Little Mermaid” was still pulling in over $41.4 million in its second weekend. This year has yet to have any film open to over $100 million domestically.

While “Barbie” and “Oppenheimer” had yet to storm theaters at this point last year, there had been several substantial hits including “The Super Mario Bros. Movie” ($1.36 billion global total), “Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 3” ($845.5 million) and “Fast X” ($704.7 million).

“It should come as no surprise given the nature of this year’s trajectory that we are running this far behind,” said Paul Dergarabedian, the senior media analyst for Comscore. “I understand why people are concerned about where this year is going, but it’s never too late to get things running again.”

“It’s a momentum business,” he added. “The attention right now is focused on what will be the big movie to get the summer moving in the right direction.”

That big summer movie could arrive in the form of “Inside Out 2,” which could open to over $85 million according to early projections, and propel other juggernauts like “Despicable Me 4” (July 3) and “Deadpool & Wolverine” (July 26).

Dergarabedian also noted that absent a big superhero movie, it’s the family-oriented films that have been resonating recently. They might not open to the biggest numbers, but as “IF” and “The Gafield Movie” have proven, they have staying power.

The top-grossing movie of this year remains “ Dune: Part Two,” which Warner Bros. released in early March and has made over $711 million globally. Its domestic take of $282.1 million represents 10.5% of the overall box office for 2024.

“Dune” filmmaker Denis Villeneuve over the weekend said that he was “disappointed to still be number one” while at the Canadian Screen Awards in Toronto where he was collecting an award.

Variety

Features

This image released by Paramount Pictures shows Cailey Fleming, left, and Ryan Reynolds in a scene from ‘IF.’ (AP)

Film

Krasinski’s whimsical journey into imagination

Magical ‘IF’ revives childhood fantasies

By Jocelyn Noveck

How do you make a kid’s movie that appeals not only to the kids, but the adults sitting next to them? Most movies try to achieve this by throwing in a layer of wink-wink pop culture references that’ll earn a few knowing laughs from parents but fly nicely over the heads of the young ones.

So let’s credit John Krasinski for not taking the easy way out. Writing and directing (and acting in, and producing) his new kid’s movie, “IF,” Krasinski is doing his darndest to craft a story that works organically no matter the age, with universal themes — imagination, fear, memory — that just hit different depending on who you are.

Or maybe sometimes, they hit the same — because Krasinski, who wanted to make a movie his kids could watch (unlike his “Quiet Place” thrillers), is also telling us that sometimes, we adults are more connected to our childhood minds than we think. A brief late scene that actually doesn’t include children at all is one of the most moving moments of the film – but I guess I would say that, being an adult and all.

There’s only one conundrum: “IF,” a story about imaginary friends (get it?) that blends live action with digital creatures and some wonderful visual effects (and cinematography by Janusz Kaminski), has almost too many riches at its disposal. And we’re not even talking about the Who’s Who of Hollywood figures voicing whimsical creatures: Steve Carell, Matt Damon, Bradley Cooper, Jon Stewart, Phoebe Waller-Bridge, Maya Rudolph, Emily Blunt, Sam Rockwell, and the late Louis Gosset Jr. are just a few who join live stars Ryan Reynolds and Cailey Fleming. Imagining a table read makes the head spin.

Nicole Brown Simpson’s sisters want you to remember how she lived, not how she died

The issue is simply that with all the artistic resources and refreshing ideas here, there’s a fuzziness to the storytelling itself. Just who is actually doing what and why they’re doing it — what are the actual mechanics of this half-human, half-digital world? — occasionally gets lost in the razzle-dazzle.

But, still, everything looks so darned lovely, starting with the pretty, brownstone-lined streets of Brooklyn Heights in New York City, where our story is chiefly set. We begin in flashback, with happy scenes of main character Bea as a little girl, playing with her funloving parents (Krasinski and Catharine Daddario). But soon we’re sensing Mom may be sick — she’s wearing telltale headscarves and hats — and it becomes clear what’s happening.

Bea is 12 when she arrives with a suitcase at her grandmother’s Brooklyn apartment, filled with her old paint sets and toys. Grandma (Fiona Shaw, in a deeply warm performance) offers the art supplies, but Bea tells her: “I don’t really do that anymore.”

Creatures

She says something similar to her father, visiting him in the hospital (it takes a few minutes to figure out that they’ve come to New York, from wherever they live, so Dad can have some sort of heart surgery.) He tells Bea he’s not sick, just broken, and needs to be fixed. Hoping to keep her sense of fun alive, he jokes around, but she says sternly: “Life doesn’t always have to be fun.”

And then the creatures start appearing, visible only to Bea.

We first meet a huge roly-poly bundle of purple fur called “Blue” (Carell.) Yes, we said he was purple. The kid who named him was color-blind. These, we soon understand, are IFs —imaginary friends — who’ve been cut loose, no longer needed. There’s also a graceful butterfly called Blossom who resembles Betty Boop (Waller-Bridge). A winsome unicorn (Blunt). A smooth-voiced elderly teddy bear (Gossett Jr., in a sweet turn.) We’ll meet many more.

Supervising all of them is Cal (Ryan Reynolds.) An ornery type, at least to begin with, he’s feeling rather overworked, trying to find new kids for these IFs. But now that Bea has found Cal living atop her grandmother’s apartment building, she’s the chosen helper.

The pair — Reynolds and the sweetly serious Fleming have a winning chemistry — head to Coney Island on the subway, where Cal shows Bea the IF “retirement home.” This is, hands down, the most delightful part of the movie. Filmed at an actual former retirement residence, the scene has the look down pat: generic wall-to-wall carpeting, activity rooms for CG-creature group therapy sessions, the nail salon. And then the nonagenarian teddy bear gives Bea a key bit of advice: all she need do is use her imagination to transform the place. And she does, introducing everything from a spiffy new floor to a swimming pool with Esther Williams-style dancers to a rock concert with Tina Turner.

The movie moves on to Bea’s matchmaking efforts. A tough nut to crack is Benjamin (Alan Kim), an adorable boy in the hospital who favors screens and seems to have trouble charging his own imagination.

There are segments here that feel like they go on far too long, particularly when Bea, Cal and Blue track down Blue’s now-adult “kid” (Bobby Moynihan of “Saturday Night Live”), now nervously preparing for a professional presentation.

Still, the idea that adults could still make use of their old “IFs” at difficult times — and, to broaden the thought, summon their dormant sense of whimsy, as a closing scene captures nicely — is a worthwhile one. And by movie’s end, one can imagine more than one adult in the multiplex running home, checking under the bed, hoping to find a trusted old friend.

“IF,” a Paramount release, has been rated PG by the Motion Picture Association “for thematic elements and mild language.” Running time: 104 minutes. Two and a half stars out of four. (AP)

ARAB TIMES
TUESDAY, JUNE 4, 2024

NEW YORK: The Washington Post said Sunday that its executive editor, **Sally Buzbee**, has stepped down after three years at the top of one of journalism’s most storied brands.

She will be replaced by **Matt Murray**, former editor in chief of The Wall Street Journal, through this fall’s presidential election. Following that, **Robert Winnett**, deputy editor of the Telegraph Media Group, will take over as editor as the newsroom restructures its operations.

No reason was given for Buzbee’s departure. She wasn’t quoted in the news release announcing that she was leaving, and did not immediately return a message seeking comment.

The Post also announced that it was launching a new division in its newsroom dedicated to reaching audiences who want to pay for and consume news in a different way.

Buzbee, former top editor at The Associated Press, was selected as the Post’s top editor in May 2021. She replaced a renowned predecessor, **Martin Baron**, after the Post exploded in popularity during the Trump administration.

Buzbee was the first woman to serve as executive editor of The Washington Post. And like **Jill Abramson**, the first woman to be top editor at The New York Times, her tenure was short: Abramson had her job from 2011 to 2014.

It has been a miserable few years financially for the news industry, including for the Post. It has bled subscribers to the point where new publisher, **Will Lewis**, told employees last month that the newspaper lost $77 million last year.

“To speak candidly, we are in a hole, and have been for some time,” Lewis said, according to the Post.

Lewis was named late last year to replace **Fred Ryan** as Post publisher. He has worked at both The Wall Street Journal and The Telegraph in **England**, the places he turned to to find the new executives. (AP)

❑ ❑ ❑

NEW YORK: Media magnate **Rupert Murdoch**, 93, has married for the fifth time, his corporation, News Corp, confirmed Sunday.

Murdoch and **Elena Zhukova**, a 67-year-old Russian-born retired molecular biologist, wed Saturday in a ceremony at his vineyard estate in **Bel Air, California**. Photographs of the newly married couple were released by News Corp. The couple announced their engagement in March.

Buzbee

Murdoch

Murdoch was most recently married to model and actor **Jerry Hall**. They were wed in 2016 and divorced in 2022.

Zhukova is the ex-wife of **Alexander Zhukov**, a billionaire energy investor and Russian politician. Their daughter, **Dasha**, was previously married to Russian billionaire **Roman Abramovich**, who used to own the Premier League soccer club Chelsea.

Last fall, Murdoch stepped down as leader of both Fox News’ parent company and his News Corp media holdings. His son, Lachlan, took his place in a media empire that spans continents and helped to shape modern American politics.

In 1952, Murdoch inherited a newspaper in his native **Australia** from his father. Over decades, he built a news and entertainment enterprise that became prominent in the **United States** and **Britain**, including ownership of such notable newspapers as The Times of **London** and The Wall Street Journal. (AP)

People & Places

Lifestyle

Embracing change

‘Divorce registries’ help rebuild anew

NEW YORK, June 3, (AP): Monogrammed towels. A toothbrush holder for four, rather than three. Shared bedding. For people putting a life back together after divorce, mundane household objects can be painful marital reminders.

Also difficult can be the absence of items that departed with the ex-spouse.

Olivia Howell knows all too well how it felt, going through her own divorce in 2019 after eight years of marriage and two kids. Her husband decamped with his stuff and she donated other items that triggered unwelcome emotions to a thrift shop.

“What was left in the house was almost nothing,” she said.

Ashurst-McGee

Howell then got busy replenishing, and trying to make the experience better for others through Fresh Starts. It’s a gift registry specifically for rebuilding after divorce that’s also packed with vetted experts if needed and other resources.

Divorce registries are part of a trend toward breaking the stigma of broken marriages, along with divorce parties and formal divorce announcements akin to wedding and marriage news.

Howell built Fresh Starts from the ground up with her sister, Jenny Dreizen, who found herself in a similar situation after the end of a long-term relationship. Nearly three years after launch, it remains a rare support resource offering divorce-specific registries for those starting over, and for loved ones who may struggle to find the right words and ways to reach out.

“I thought, you know, I had a baby registry and I had a wedding registry. This is when I actually need things to restock my life. I need the community support. I need new towels. I need new sheets, I need new utensils,” the 39-year-old Howell said.

Today, Fresh Starts has between 50,000 and 70,000 monthly visitors. The sisters also host a podcast, “A Fresh Story,” featuring guests discussing how they began again after divorce or navigated other huge life changes.

Arrangement

Erin Eloise Tulberg, a yoga teacher, actor and dancer in Brooklyn, has not yet finalized her divorce as she works out custody arrangements for her 9-year-old son. She started using Fresh Starts last summer at the suggestion of a friend.

“There was an immediate need for me to get my own apartment. I was moving into a place with absolutely nothing. I had no furniture. I had no kitchenware. I had my clothes and my books,” said Tulberg, 37.

The situation, she said, was “kind of scary.” Originally from Washington state, her closest family and friends are scattered around the country.

“It was a great way to have my friends rally behind me,” Tulberg said of her registry.

Flowers and a pile of “I’m sorrys” or “congratulations,” depending, are often how divorce news plays out. Those looking to support their friends or relatives don’t often think about the need for a lamp or new sheets, Howell said.

They may also not understand the emotional impact that simple objects can take on. New household goods at a time of rupture and despair can draw community closer and become totems, a rebirth of sorts, said Leslie Jamison, a Brooklyn novelist and essayist whose latest book, “Splinters,” is a personal exploration of her own divorce.

“Part of it is a kind of faith and hope and trust that a new version of one’s life, household, family not only is possible but can be filled with beauty,” she said.

Howell, among the first of her friends to get divorced, had loved ones who checked in daily to make sure she was eating and sleeping. They sent Mother’s Day gifts after her separation just ahead of the holiday. And they reassured her with standing offers to assist in any way.

But there was a lot they didn’t immediately understand.

“Every time I would go into the bathroom, I would feel horrible because I would see a toothbrush holder for a life that I thought I was going to have. It made me feel so much shame and guilt, and all of those other feelings that come with divorce,” Howell said.

One day, her sister showed up with a new one just for three.

“I still get emotional talking about it because it was really like, OK, this is happening. I’m going to be OK,” Howell said.

For Tulberg, it was matching beds for her and her son. They share a studio apartment.

“Suddenly, I had things from all of my friends that are real and tangible and not ephemeral,” she said. “I look at my plates and I know exactly who they’re from. My friends say it feels good to be able to give something solid and real to us.”

Projects

Many retail registries can be set up for a multitude of purposes, including divorce.

Fresh Starts uses Amazon. It suggests bundles of items ranging from $99 to $500. Among the bedroom, kitchen, home office and bathroom essentials are a shower curtain, a can opener, a bedside clock, a humidifier. The site also groups bundles by room, including child-size hangers and a night light that projects the stars for a young one’s space.

Recipients can go the bundle route when choosing what to list, or they can pluck specific items from them. They can also select anything else on Amazon. Getting to the emotional place that allows someone newly separated to reach out for this kind of tangible help isn’t always easy.

Divorce talk can be awkward. Fresh Starts offers text prompts covering how to introduce a registry to loved ones, along with suggestions for what friends and relatives can say.

Howell doesn’t describe divorce registries as “gift registries” but rather “support registries.” Some of her users create registries for other reasons, too.

Not everyone is on board with the idea. Howell hears from a lot of haters.

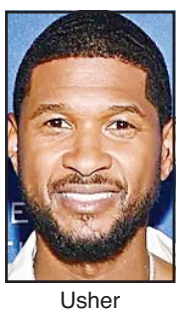
Angela Ashurst-McGee, 52, finalized her divorce in March after six kids and 32 years of marriage. She and her husband took turns choosing what they wanted in their 3,000-square-foot house about an hour south of Salt Lake City. She, too, heard about registries from a friend.

“So it was like, I want the sofa in the living room, I want the sofa in the sunroom, I want the hedge trimmer. I want the drill, you know, down to the waffle maker,” she said. “Just on a practical level, I needed to replace various things. And also, I felt like this is a big life event that I think we should kind of rally around and celebrate.”

Maya Hawke performs her album ‘Chaos Angel’ on Sunday, June 2, at the Buckhead Theatre in Atlanta. (AP)

This cover image released by Sony Music shows ‘The Border’ by Willie Nelson. (AP)

Letizia



Usher

Variety

HANGZHOU: The 20th China International Cartoon and Animation Festival (CICAF) wrapped up in Hangzhou, capital of east **China**’s **Zhejiang Province**, on Sunday, drawing over 9 million online and offline visitors.

During the five-day event, 233,000 visitors attended activities at the main and secondary venues, and the value of on-site deals and intended contract agreements totaled 1.28 billion yuan (about 180 million U.S. dollars).

According to the organizers, 2,156 companies and institutions from 52 countries and regions participated in this year’s CICAF, attracting 3,072 business representatives and showcasing 147,000 exhibits from across the globe.

The festival featured various activities, including an international animation game business conference, a cosplay event and a voice actor contest.

Organized by the National Radio and Television Administration, China Media Group and the Zhejiang provincial government, the festival has been held annually in Hangzhou, one of the animation hubs in China, since 2005. (Xinhua)

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BEIJING: In the Altar of the god of Agriculture, where Chinese emperors once prayed for good harvests, dozens of children burst into laughter while watching a fantasy comedy film projected onto three improvised screens.

The “Little Canned Men,” screened in the open-air on Saturday evening, is a Children’s Day gift offered by the Beijing Ancient Architecture Museum, which administers the ancient altar, and part of a new drive by Beijing’s museums to create public awareness.

On Saturday, more than 20 museums in the Chinese capital launched a movie week with nearly 40 screenings that are available to the public free of charge.

More than 10 movies will be screened in the museums’ halls, courtyards and other spaces, organizers said.

Some films are chosen because they relate to the museums’ themes. The Overseas Chinese History Museum of **China**, for instance, screened “I Am What I Am,” an animation about lion dance, a folk art popular in China and among overseas Chinese. (Xinhua)

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KUWAIT CITY: The 83rd edition of the Bookfair in the Spanish Capital **Madrid**, the largest cultural event in Spanish language in **Spain**, witnessed a great turnout with various activities for all ages.

Last Friday, the Spanish Queen **Letizia** opened the fair’s activities, held in **El Retiro Park** in the heart of the capital, and will continue until June 16, with 358 booths participating, among expectations of more than two million visitors. (KUNA)

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Music

Marías’ ‘Submarine’ takes audiences on a blue journey

Nelson’s Tex-Mex fusion in ‘Border’

LOS ANGELES, June 3, (AP): Willie Nelson has never in his long life not wanted to be making music.

After 2023 saw him celebrate his 90th birthday with an epic two-night concert celebration at the Hollywood Bowl, get inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, and release two studio albums along with the usual constant touring, 2024 finds him as unretired as ever, with his release of “**The Border**.”

It’s his 152nd album, counting live collections and collaborations, according to Texas Monthly, which recently took on the titanic task of ranking them (“The Border” is No. 55).

While his last studio album, “Bluegrass,” explored the music of Kentucky, the new one - produced by longtime collaborator Buddy Cannon and released by Sony’s Legacy Recordings on streaming, CD and vinyl - is firmly planted in his native Texas and its stark southern borderlands.

Inflections of Mexican music have run through almost all of Nelson’s work, but he occasionally leans into it, as he did with the 1998 masterpiece “Teatro.”

He does the same - sort of - with “The Border,” whose best tracks have heavy doses of the sounds of Mexico.

That includes the stark, dark, title track, written by Nelson favorite Rodney Crowell with Allen Shamblin and sung from the perspective of a Border Patrol agent. It begins like a Western with a standoff between the law and the cartels.

“There’s a price on the head of every Border Patrol,” Nelson sings.

But then comes a shift, when the agent despairs for his life and his family and empathizes with the people he takes into custody.

“From the shacks and the shanties come the hungry and poor,” he sings, “some to drown at the crossing some to suffer no more.”

Nelson delivers the lines with a darkly direct rasp reminiscent of the final recordings of his Highwaymen bandmate Johnny Cash.

Elsewhere he employs the jazz-inspired vocals, developed decades ago, that have served him so well in his elder years, like a pitcher who has lost his fastball but can still get guys out with change-ups and curves.

He throws jazzy spitballs through “What If I’m Out of My Mind,” a Western swing tune in the style of Texas’ Bob Wills, written by Nelson and Cannon. The duo wrote about half the songs on the album, and they’re generally the strongest.

A standout is “Kiss Me When You’re Through,” a driving-into-the-sunset tune marked by Nelson’s Latin-influenced guitar and the harmonica of Mickey Raphael, the only surviving member of the Family Band that backed Nelson for decades.

There’s not a bad song in the bunch. If there’s fault to be found with “The Border,” it’s that the stark desert tone established in the beginning isn’t sustained, and at times it swerves from bluesy rockers to country shuffles that are downright breezy.

In one of its more esoteric tracks, “Hank’s Guitar,” written by Cannon and Bobby Tomberlin, Nelson sings from the first-person perspective of Hank Williams Sr.’s titular instrument.

“He held me close against his chest and he wrote ‘Your Cheatin’ Heart,” Nelson sings. In the end the guitar gets packed into the blue Cadillac in which Williams died at age 27.

It’s a reminder of how lucky we’ve been to have had Nelson - arguably second only to Williams in country music greatness - for so much longer.

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When the indie pop band The Marías emerged in 2017 with their first EP, “Superclean Vol. 1,” they quickly solidified a sound.

It wasn’t any one sound, really, but a sonic identity. With lead vocalist María Zardoya’s mellow, romantic vocals serving as the unifier, the band’s productions were free to oscillate between dance beats, Latin instrumentals and jazz rhythms - and their lyrics between English and Spanish - all while furthering their multi-genre, distinguishable and often hypnotic, audio footprint.

On the quartet’s second LP, “**Submarine**,” The Marías sharpen those features without losing the genre-bending experimentation that characterized their EPs and major label, Grammy-nominated debut album, “Cinema.”

“Ride,” the album’s opening track, is an invitation into the album’s landscape. Starting with ambient tones that give way to muffled electric guitar sounds courtesy Jesse Perlman, Zardoya sings: “Careful while you’re cruising/Gonna be a ride/Introducing submarine,” as the sound surges and then dives, taking us underwater.

The album, like its cover and the aquatic world its title evokes, is blue: There’s an inherent melancholy to many of the tracks, all of which were written by Zardoya and producer and drummer Josh Conway. But that ride is still a fun one. The lead single, “Run Your Mouth,” has the same cool, funky confidence of the band’s 2021 hit “Hush.”

There’s a sense of urgency to the chill “No One Noticed.” “Maybe I lost my mind,” Zardoya sings in her heady tone, “No one noticed/No one noticed.”

There’s the risk that Zardoya’s genial singing could accidentally smooth the album tracks together. But the band avoids that here, as before, by staying true to their genre-jumping roots and serving up varied, lush productions. “Blur” is less than blurry, as a steady drum beat builds to a flowing, intense bridge. Prominent piano and featured horns give “If Only” an eerie allure. And Zardoya switches to Spanish in the beautiful “Lejos De Ti.”

All the while, wet sounds continue the album’s subaquatic journey. “Echo” is dotted with bubble-like effects; the guitar riffs in “Paranoia” are splashy and light; “Love You Anyway” starts with the revving of what could very well be a submerged engine. “Sienna” brings back muffled instrumentals to close the album.

We were promised a submarine ride after all, weren’t we? Listeners will enjoy sinking into these songs.

LOS ANGELES: **Usher** will add another prestigious award to his already loaded trophy case.

The American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers said Thursday that Usher will receive its Voice of the Culture Award. He’ll be honored at ASCAP’s Rhythm & Soul Music Songwriters and Publishers event on June 27.

The honor Usher is receiving is presented to ASCAP members who have had a major influence on music and culture.

“Artistic development is a lifelong journey of experimentation that requires risk for reward, embracing unknowns, trusting your intuition, and believing in your creative vision and God given talent,” Usher said in a statement.

The R&B superstar is an eight-time Grammy winner who recently ended a two-year Las Vegas residency, “Usher: My Way” at the Park MGM. In February, he released his first solo album in eight years, and in August is scheduled to kick off a 24-city US tour titled “Past Present Future.”

Usher’s Super Bowl halftime performance drew acclaim and included guest appearances by such stars as Alicia Keys, H.E.R., Jermaine Dupri, Lil Jon and Ludacris. His album “Confessions” has sold more than 10 million units in the **U.S.**, ranking it among one of the best-selling music projects of all time. It launched No. 1 hits such as “Yeah!” with Ludacris and Lil Jon, “Burn” and “Confessions Part II.”

“It means the world to me that my peers, this community of passionate and distinguished songwriters, composers, and authors are inspired by my execution of the craft,” Usher added. (AP)

Pearl Jam guitarist Mike McCready prepares to perform the National Anthem before a baseball game between the Seattle Mariners and the Los Angeles Angels, Sunday, June 2, in Seattle. (AP)

Finding offers hope for families of those with disorder

Researchers identify key gene linked to intellectual disability

NEW YORK, June 3, (AP): Scientists have found the genetic root of a disorder that causes intellectual disability, which they estimate affects as many as one in 20,000 young people. And they hope their discovery leads to a new diagnosis that can provide answers to families.

Those with the condition have a constellation of issues, which also include short stature, small heads, seizures and low muscle mass, said the researchers, who published their findings in the journal Nature Medicine on Friday.

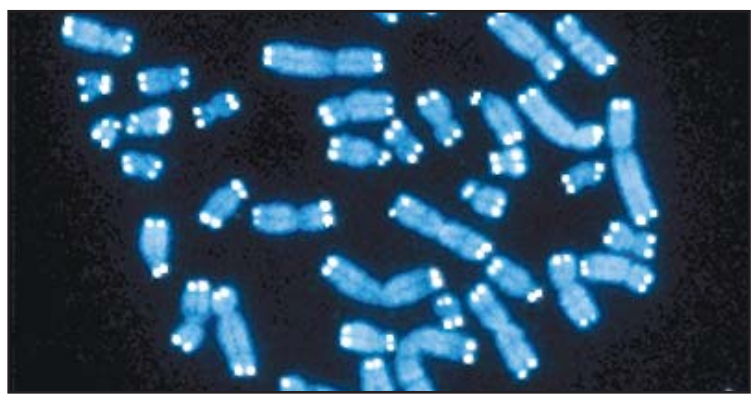
"We were struck by how common this disorder is" when compared with other rare diseases linked to a single gene, said Ernest Turro of the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, senior author of the study.

Syndromes like these can go unnoticed because the traits are sometimes so subtle doctors can't recognize them by just looking at patients, said Dr. Charles Billington, a pediatric geneticist at the University of Minnesota who was not involved in the study.

"So certainly this wasn't something that we necessarily had a name for," he said. "We're learning more about these syndromes that we recognize only once we are seeing the cause."

Researchers said the mutations occurred in a small "non-coding" gene, meaning it doesn't provide instructions for making proteins. Until now, all but nine of the nearly 1,500 genes known to be linked to intellectual disability in general are protein-coding genes. Most large genetic studies so far have used a sequencing technology that typically leaves out genes that don't code for proteins.

This study used more comprehensive "whole-genome" sequencing data from 77,539 people enrolled in the British 100,000 Genomes Project, including 5,529 with an intellectual disability. The rare mutations researchers found in the gene, called RNU4-2, were strongly associated with the potential to develop intellectual disability.



This microscope image shows the 46 human chromosomes, blue, with telomeres appearing as white pinpoints. (AP)

The finding "opens the door to diagnoses" for thousands of families, said study author Andrew Mumford, research director of the South West England NHS Genomic Medicine Service.

More research is needed, Mumford said. How the mutation causes the disorder remains unclear and there is no treatment. But Billington said labs should be able to offer testing for this condition relatively quickly. And researchers said families should be able to find and support each other - and know they're not alone.

"That can be incredibly comforting," Mumford said.

A lifeline for preterm babies

Breast milk donors in Uganda offer hope to mothers in need

KAMPALA, Uganda, June 3, (AP): Early last year, Caroline Ikendi was in distress after undergoing an emergency Caesarean section to remove a stillborn baby and save two others. Doctors said one of the preterm babies had a 2% chance of living.

If the babies didn't get breast milk - which she didn't have - Ikendi could lose them as well.

Thus began a desperate search for breast milk donors. She was lucky with a neighbor, a woman with a newborn baby to feed who was willing to donate a few millilitres at a time.

"You go and plead for milk. You are like, 'Please help me, help my child,'" Ikendi told The Associated Press.

The neighbor helped until Ikendi heard about a Ugandan group that collects breast milk and donates it to mothers like her. Soon the ATTA Breastmilk Community was giving the breast milk she needed, free of charge, until her babies were strong enough to be discharged from the hospital.

Support

ATTA Breastmilk Community was launched in 2021 in the Ugandan capital, Kampala, by a woman who had struggled like Ikendi without getting support. The registered nonprofit, backed by grants from organizations and individuals, is the only group outside a hospital setting in Uganda that conserves breast milk in substantial amounts.

ATTA, as the group is known, receives calls for support from hospitals and homes with babies born too soon or too sick to latch onto their mothers' breasts.

More than 200 mothers have donated breast milk to support over 450 babies since July 2021, with over 600 liters of milk delivered for babies in that period, according to ATTA's records.

In a measure of efforts to build a reliable community, many donors have given multiple times while others help to find new ones, said ATTA administrator Racheal Akugizibwe.

"We are an emergency fix," Akugizibwe said. "As the mother is working on their own production, we are giving (her) milk. But we do it under the directive and under the support of a lactation specialist and the medical people."

She added: "Every mother who has given us milk, they are kind of attached to us. They are we; we are them. That's what makes it a community."

ATTA makes calls for donors via social media apps like Instagram. Women who want to donate must provide samples for testing, including for HIV and Hepatitis B and C, and there are formal conversations during which ATTA tries to learn more about potential donors and motivations. Those who pass the screening are given storage bags and instructed in safe handling.

Donated breast milk is pasteurized before being prepared and frozen for mothers who may need it, seen in a freezer in Kampala, Uganda, Thursday, May 16, 2024. (AP)

Akugizibwe spoke of ATTA's humble beginnings in the home of its founder, Tracy Ahumuza, who would store the milk in her freezer. Ahumuza started the group amid personal grief: She hadn't been able to produce breast milk for her newborn who battled life-threatening complications. Days later, after the baby died, she started lactating.

Dengue grips Sri Lanka

Pakistan, Afghanistan kick off polio vaccination drive

ISLAMABAD, June 3, (Xinhua): A country-wide polio vaccination campaign kicked off in Pakistan on Monday in which over 16.5 million kids under 5 will be inoculated, the Pakistani Health Ministry said.

The five-day campaign comes ahead of massive public movement expected across the country on the occasion of the upcoming Muslim festival of Eid al-Adha later this month, the ministry said in a statement.

The vaccination will be carried out in 66 districts of the country in which 33 districts will be inoculated completely while 30 districts partially, said the statement.

The campaign focuses on the federal capital Islamabad, 20 districts of the southwestern Balochistan province, 23 districts of the northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, 16 districts of the southern Sindh province, and six districts of the eastern Punjab province, it added.

Meanwhile, Afghanistan's second nationwide anti-polio campaign of 2024 kicked off on Monday, aiming to protect Afghan children from paralysis, according to a statement by the country's Ministry of Public Health.

During the four-day campaign until June 6, more than 11.2 million children under five will be given polio vaccines, the statement said.

Also:

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka's National Dengue Control Unit (NDCU) said on Sunday that 71 divisions in 15 districts including the capital Colombo had been identified as high risk zones for dengue fever.

The NDCU said in a statement that it carried out a survey between May 26 and June 1 and observed a surge in mosquito breeding places.

The agency said though dengue cases reported from January to April remained relatively low, a surge of cases could be expected from May onwards with the onset of southwest monsoon according to experience from previous years.

According to the NDCU, nearly 25,000 cases have been reported so far this year with nine deaths.

No evidence for ditching glasses, says expert

Eye exercises for better vision?

By Benjamin Botsford
UMass Chan Medical School

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

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You may have seen advertisements claiming to eliminate the need for eyeglasses through vision therapy or vision training - basically, eye exercises.

These exercises include putting pressure on or palming the eye; eye movement exercises; or straining to read by using the wrong prescription glasses to "train" the eyes.

As a professor of ophthalmology - and as an eye doctor who has seen thousands of patients - I can tell you that no study to date shows strong evidence that these exercises eliminate the need for glasses or offer any long-term significant benefits. The science simply isn't there.

The lack of evidence holds true for virtually all eye conditions and diseases, including common afflictions such as myopia, or nearsightedness, which refers to when closer objects are clear, but distant objects are blurry. It's also true for farsightedness - also called hyperopia - which happens when objects are clear in the distance but blurry up close. Nor do these eye exercises help with presbyopia, or the need for reading glasses, which generally begins at around age 40.

With presbyopia, the patient is neither nearsighted nor farsighted and requires no glasses for distance vision. Yet as the lens of the eye becomes stiffer over time, the eye struggles to focus on fine print and smaller text. This decline will continue with age - and, with it, the need for stronger reading glasses will increase.

Although some methods claim to alleviate the need for reading glasses, there is limited if any evidence to suggest benefit.

That said, here are some things everyone can do to maintain healthy eyes:

All children should have a baseline eye exam during infancy and then again between 6 and 12 months of age. They should have a third exam between ages 1 to 3, and then a more formal exam between ages 3 to 5 to check for eye misalignment, ocular health and the potential need for glasses.

Address

Failing to address eye misalignment, or to provide glasses for a child who needs them, may lead to abnormal visual development or amblyopia, which is a weak, lazy eye.

Progression of nearsightedness in children can be slowed by taking breaks and avoiding hour after hour on the phone or computer. Limiting up-close reading time outside of school - screen time or otherwise - may help slow the progression of nearsightedness in children.

Prolonged screen time can cause eye strain and dryness. I suggest following the 20-20-20 rule: Take 20-second breaks every 20 minutes to look 20 feet away from your device. Focus on relaxing the eyes and blinking. The occasional use of artificial tears, which can be bought over the counter at drugstores, may help with dry eye.

Spending more time outdoors is good for your eyes. It has been correlated with a reduced incidence of nearsightedness in childhood. One caution: Staring directly into the Sun, even briefly, is dangerous and can cause permanent retinal damage.

Ads for blue-light-blocking glasses claim they prevent headaches and eye strain and improve sleep. But some studies, including a large, randomized control trial, found that blue-blocking lenses did not alter symptoms of eye strain. Additionally, there is only limited evidence to show that these glasses improve circadian rhythm.

Be wary of supplements or natural remedies that claim to be a cure-all for any eye condition. These assertions are not backed by rigorous scientific evidence, and there is no proof they improve vision, reduce eye floaters or eliminate the need for glasses. The same is true for claims that essential oils or other topical substances may improve vision.

While omega-3s have been previously touted for dry eye symptoms, there is no strong evidence that they help, although this does not discount their many other health benefits.

One study did demonstrate that progression of intermediate age-related macular degeneration slowed in some patients after using over-the-counter vitamins; specifically, the AREDS2 formula. However, these vitamins were not beneficial in patients with early or no signs of the disease.

Scientists design energy-efficient brain-like chip

China develops guide robot for blind people

BEIJING, June 3, (Xinhua): A research team from China's Shanghai Jiao Tong University has developed a six-legged guide robot for visually impaired people that is expected to address the country's shortage of real guide dogs.

"We believe our robot will function as a 'pair of eyes' for visually impaired people," said Professor Gao Feng from the School of Mechanical Engineering in a press release on the university's official website on Thursday.

According to the China Association of Persons with Visual Disabilities, there are about 17.31 million visually impaired people in China. However, due to high breeding costs and long training periods, there are reportedly only over 400 guide dogs in service nationwide, which means only one guide dog is available for every 40,000 visually impaired individuals in China.

As a strong backup for the real guide dogs, the guide robot can accurately recognize the speech of blind people and respond in less than one second, walking at a maximum speed of three meters per second while maintaining a stable walking state with little noise, according to the press release.

The robot has visual environmental perception capabilities, allowing it to autonomously navigate to its destination, dynamically avoid obstacles, and recognize traffic lights.

Moreover, with the support of the internet, it can also serve as a home companion and an emergency responder for blind people, it said.

"The primary task of our robot is to establish effective communication with blind individuals to enable the robot to understand the user's intentions while maintaining coordinated movements," said Gao.

To achieve these goals, the robot adopts a multisensory perception system of "seeing, hearing, asking and touching." It combines natural language comprehension and speech recognition with force-feedback canes to enable the users to control the robot.

This robot also uses advanced machine learning algorithms, enabling it to automatically avoid static and dynamic obstacles with a high degree of stability and safety.

Also:

BEIJING: A team of Chinese and Swiss scientists has jointly developed an energy-efficient sensing-computing neuromorphic chip that mimics the neurons and synapses of the human brain.

The human brain, capable of processing incredibly intricate and expansive neural networks, operates with a total power consumption of merely 20 watts, significantly lower than that of current AI systems. Therefore, neuromorphic or brain-like computing offers promising energy-saving machine intelligence.

The researchers from the Institute of Automation under the Chinese Academy of Sciences and SynSense AG Corporation in **Switzerland** crafted this asynchronous chip, dubbed "Speck," which boasts an impressively low resting power consumption of just 0.42 milliwatts, meaning it consumes almost no energy when there is no input.

1st IndyCar driver to win 2 this season

Dixon wins record 4th Detroit Grand Prix

DETROIT, June 3, (AP): Scott Dixon made some savvy decisions, choosing not to pit for rain tires early and calculating that he would have enough fuel to finish, that paid off at the Detroit Grand Prix.

Dixon also had some good fortune on his side.

"Some of it today was a little bit of luck," he acknowledged.

Dixon won a record fourth Detroit Grand Prix, outlasting the competition

CAR RACING

in a caution-filled race on Sunday to become the first IndyCar driver with two victories this season. The six-time IndyCar Series champion won his 58th career race, trailing only A.J. Foyt's total of 67 in the series.

The New Zealand racer was responsible for the fifth and final lead change on Lap 66, and held off a late charge from Marcus Ericsson to break a tie in the Detroit Grand Prix record books with Will Power and Helio Castroneves.

The Chip Ganassi Racing driver finished nearly a second ahead of Ericsson and was followed by Marcus Armstrong, Kyle Kirkwood and Alexander Rossi thanks to strategy that also served him well during his win at Long Beach in April.

"Scott Dixon is the best ever at what he did today, saving the fuel," Ericsson said.

The Detroit Grand Prix got off to a rough start and failed to find much of a flow as eight cautions stunted nearly half of the 100-lap race.

"I don't think it's embarrassing," Dixon said. "Most people go to races to watch crashes. I don't." Theo Pourchaire tapped Power from behind on the third turn of Lap 1, tangling several cars in a rare spot to potentially pass on the tight, short and bumpy track.

Santino Ferrucci, whose driving drew Kyle Kirkwood's ire in practice on Saturday, tried to get around Castroneves and clipped him. Castroneves, a four-time Indy 500 champion, was filling in for struggling Tom Blomqvist for Meyer Shank Racing in the hopes of picking up points, only to finish 25th.

"I think people are driving reckless," Ericsson said. "We're some of the best drivers in the world racing so we shouldn't be having incidents like today." As if the track didn't pose enough of a challenge, conditions added another obstacle on the nine-turn, 1.6-mile street course near the banks of the Detroit River.

Overnight rain removed some rubber from the street circuit and sporadic showers made it slick in spots.

Pole sitter Colton Herta, who led 31 laps early in the race, attempted to make an aggressive inside move midway through the race and lost control of the No. 26 Honda that went into a tire barrier and led to a 19th-place finish.

Dixon was thankful to be above the fray for much of the day.

"It was pretty wild," he said.

Josef Newgarden had a humbling afternoon a day after Team Penske announced a multiyear contract extension with the back-to-back Indianapolis 500 winner. Late in the race, Newgarden lost control of the back end of his car - with no one nearby - and hit a wall to set up a 26th-place finish in the 27-car field.

Reigning IndyCar champion Alex Palou, who won last year's race in Detroit, started second and finished 16th to end a run of being eighth or better in points-paying races.

"A lot of guys that you know are going to be racing for a championship had a rough day," said Dixon, who moved passed Palou, his Chip Ganassi Racing teammate to become the season's points leader.

In the shadow of General Motors' world headquarters, Honda dominated in Detroit, with only Rossi cracking the top five in a Chevrolet.

"It felt good to spoil the party, for sure," Ericsson said.

Ericsson and Kirkwood had season-best finishes, a week after both were disappointed at the Indy 500.

"It wasn't weird," Ericsson said. "It was terrible." Blomqvist, a rookie, caused Ericsson to crash on the opening lap to end his bid to repeat at the Brickyard while Kirkwood had his hopes end with a penalty for avoidable contact on pit row.

Ocon to leave Alpine F1 team at the end of the season

ENSTONE, England, June 3, (AP): Esteban Ocon is leaving Alpine at the end of the season after a troubled start to the year in Formula 1 for him and the French-owned team.

Ocon is the only driver to win a race for Alpine since it rebranded from Renault at the end of 2020 but he has scored one point this season and crashed into teammate Pierre Gasly's car in the last race, the Monaco Grand Prix. Ocon will have a five-place grid penalty at the Canadian Grand Prix this week as a result.

"We have had some great moments together, some tough moments as well, and I am certainly grateful to everyone at the team for these memorable times," the 27-year-old Ocon said in a team statement.

"I will announce my plans very soon but, in the

MOTOR RACING

meantime, my full focus is on delivering on track for this team and having a successful remainder of the season."

Alpine said its drivers for next year "will be announced in due course."

Ocon made his F1 debut in 2016 with Manor and his sole career win came at the Hungarian Grand Prix in 2021 for Alpine after a crash in wet conditions took out much of the field.

Alpine hoped to establish itself among F1's leading teams but has hit a major setback this year with a car that has often been well off the pace.

French teammates Ocon and Gasly have one 10th-place finish each this year, leaving Alpine ninth of the 10 teams on just two points, ahead of only Sauber.

Sun maintain unbeaten streak

Indiana Fever forward Aliyah Boston (7) pulls in a rebound while being defended by Chicago Sky center Kamilla Cardoso (10) during the second half of a WNBA basketball game in Indianapolis. (AP)

Liberty brush aside Fever

ATLANTA, June 3, (AP): DeWanna Bonner had 18 points and 10 rebounds, Di-Jonai Carrington added 15 points and the Connecticut Sun remained undefeated with a 69-50 win over the Atlanta Dream on Sunday.

In addition to Bonner's traditional double-double, Alyssa Thomas had 14 rebounds, 11 assists and eight points for the Sun. Tyasha Harris added 13 points.

The Sun finished the first half on a 12-2 run over the final four minutes of the second quarter and led 39-27 at halftime.

Atlanta scored two points in the first six-plus minutes of the third quarter and Connecticut was out front 51-29. Atlanta made four of its final five shots of the period and added 5 of 6 free throws to trail 57-43 heading to the fourth quarter.

BASKETBALL

The Dream went 3 for 16 from the field and 0 for 2 from the line in the fourth quarter. Their 50 points were 23 points below their previous season low. It was the second fewest points allowed by Connecticut, which held Phoenix to 47 points in a game last week.

Atlanta got 12 points and 12 rebounds from Tina Charles. The Dream shot 28.4% overall and made 3 of 16 3-pointers, their worst numbers at home this season.

Mercury 87, Sparks 68

In Phoenix, Diana Taurasi hit 7 of 9 from 3-point range and finished with a season-high 31 points to help Phoenix beat Los Angeles and snap a four-game skid.

Taurasi made 9 of 14 from the field, hit 6 of 6 from the free-throw line and added two steals. Natasha Cloud scored 21 points with 12 assists, her third double-double of the season, and Kahleah Copper added 12 points and Sophie Cunningham 10 for the Mercury. Natasha Mack grabbed a career-high 12 rebounds.

The Sparks made just 3 of 13 from the field and scored seven points in the second - their lowest-scoring quarter of the season - and Phoenix used a 15-0 run to make it 31-17 when Liz Dixon hit a jumper with 3:36 left in the first half and the Mercury led by double figures the rest of the way.

Dearica Hamby finished with 23 points and four rebounds and Kia Nurse scored 12 for the Sparks (2-6). Hamby, who went into the game sixth in the league in scoring (20.6 per game) and leading the WNBA in rebounds per game (12.7), had her league-record streak of seven consecutive regular-season games with at least 17 points and nine rebounds snapped.

Liberty 104, Fever 68

In New York, Caitlin Clark had just one basket and three points in the worst game of her young pro career, and New York routed Indiana.

Betnijah Laney-Hamilton scored 20 points and Jonquel Jones added 18 for the Liberty, who were nearing the end of the easy win when Clark left the game and Aliyah Boston departed a few minutes later after an awkward fall.

Clark shot 1 for 10 and had five assists. The No. 1 pick in the draft played the first few minutes of the fourth quarter before exiting, holding her ear for a little bit as she left the court.

The Fever had another scary moment a few minutes later when Boston went down awkwardly after she was fouled. She gingerly walked off the court and back to the locker room.

Indiana was playing the second game of a back-to-back set. The Fever beat Chicago on Saturday afternoon by one point.

The Fever have had a brutal stretch to the start the season with 11 games in the first 20 days, including playing New York three times now.

Lynx 87, Wings 76

In Minneapolis, Kayla McBride hit five 3-pointers and scored 25 points, Napheesa Collier added 24 points and grabbed 14 rebounds and Minnesota beat Dallas.

Courtney Williams finished with 10 points, five rebounds, four assists and three steals for the Western Conference-leading Lynx.

Collier hit a jumper just before halftime that made it 39-38 and the Lynx led the rest of the way.

Indiana Fever guard Caitlin Clark (22) makes a move around the defense of Chicago Sky guard Lindsay Allen, (left), during a WNBA basketball game in Indianapolis. (AP)

Cindric claims win in NASCAR Cup series after Blaney runs out of gas

MADISON, June 3, (AP): Austin Cindric emerged as the surprise winner of the NASCAR Cup series race Sunday at World Wide Technology Raceway when teammate Ryan Blaney ran out of gas while leading on the final lap.

Blaney, the reigning NASCAR Cup series champion, appeared to be on his way to his first win of the season after fighting off a challenge from Christopher Bell, who had his own car trouble in the closing laps.

Cindric, who had pitted just one lap after Blaney, took advantage of the situation and notched his second career victory. The other came in the 2022 Daytona 500.

"It was like my first time all over again," Cindric said. "It's been so long. Even just standing up on the roof of my car, I about fell over in Victory Lane." Denny Hamlin came in second, recording his sixth straight top-5 finish. Brad Keselowski was third, followed by Tyler Reddick and Joey Logano.

Cindric said he didn't find out until he reached Victory Lane that Blaney had run out of gas - or that it might have been an issue for him.

CAR RACING

"Probably the two best cars at the end of that race both had an issue, and the third-place car wins the race. That's the way I see it," Cindric said. "I mean, it's not like I went out there and I took the lead away but we were in position, and this is one of our best-executed races so far this year with probably our best speed." The three Penske cars - Cindric, Blaney and Logano - did not pit in the break between the second and third stages, and that put them in position to go for Team Penske's first win of the year.

"It's been miserable to be in our shop here lately. We expect to win," said Logano, a two-time series champion who entered the race 17th in points. "We got used to winning and when you're fighting for 20th, it's quite the kick in the you-know-what." Bell, the winner of last week's rain-shortened Coca-Cola 600, had been the dominant car for much of the day in suburban St. Louis, leading 80 of the 240 laps.

1st world series win ignites hopes

France rugby sevens raises expectations for home Oly

MADRID, June 3, (AP): High expectations on the France rugby sevens side for its Paris home Olympics will intensify after it won its first world series title in Madrid on Sunday.

The men outmuscled Argentina in the final 19-5 after the women were runner-up to Australia 26-7 at Metropolitano Stadium.

Since the world series began in 1999, France had never finished in the top four until last year. This season, it won the Los Angeles leg in March for its first tournament victory in 19 years.

France came to the series finale in Madrid ranked fifth but edged Fiji in the semifinals and avenged a pool loss to Argentina.

"The next tournament in Paris will be another story so we'll take the pleas-

RUGBY

ure now," France coach Jerome Daret said. "When you're on top of the wave, you have to be hard on your mindset. I'm very proud of the team, they never gave up, big heart. But it's not finished. We have a big target in a few weeks and maybe win the Olympics."

The Argentines led for almost the entire series and knocked out defending series champion New Zealand to reach the Madrid final unbeaten and have a shot at their first world series title, too.

They started the final better. Rodrigo Isgro made a try-saving tackle on Jean Pascal Barraque, then Luciano Gonzalez, playing with a heavily taped right ankle, fended off two defenders to score the opening try in the left corner.

But seconds before halftime, France attacked from behind its own tryline and Varian Pasquet and Barraque worked to set Stephan Parez-Edo Martin free from the halfway line. France led 7-5 at halftime.

When Isgro was yellow-carded for a deliberate knockdown in the second half, France used the man advantage to score through Jefferson-Lee Joseph. They clinched the win with a minute to go when Antoine Dupont's inside pass gave captain Paulin Riva a try.

Dupont, the former 15s world player of the year who sacrificed the Six Nations to try for the Olympic sevens squad, has played three tournaments for France and won two golds and a bronze.

"Antoine Dupont is the best player in the world, we think," Riva said. "When he is on the pitch, we have a lot of confidence."

The final finished with an all-in melee. Isgro took exception to Riva's late clearout and tip-tackled him onto his neck. Isgro, the world sevens player of the year, was red-carded and a sanction may affect his Olympic appearance.

The France women have never won a tournament and were managing their final to halftime - 7-7 - until Australia cut down the errors. Then it became another Maddison Levi show.

Levi brushed off two defenders for the go-ahead try, finished off the second in the other corner, and face-palmed a defender to score her third.

Levi scored 13 of Australia's 21 tries in Madrid, including three hat tricks in five games. Her 69 tries in the season were the second best total in series history, among men and women, after Vilimoni Delasau's 83 for Fiji in the inaugural 1999-2000 season.

Arguably her biggest moment was in the semifinal against New Zealand. The clock was in red, Australia trailed 19-14, and Levi regained the restart and ended up scoring the tying try. Then Tia Hinds kicked the conversion from the touchline.

New Zealand had won the last four tournaments. The battles with Australia finished 3-3 this season. The teams also share the only two Olympic gold medals and will be the favorites again in Paris.

Australia captain Charlotte Carlick noted its importance after the final.

Belgium's Romelu Lukaku celebrates after scoring his sides third goal during the Euro 2024 group F qualifying soccer match between Belgium and Azerbaijan in Brussels, Sunday, Nov. 19, 2023. (AP)

Belgium's exciting new crop looks to upstage the 'golden generation'

BRUSSELS, June 3, (AP): For all its talent, Belgium's so-called golden generation of soccer players has never won a major title.

With only a few members of that era still around, a new group of ambitious youngsters chaperoned by seasoned veterans will compete at the European Championship, looking to shed the country's underachiever reputation.

After the Red Devils failed to progress to the knockout stage of the 2022 World Cup in Qatar, Belgium has quickly rebuilt a solid and entertaining team under the helm of coach Domenico Tedesco.

The 38-year-old German-Italian remains unbeaten since he was appointed in February last year.

In a very short time, Tedesco has put together a team with an attack-minded style, putting his faith in promising, emerging talents on a mission to win Belgium's first major trophy.

Tedesco has been so convincing that he was given a two-year contract extension until 2026 before the start of the Euros.

After Eden Hazard, Toby Alderweireld and Simon Mignolet announced their retirement from international soccer following the World Cup in Qatar, Tedesco brought in exciting new faces while experienced players such as Dries Mertens and Thorgan Hazard lost their influence.

The new faces have the opportunity to leave their mark at the Euros.

SOCCER

Jeremy Doku is the most prominent of them following his excellent debut season at Manchester City, which should earn him a place in Tedesco's starting lineup in Germany. Alongside Doku, PSV Eindhoven player Johan Bakayoko - who scored 12 goals and delivered nine assists in the Dutch league - is expected to wreak havoc on the right wing of the Belgian attack.

Gatti called up

Italy's defensive crisis deepens as injured Scalvini out of Euro squad

FLORENCE, Italy, June 3, (AP): Italy's crisis in defense deepened Monday when Giorgio Scalvini was ruled out of the European Championship after he tore an ACL in Atalanta's last match of the season.

Scalvini

The 20-year-old defender has been replaced in Italy's provisional squad by Juventus counterpart Federico Gatti, the Italian soccer federation announced with the Azzurri kicking off their title defense in less than two weeks.

Gatti was already on standby after Inter defender - and Euro 2020 champion - Francesco Acerbi had to pull out with a groin injury last week.

The 25-year-old Gatti, who made his debut in 2022, has played three times for Italy.

Scalvini appeared to be in tears Sunday when he was taken off five minutes before the end of Atalanta's 3-2 loss to Fiorentina. Tests confirmed the center-back had torn a ligament in his left knee. He had scored in the first half.

SOCCER

The Serie A match was rescheduled from March when former Fiorentina general manager Joe Barone fell ill. Barone then died two days later.

Scalvini was supposed to join the Italy squad on Monday, along with teammate Gianluca Scamacca. Gatti will now head to the Italy training headquarters in Coverciano, near Florence.

KWSP.E.HE acknowledges achievements in Kuwait's sports scene

Kuwait School Sports Federation honors participants

Excelled students display their certificates after the awarding ceremony.

KUWAIT CITY, June 3: The Kuwait School and High Education Sports Federation (KWSP.E.HE) honored the participants in the activities of the "morning activities" and "talented" centers for the 2023-2024 sports season.

The ceremony was held under the patronage of the Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs, and the Minister of State for Youth Affairs, Dr. Mathal Al-Huwaila. She was represented in the honor by the Deputy Director General of the Public Sports Authority for the competitive sports sector, Bashar Salem.

The Chairman of the Federation's Board of Directors, Faisal Al-Maqseed, said in a press statement on this occasion that the current season witnessed the joining of a large number of players, male and female coaches, and administrative staff to clubs and federations.

Al-Maqseed stated that the federation's strategy and vision 2021-2026, which relies on discovering talent in schools and working to develop it and supplying clubs and federations with it, has succeeded in achieving its goals this season.

Pointing to the success achieved in the Arab School Sports Championship, which was hosted in the Egyptian capital, Cairo, at the end of last November, as well as the World Championship, which was hosted by China.

The activities included include seven sports for boys: football, handball, basketball, volleyball, bowling, and martial arts, in addition to four games for girls: futsal, basketball, volleyball, and handball.

The Kuwait School Sports and Higher Education Federation is a qualitative, non-profit sports federation supervised by the Public Sports Authority. It aims to serve athletes from the primary to university levels and seeks to advance sports in the State of Kuwait.

The federation's vision is for the State of Kuwait to be a leader in the field of school sports in the Arab, Asian and global world, to restore the leadership level of our national teams.

The Federation aims to enhance sports practice and activities in Ministry of Education schools, universities and colleges for both genders, boys and girls, as well as spreading sports, health and educational awareness and encouraging the practice of sports.

Kuwait Club win 14th Premier Handball League title

Al-Abyad rout Al-Arabi

By Khaled El Anzi
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 3: The Kuwait Club has officially claimed victory in the 57th edition of the Premier Handball League for the 2023-2024 season, three rounds before its conclusion. This achievement marks its 14th title in history and an impressive 12th consecutive win. "Al-Abyad" sealed the triumph by defeating Al-Arabi 33-25 in the seventh week of the Premier League, held at the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Complex. Additionally, Al-Qadisiya edged Kazma 30-28 in a close match,, while Burgan secured a 34-32 victory over Al-Salmiya.

Khaled Al-Ghanem celebrates with Al-Rashidi and Al-Hajri.

Sameh Al-Hajri, the director of handball at the Kuwait Club, extended his congratulations to the club's president, Khaled Al-Ghanem, the board of directors, the technical staff led by Haitham Al-Rashidi, the administrator, the champion players, and the fans of "Al-Abyad" for their remarkable achievement. He emphasized the difficulty of maintaining the top spot but expressed confidence in the club's ability to uphold their leadership.

Al-Hajri praised the players for their consistent performance, citing their success in local and international competitions throughout the season. Looking ahead, he mentioned upcoming events including the Arab Club Championship, the Federation Cup, and the Asian Club Championship, expressing optimism for further triumphs and aspirations to qualify for the Super Globe Club World Cup.

De Minaur beats Medvedev

Sabalenka powers into quarters

PARIS, June 3, (AP): Aryna Sabalenka's dominant run at the French Open continued Monday with a 6-2, 6-3 win over Emma Navarro to reach the quarterfinals.

And watch out, because now the sun is shining at Porte d'Auteuil in the southwest of Paris.

"When the sun is out, I play with a lot more happiness," said Sabalenka, who has yet drop at Roland Garros this year.

She certainly showed some joy after her fourth-round win over the 22nd-seeded Navarro, displaying disco-inspired dance moves on her way off the court to the Bee Gees' "Stayin' Alive" played loudly on the phone of No. 8 Ons Jabeur, who stood near a staircase leading to the locker room.

The Belarusian, ranked second in the world, is now one win away from her seventh straight Grand Slam semifinal appearance. She will face the winner of the match between Varvara Gracheva and Mirra Andreeva in the quarterfinals.

Other results included No. 12 Jasmine Paolini defeating Elina Avanesyan 4-6, 6-0, 6-1, and No. 4 Elena Rybakina advancing past Elina Svitolina 6-4, 6-3. Paolini and Rybakina will meet in the quarterfinals.

"She's a tough opponent. She's moving well and hitting the ball quite heavily. I'll have to focus on my footwork," Rybakina, the 2022 Wimbledon champion, said of Paolini. With temperatures in Paris approaching 22 degrees Celsius (72 Fahrenheit), the absence of rain allowed the matches on Court Philippe Chatrier and Court Suzanne Lenglen to proceed with an open roof.

That hot, really?

It is far from the scorching heat Alex De Minaur grew up with back home in Australia. The 11th-seeded De Minaur rallied past No. 5-seeded Daniil Medvedev 4-6, 6-2, 6-1, 6-3 to become the first Australian to reach the quarterfinals at Roland Garros since Lleyton Hewitt in 2004. Medvedev had some treatment on his right foot during the second set.

TENNIS

De Minaur conducted his on-court interview all in French.

"I will try (speaking) in French. I want to say thank you to everyone, it was an incredible atmosphere. I was not expecting to get to the quarterfinals at Roland Garros because I haven't played very well on clay in recent years," the 25-year-old De Minaur said.

He then tried to explain how difficult it is playing Medvedev but found it too hard in French, saying "it's too difficult" but still drawing loud cheers and applause.

Mbappé not in France squad for Paris Games

PARIS, June 3, (AP): Kylian Mbappé was left out of France's provisional squad for the Paris Olympics on Monday, though coach Thierry Henry said the list "can evolve."

The World Cup winner, who is widely expected to join Real Madrid after leaving Paris Saint-Germain as a free agent, had stated his desire to play at the Games in his home nation but was not included in Henry's initial 25-man list.

"I didn't draw a line in the hope that something would happen," Henry told a news conference. "We don't know what's going to happen until July 3, but I have to give you a list that's real. I've put together a list that is more in the truth of the moment. Even though the list can evolve. Everything is open to everybody."

PSG's Warren Zaire-Emery and Bradley Barcola were included, as well as veteran striker Alexandre Lacazette.

Unlike most international tournaments like the World Cup, European Championship and Copa America, clubs are not required to let their players compete at men's Olympic tournaments.

With Mbappé set to play at the Euros for France, his involvement at the Paris Games would have meant he was unlikely to get a break during the off-season.

Still, he said in March that he wanted to be involved: "I have always had the same ambition. I have always said that I wanted to go, but it doesn't depend on me."

Even France President Emmanuel Macron had called for Mbappé to be part of the men's Olympic team.

Macron said last month that he was "counting upon Real Madrid to free up Kylian for the Olympic Games," despite his widely anticipated move to the Spanish giant still not confirmed.

Crystal Palace's Jean-Philippe Mateta and Michael Olise have both been included.

France squad:

Goalkeepers: Lucas Chevalier (Lille), Obed Nkambadio (Paris FC), Guillaume Restes (Toulouse), Robin Risser (Dijon)

Defenders: Bafode Diakite (Lille), Maxime Esteve (Burnley), Bradley Locko (Brest), Castello Lukeba (Leipzig), Kiliann Sildillia (Freiburg), Adrien Truffert (Rennes), Leny Yoro (Lille)

Midfielders: Maghnes Akliouche (Monaco), Joris Chotard (Montpellier), Desire Doue (Rennes), Manu Kone (Borussia Mönchengladbach), Enzo Millot (Stuttgart), Khephren Thuram (Nice), Lesley Ugochukwu (Chelsea), Warren Zaire-Emery (Paris Saint-Germain)

Forwards: Bradley Barcola (Paris Saint-Germain), Arnaud Kalimuendo (Rennes), Alexandra Lacazette (Lyon), Jean-Philippe Mateta (Crystal Palace), Michael Olise (Crystal Palace), Mathys Tel (Bayern Munich)

The latest signs seem positive

Hosts Germany hoping to create another summer party at Euro 2024 after recent tournament flops

BERLIN, June 3, (AP): Another extraordinary summer or another national embarrassment.

No one knows quite what to expect from this Germany team heading in the European Championship.

The optimists point to the opportunity of staging another monthlong party like the one that gripped the country when it hosted the 2006 World Cup. The pessimists can point to three straight fiascos at major tournaments that has forced Germany fans to readjust their expectations of the men's soccer team.

The latest signs seem positive, though, with Germany earning impressive wins in friendlies against France and the Netherlands in March after new coach Julian Nagelsmann instigated a shakeup of the squad.

If the team can carry can carry that momentum into the group stage, expect another festive atmosphere in Germany.

"If we get off to a good start, Germany could experience a similar enthusiasm and energy to that of 2006," said Philipp Lahm, the former national team captain who is now the tournament director of Euro 2024.

SOCCER

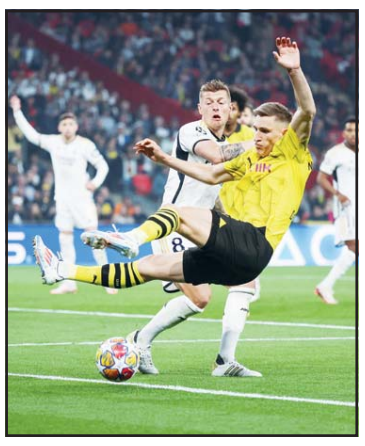
Many Germans still look back fondly on that summer of 2006, and there are some parallels between the two tournaments.

Back then, the Germany team coached by Jürgen Klinsmann had been criticized before the tournament for conceding too many goals, and the team was coming off an embarrassing exit in the Euro 2004 group stage. Klinsmann was placing his faith in youth, but expectations were still low going into the World Cup.

But after three wins in the group stage, World Cup fever took hold in the host nation.

It was the first tournament that Germany was hosting as a reunified country, and for many Germans it felt like the first opportunity they could wave their flag and show national pride.

In addition, the weather was wonderful, the beer kept flowing and everyone seemed to be enjoying the fun. While Germany fell just short of the final, losing to Italy in the semifinals, Germans still refer to the 2006 World Cup as a "Sommermärchen" - or summer fairytale.



Dortmund's Nico Schlotterbeck, foreground, duels for the ball with Real Madrid's Toni Kroos during the Champions League final soccer match between Borussia Dortmund and Real Madrid at Wembley stadium in London. (AP)

The build-up to this summer's tournament has seen some striking similarities. Germany was playing so badly that Hansi Flick was fired as coach last September. Nagelsmann had a rocky start, but threw caution to the wind when he dropped established players like Leon Goretzka and Mats Hummels and placed his trust in players who were performing well for their club teams.

Nagelsmann also recalled Real Madrid star Toni Kroos, though he didn't know at the time it would be for the midfielder's final hurrah. The 34-year-old Kroos has since announced he will retire after the tournament.

Nagelsmann's changes paid off immediately as his new-look team defeated France and the Netherlands.

The old doubts were dispelled, confidence surged back. Former West Germany great Lothar Matthäus declared Germany had to go on and win the European Championship.

Unlike many former Germany teams, though, this one will not be overly reliant on Bayern Munich players.

After Bayern's domestic supremacy was ended by Bayer Leverkusen - which won a league and cup double without losing a game - that power shift will likely be reflected in the national team.

The only Bayern players involved from the start in March were Jamal Musiala and Joshua Kimmich, although Manuel Neuer should return in goal for the tournament.

Leverkusen will likely have three players in Nagelsmann's starting lineup with Jonathan Tah at the back, Robert Andrich in midfield, and Florian Wirtz in attack. Stuttgart's Maximilian Mittelstädt has been trusted with the troublesome left back position while Arsenal's Kai Havertz is a likely option up front.

The host nation opens against Scotland in Munich on June 14, then plays Hungary in Stuttgart on June 19, before finishing the group against Switzerland in Frankfurt on June 23. Much of the team's success will depend on Kroos, who has the composure to read games and the technical skill to play the ball exactly where he wants it.

Kroos is one of the few players left from the team that won the 2014 World Cup, and finishing his Germany career with a European title would make for a perfect summer, indeed.

"He doesn't have to prove anything to anyone," Nagelsmann said about Kroos. "But he's got one last big tournament left and he's really looking forward to it. He has the chance to win another title. Then I think he would have won everything. That would be an incredible story."

Australia's Hayley Raso (left), and China's Liu Yanqiu battle for the ball during the women's international soccer friendly between China and Australia at Stadium Australia, in Sydney. Australia won 2-0. (AP)

Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus plays a shot against Emma Navarro of the U.S. during their fourth round match of the French Open tennis tournament at the Roland Garros stadium in Paris. (AP)

Sports

Latest sports scores at — http://sports.arabtimesonline.com

Kuwait head to Kolkata for showdown with India

By Khaled El Anzi
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

BANGKOK, June 3: Kuwait delegation departs from Bangkok to Kolkata to face the India in the fifth round of the joint Asian qualifiers for both the 2026 World Cup finals in the United States of America, Mexico, and Canada, as well as the 2027 Asian Cup, set to be held in Saudi Arabia.

Upon arrival in Kolkata, Al-Azraq plans to hold a single training session as requested by the technical staff, led by Portuguese coach Rui Pinto.

In anticipation of the crucial match against the Indian team, Al-Azraq has intensified its training regimen, conducting morning and evening sessions. The team aims to secure a positive result, advancing its journey to compete for the second qualifying card for the decisive stage of the World Cup qualifiers, along with securing a spot in the Asian Cup finals. Currently, Qatar leads Groupn A with a perfect record of 12 points, Kuwait, holds the fourth position with 3 points, trailing behind India and Afghanistan by one point.

Coach Pinto and his assistant, Ahmed Abdel Karim, have organized meetings with the players, focusing on technical lectures, instructions, and emphasizing the importance of implementing strategies practiced in daily training sessions. The team has also analyzed the performance of the Indian team in previous qualifiers to identify areas of strength and weakness.

SOCCER

Coach Rui Pinto selected a squad of 26 players: Fahd Al-Hajri, Sami Al-Sanea, Muhammad Dahham, Ahmed Al-Dhafiri, Reda Hani, Mishari Ghannam, Faisal Zayed, Saud Al-Hawshan, Youssef Nasser, Mubarak Al-Fanini, Khaled Ibrahim, Eid Al-Rashidi, Rashid Al-Dosari, Abdulaziz Wadi, Hassan Hamdan, Sultan Al-Anzi, Ali Khalaf, Suleiman Abdul-Ghafour, Badr Tariq, Salman Al-Awadi, Abdul Rahman Al-Fadhli, Mahdi Dashti, Athbi Shehab, Hamad Harbi, Bandar Bouresli, and Salman Buramiya. Moaz Al-Asmaa was later chosen to replace Salman Al-Awadi, who was suspended by the AFC for participating with the U-23 team in the recent Asian Cup finals in Qatar last April. Additionally, Reda Hani returned to Kuwait the day before yesterday due to the death of his father.

Kuwaiti players hold their final training session in Thailand.

Windies open T20 World Cup with nervy win

Namibia edge Oman in Super Over

West Indies' Nicholas Pooran plays a shot against Papua New Guinea during an ICC Men's T20 World Cup cricket match at Guyana National Stadium in Providence, Guyana. (AP)

PROVIDENCE, Guyana, June 3, (AP): West Indies scrapped to a nervy five-wicket win before allrounder David Wiese helped Namibia edge Oman in a Super Over on Sunday as the first two Twenty20 World Cup games in the Caribbean produced low-scoring but tense contests.

Namibia's Ruben Trumpelmann set a record in the dramatic Group B game in Barbados, becoming the first man to take wickets with the first two deliveries of a T20 cricket international.

CRICKET

The left-arm fast bowler took another wicket in his second over and returned a career-best 4-21, also taking the catch to finish the Oman innings at 109.

Namibia was on course for victory, needing five runs off the last six balls and Jan Fylinck unbeaten on 45, but Mehran Khan took two wickets and Oman narrowly missed a run-out chance that could have the game.

Namibia finished 109-6, with Wiese not out on 9.

The 39-year-old allrounder then went to work in the tiebreaker, striking a four and a six to help his team plunder 21 batting first in the Super Over.

Wiese, who took 3-28 in the regulation overs, then took a wicket and restricted Oman's Super Over to 10-1 in a player-of-the- match performance.

"Aged a couple of years tonight - (and) I don't have a lot of years left in me," the 39-year-old Wiese said, laughing. "Emotionally draining evening."

Namibia captain Gerhard Erasmus said his batters needed to be more accountable in the momentum-shifting moments.

"It was a tough one on a tough wicket like that," he said, noting that the Super Over took all the pressure off. "We haven't had one in a competition game. It was great to be part of. Winning a close game early breaks the duck and brings you into the tournament."

Oman captain Aqib Ilyas agreed it was a draining, exciting game.

"Some days it is your day, some days it goes the opposite way," he said.

West Indies had to wait until the last over in Guyana earlier Sunday to reach a victory target at 137-5 against Papua New Guinea.

The tournament opened Saturday with co-host United States enjoying a seven-wicket win over Canada in Grand Prairie, Texas.

The West Indies lineup should have dominated after restricting PNG to 136-8 but the big hitters were restricted by the spin bowlers.

Sese Bau guided the visitors innings, with his 50 being only the second PNG batter to score a half century at a T20 World Cup.

"Credit has to be given to PNG, their plans were simple and they played good cricket," West Indies skipper Rovman Powell said.

PNG didn't allow West Indies to run away with the chase and had the hosts worried at 97-5 in 16 overs. Roston Chase made an unbeaten 42 off 27 balls and carried the team home.

"It was a competitive score but we believe we missed a trick towards the end," PNG skipper Assad Vala said. "Another 10 to 15 runs would have been nice."

New Zealand, Uganda and Afghanistan are the other teams in Group C. The top two teams in each of the four groups advance to the playoff stage.

The 20-nation tournament continues Monday with South Africa playing Sri Lanka in New York and Afghanistan against Uganda in Guyana.

Papua New Guinea's wicket keeper Kipling Doriga celebrates taking the catch to dismiss West Indies' captain Rovman Powell during an ICC Men's T20 World Cup cricket match at Guyana National Stadium in Providence, Guyana. (AP)

MacIntyre takes Canadian Open

Saso wins second US Women's Open title

LANCASTER, Pa., June 3, (AP): Yuka Saso became a U.S. Women's Open champion for the second time Sunday and took her place in history with a rare footnote - the first Filipino to win the Women's Open in 2021, and now the first from Japan to win women's golf' biggest event.

No matter the flag, the 22-year-old Saso delivered a masterful performance at Lancaster Country Club with a 2-under 68. She ran off four birdies in a five-hole stretch on the back nine amid a series of collapses and won without much drama.

Saso got up-and-down for par from short of the 18th green to finish at 4-under 276, winning by three shots over Hinako Shibuno, who in 2019 became the first Japanese player to capture the Women's British Open.

They were the only two players under par, the fewest for the Women's Open in 10 years. Saso's only other LPGA Tour victory was the Women's Open at Olympic Club in 2021. She also has two titles on the Japan LPGA.

GOLF

Andrea Lee, part of a three-way tie for the lead at the start of this wild day, was the last player who had a chance to catch Saso. But the Stanford alum, a former No. 1 amateur, badly missed her tee shot on the easy 16th and had to settle for par, then took bogey on the 17th. Lee took one last bogey on the 18th for a 75 to tie for third with Ally Ewing (66).

Saso has said she wishes she could play for two flags - her mother is from the Philippines, her father from Japan. She decided to switch citizenship before turning 21, and Saso wound up leading a strong showing by Japan - five players among the top 10.

Saso won $2.4 million from the $12 million purse, the largest in women's golf and in women's sports at a standalone venue. The victory also put Saso in position to return to the Olympics - she played for the Philippines in 2021 in the Tokyo Games.

Robert MacIntyre, with father Dougie at his side as his caddie, held on to win the RBC Canadian Open for his first PGA Tour title.

Four strokes ahead entering the final round at Hamilton Golf and Country Club, MacIntyre shot a 2-under 68 to beat playing partner Ben Griffin by a stroke. On the par-4 18th, the 27-year-old Scottish left-hander two-putted for par from 12 feet, holing out from 1 1/2 feet.

MacIntyre finished at 16-under 264 for the breakthrough victory in his 45th career PGA Tour start. The former McNeese State player was a member of Europe's winning 2023 Ryder Cup team and has two European tour victories, the 2020 Aphrodite Hills Cyprus Showdown and 2022 Italian Open.

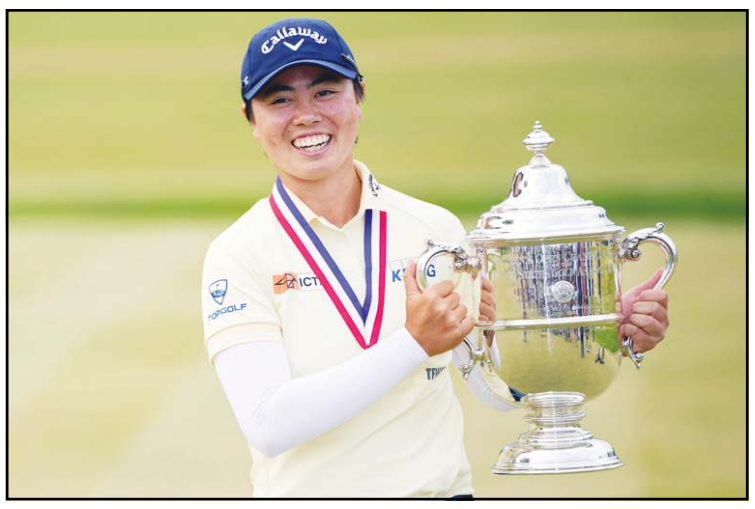
Griffin had a 65. He parred the 18th after birdieing the previous three holes.

Corey Conners was the top Canadian, shooting a 65 finish sixth at 12 under. Last year at Oakdale in Toronto, Nick Taylor made a 72-foot eagle putt on the fourth hole of a playoff against Tommy Fleetwood to become the first Canadian to win the event since 1954.

Englishman Laurie Canter held his nerve and overcame three bogeys for a 1-under 72 to win the European Open by two shots.

Canter, who had two appearances on LIV Golf this year before Anthony Kim was signed to join the Saudi-funded league, started the day in a two-way tie with Italy's Guido Migliozzi.

Migliozzi's challenge fizzled with a 78, but Canter was under pressure from others after playing his first 10 holes in 1 over. Thriston Lawrence of South Africa and Bernd Wiesberger of Austria were both making moves on the back nine.



Yuka Saso, of Japan, holds the tournament trophy after winning the U.S. Women's Open golf tournament at Lancaster Country Club in Lancaster, Pa. (AP)

Kuwait Football Association launches 'Blue League for Local Players'

KUWAIT CITY, June 3: The Kuwait Football Association has announced the launch of a new football competition called the "Blue League for Local Players" and introduced amendments to the local competition system, which will reduce the first team roster from 30 to 25 players starting from the 2024-2025 season.

This announcement was made at a conference held the day before yesterday, where Vice Chairman of the Federation's Board of Directors, Hayef Al-Mutairi, detailed the plan and competition mechanism. The conference was attended by the Assistant Secretary-General for Competitions Affairs and Support Services, Dr. Saleh Al-Majroub, Director of the Competitions Department, Dr. Hamid Al-Shaibani, and representatives of local clubs.

Hayef Al-Mutairi

Al-Mutairi explained that the Blue League for local players will be conducted in one round and then divided into two sections: "Gold," which includes teams ranked from first to seventh, and "Silver," which includes teams ranked from eighth to fifteenth. This league aims to provide opportunities for local players who do not frequently play with the first team and to help improve the fitness of players returning from injury. It serves as an alternative to the "Under-21" league.

SOCCER

Additionally, starting next season, amendments will reduce the first team's roster size from 30 to 25 players, while maintaining the decision to allow the signing of five professional players.

Khalaf makes history as the 1st Kuwaiti official at French Open

PARIS, June 3: Ahmed Khalaf, an international tennis referee from Kuwait, has made history by officiating matches at the renowned French Open, known as "Roland Garros." This significant achievement follows his attainment of the bronze international badge, alongside his colleague Abdul Raouf Abdul Salam, and his successful management of matches at the Wimbledon International Championship in London last year.

TENNIS

At Roland Garros, Ahmed Salman Khalaf demonstrated exceptional skill in overseeing the matches assigned to him, showcasing the advancements he's made in both administrative and technical aspects of refereeing. His performance has left a positive impression, highlighting the capabilities of Kuwaiti referees on the international stage. The tournament, hosting elite players from around the world, runs until June 9 in Paris.

Expressing his gratitude, Ahmed Khalaf thanked the Kuwait Tennis Federation and the Public Sports Authority for their unwavering support, which facilitated his participation in the prestigious event. He expressed immense joy in being the first Kuwaiti to officiate matches at a Grand Slam tournament, acknowledging the honor bestowed upon him by the International Federation of the Game.

Ahmed Khalaf, an international tennis referee.

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