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Kuwait celebrates Independence Day

Nation noted for diplomacy, humanitarian aid

KUWAIT CITY, June 18, (KUNA): June 19 of 1961 is a pivotal day in the history of Kuwait as it marks the end of the British protection treaty and the emergence of the modern state.

The late Amir Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem had signed the declaration of independence with the British Government Chief Political Resident in the Arabian Gulf Sir George Middleton.

Three years after the declaration, a decree was signed on May 18, 1964 merging the national day with the day in which Sheikh

Abdullah Al-Salem assumed office, making it February 25. Celebrations were held on that day as of 1965.

Since assuming office in 1950, Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem took carefully measured steps paving the way for independence, and achieving stability.

The 15-year reign of Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem, who was dubbed "Father of Independence" and "Father of Constitution" was peppered with achievements.

The State of Kuwait became member in the Arab League on July 20, 1961.

Sheikh Abdullah signed decree on August 26, 1961 to hold elections of the Constituent Assembly, mandated with writing the constitution.

The 183-article comprehensive constitution was completed in nine months, it laid the foundations for a sturdy democratic

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Opinion

Napoleon said: 'We do not rule people unless we show them the future; a leader trades with hope'

By Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

THE Chinese philosopher Laozi once said - The best leader is the one who understands people's feelings and demands, and they hardly feel his presence.

In this regard, Laozi's words mean to build mutual trust between the ruler and his people.

It is true that every ruler has his own style of running his state, irrespective of whether it is democratic, monarchical or parliamentary. However, the lesson remains in the formulation of orders. It is an art that the official needs to master, as nothing captures minds more than the kindness of the phrase.

Once upon a time, the king of an ancient kingdom issued an order to prohibit women from adorning themselves with gold and jewelry.

The reaction of the mass was startling, and they refused to obey the order, and protested in defiance.

Confronted by this situation, the king was confused about what to do in order to quell the sparks of sedition that he had created with his own hands. He ordered a meeting with the advisors and the pillars of government. During the meeting, one of them suggested rescinding the decision "in the public interest."

Another said, "No... Rescinding is an indication of weakness and fear. We must show our strength."

The group was divided between supporters and opposers. At that time, the king summoned the wise man of the city, and the latter was presented with the problem facing the king.

He told the king that people will not obey him if he thinks about what he wants, and not what the people want.

The king asked him, "What is to be done? Should I rescind then?"

The wise man said: "No, but issue another order explaining why adorning with gold and jewelry is not necessary for women, because they do not need such a thing, as their natural beauty is enough, and adorning with jewelries is for the ugly ones."

The king acted on the advice of the wise man and issued the decision. Within just a few hours, the women gave up adornment. Each one of them began to look at herself as beautiful, and realized they did not need adornment and jewelry.

The next day, the wise man told the king, "People obeyed you when you thought with their minds, and you understood their interests through the window of their feelings."

The king did not back down from his decision, but the shrewd wise man changed his direction, thereby quelling a massive opposition that almost opened the gates of hell to the government and the state, divided the people and would have led to unbearable consequences.

Therefore, the lesson from the story is that having incompetent advisors is the most dangerous for a ruler, especially if they put their interests before the affairs of the state and use their powers to maximize their role. Successful administration requires the art of choosing efficient aides and assistance, and also knowing how people think and what they want, which is what the Chinese Philosopher said 2,600 years ago.

There are many countries that fall into the trap of advisors and officials who do not possess prudence in implementing the decision, and formulate the matter according to what they see and not what serves the government and the state.

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Iraqi Minister of Culture, Ahmed Fakak Al-Badrani displays an ancient artifact brought back from Italy exhibited at the Peace Palace inside the Green Zone, in Baghdad, Iraq, Sunday, June 18, 2023. (AP)

NewsWatch

BAGHDAD: Iraq's President Abdul Latif Rashid said Sunday that approximately 600,000 internally displaced persons are enduring extremely complex and challenging circumstances in Iraq.

He made the statement during his meeting with Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations and Director of the Regional Office for Arab States at the United Nations Development Programme, Abdullah Aldurderi at Baghdad Palace.

President Rashid called for developing the existing relationship between Iraq and the United Nations through its specialized agencies, underscoring the need to enhance and develop these ties to achieve the desired objectives of supporting Iraq.

The meeting also addressed the water crisis faced by Iraq due to the water policies of neighboring countries and the absence of effective water management and electricity production, the statement noted.

For his part, the UN official reaffirmed the organization's commitment to supporting Iraq, hailing this Arab country's security and stability. (KUNA)

Iran, Saudis talk

Sides work to end 7-year rift

TEHRAN, June 18, (AP): Saudi Arabia's foreign minister arrived in Iran's capital on Saturday, the latest step in the restoration of diplomatic ties between the two Mideast rivals, Iranian state media reported.

Prince Faisal bin Farhan was officially welcomed by his Iranian counterpart, Hossein Amirabollahian, Iran TV said. He carried a message from the Saudi king to Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and the two were due to meet later Saturday, Iran TV said.

Later, Prince Faisal said Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and King Salman officially invited Raisi to visit Saudi Arabia, according to the state TV broadcast of a joint news conference.

The visit comes after U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken visited Saudi Arabia earlier in June. In March, Iran and Saudi Arabia agreed to reestablish diplomatic relations and reopen embassies after seven years of tensions. The move sent shock waves through the Middle East, especially Israel, Iran's arch-enemy.

Prince Faisal was expected to officially inaugurate the kingdom's embassy in Tehran later Saturday. Until the mission is completed, employees were working from a Tehran hotel, Iran TV said.

Both nations reopened their diplomatic missions in recent weeks.

The agreement to reestablish diplomatic relations was a major breakthrough brokered by China that lowered the chances of further conflict between Riyadh and Tehran - both directly and in proxy conflicts around the region.

Soon after exploding in 2014, Yemen's conflict turned into a proxy war between Saudi Arabia, which led a military coalition backing Yemen's internationally recognized government, and Iran, which has aided the country's Houthi rebels.

Iran has been blamed for a series of attacks in recent years following the United States' unilateral withdrawal from Tehran's nuclear deal with world powers in 2018. One of those targeted the heart of Saudi Arabia's oil industry in 2019, temporarily halving the kingdom's crude production.

Also:

TEL AVIV: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Sunday that he opposes any interim agreement reportedly being negotiated between the U.S. and Iran over its nuclear program.

Netanyahu spoke after reports in Israeli media said understandings are being reached between Washington and Tehran that would seek to hold back Iran's nuclear program somewhat, in exchange for some sanctions relief. The reports could not be independently confirmed and the U.S. has publicly denied any such deal.

Netanyahu said Israel had informed the U.S. that "the most limited understandings, what are termed 'mini-agreements', do not - in our view - serve the goal and we are opposed to them as well."

SANAA: A commercial flight carrying more than 270 Yemeni Muslim pilgrims left the rebel-held capital of Sanaa on Saturday to Saudi Arabia, an official said, the first such flight in about seven years.

The flight by Yemen's national carrier Yemenia - also known as Yemen Airways - took off from Sanaa's international airport at 8 p.m. local time, heading to the Saudi coastal city of Jeddah. Khalid al-Shayyef, head of the Yemeni airport, said.

He told The Associated Press the flight was the first of five that would transfer this year's Muslim pilgrims from Sanaa to Saudi Arabia for hajj, the pilgrimage to Mecca required once in a lifetime of every Muslim who can afford it and is physically able to make it.

Along with Saturday's flight, two more have been scheduled for Monday and Wednesday, while Houthi and Saudi officials were working on scheduling two additional flights, he said.

Yemen's capital has been under the control of the Iran-backed Houthis since they descended from their northern stronghold in 2014 and removed the internationally recognized government. The Houthi takeover prompted a Saudi-led coalition to intervene in 2015 to try to restore the government. The coalition closed off the Sanaa airport in Aug. 2016, part of an air and sea blockade on Houthi-held areas in Yemen. (AP)

CAIRO: Sudan's warring parties began a cease-fire Sunday morning after two months of fighting pushed the African nation into chaos.

Residents in the capital, Khartoum, and its neighboring city of Omdurman reported "relative calm" in the first hours of the cease-fire Sunday morning, after fierce clashes were reported the previous day.

The three-day truce came ahead of a pledging conference the U.N. and other nations will organize Monday to raise funds to cover Sudan's humanitarian needs.

The U.N. says it received less than 16% of the \$2.57 billion required to help those in need in Sudan in 2023. Another \$470 million is needed to support refugees in the Horn of Africa region, it said.

The United States and Saudi Arabia, announced the cease-fire agreement Saturday. Both led concerted diplomatic efforts to stop the war over the past two months.



Late Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem signing the declaration of Independence with the British Government representative in the Arabian Gulf.



Late Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem delivering the Independence speech.



Ceremony for raising Kuwait Independence flag in 1961.

KUNA photos

Prospects for breakthrough slim

Blinken kicks off critical Beijing talks

BEIJING, June 18, (AP): U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Sunday kicked off two days of high-stakes diplomatic talks in Beijing aimed at trying to cool exploding U.S.-China tensions that have set many around the world on edge.

Blinken opened his program by meeting Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang for an extended discussion to be followed by a working dinner. He'll have additional talks with Qin, as well as China's top diplomat Wang Yi and possibly President Xi Jinping, on Monday.

Neither Blinken nor Qin made any substantive comments to reporters as they began the meeting at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse.

Despite Blinken's presence in the Chinese capital, prospects for any significant breakthroughs are slim, as already strained ties have grown increasingly fraught in recent years. Animosity and recriminations have steadily escalated over a series of disagreements that have implications for global security and stability.

Blinken is the highest-level American official to visit China since President Joe Biden took office and the first secretary of state to make the trip in five years.

Biden and Xi agreed to Blinken's trip early at a meeting last year in Bali. It came within a day of happening in February but was delayed by the diplomatic and political tumult brought on by the discovery of what the U.S. says was a Chinese spy balloon flying across the United States that was shot down.

The list of disagreements and potential conflict points is long, ranging from trade with Taiwan, human rights conditions in China and Hong Kong to Chinese military assertiveness in the South China Sea and Russia's war in Ukraine.

Blinken will also be pressing the Chinese to release detained American citizens and to take steps to curb the production and export of fentanyl precursors that are fueling the opioid crisis in the United States.

U.S. officials have said Blinken will raise each of these points, though neither side has shown any inclination to back down on their entrenched positions.

Shortly before leaving, Blinken emphasized the importance of the U.S. and China establishing and maintaining better lines of communication. The U.S. wants to make sure "that the competition we have with China doesn't veer into conflict" due to avoidable misunderstandings, he told reporters.

Biden and Xi had made commitments to improve communications "precisely so that we can make sure we are communicating as clearly as possible to avoid possible misunderstandings and miscommunications," Blinken said Friday.

Xi offered a hint of a possible willingness to reduce tensions, saying in a meeting with Microsoft Corp. co-founder Bill Gates on Friday that the United States and China can cooperate to "benefit our two countries."

"I believe that the foundation of Sino-U.S. relations lies in the people," Xi said to Gates. "Under the current world situation, we can carry out various activities that benefit our two countries, the people of our countries, and the entire human race."

Biden told White House reporters Saturday he was "hoping that over the next several months, I'll be meeting with Xi again and talking about legitimate differences we have, but also how ... to get along."

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Prayer Timings

Fajr	03:13	Asr	15:23
Sunrise ..	04:48	Maghrib ..	18:50
Zohr	11:49	Isha	20:22

Local

Expected weather for the next 24 hours:

By Day: Hot with moderate to fresh northwesterly wind with speeds of 20-55 km/h causing rising dust.

By Night: Rather hot with

Weather

light to moderate freshening at times over coastal areas northwesterly wind with speeds of 15-40 km/h.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	46	33
Kuwait Airport	46	33

Abdaly	46	29
Jahra	46	31
Salmiyah	39	32
Ahmadi	41	33
Nuwaisib	46	30
Wafra	46	31

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

'Need to boost culture of peace worldwide'

Kuwait keen on boosting cooperation with African nations: FM

KUWAIT CITY, June 18, (KUNA): Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah affirmed Wednesday Kuwait's keenness to continue strengthening cooperation and coordination with African nations at all levels, especially in light of "the ambitious and pioneering" 2063 Agenda to transform the continent into a global power.

In a speech during the ceremony organized by African ambassadors and heads of diplomatic missions accredited to Kuwait, and on the occasion of the celebration of Africa Day, and the anniversary of the founding of the Organization of African Unity, known now as the African Union (AU), Sheikh Salem said that the State of Kuwait has a "historical and strategic" relationship with African countries that "precedes our own independence."

"The State of Kuwait proudly hosts 34 accredited African diplomatic missions, making the African group the largest in the country," the minister said.

"The African Union is a well-oiled machine promoting regional and international peace, security, and stability and has proven effective in its efforts to mediate various global conflicts and crises."

Furthermore, the organization has demonstrated its commitment to encouraging international cooperation and has established its ability to rapidly respond to regional and global challenges," Sheikh Salem added.

"The State of Kuwait is proud to hold the status of Permanent Observer at the African Union, an organization that so closely mirrors our own values."

"The State of Kuwait has a historic and strategic relationship with the countries of Africa that precedes our own independence," the minister said.

"Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development has heavily invested in critical infrastructure and development projects across the continent since its

inception in 1961," Sheikh Salem added.

"Additionally, the State of Kuwait is keen to continue to strengthen its cooperation and coordination with the countries of the African continent across all levels to the mutual benefit of our peoples particularly in light of the ambitious and groundbreaking Agenda 2063, Africa's blueprint and master plan for transforming the continent into the global powerhouse of the future," the minister noted.

"The State of Kuwait hosted the Third Arab-African Summit in 2013, affirming on the importance and depth of Kuwaiti-African relations," Sheikh Salem added.

"This Summit witnessed the launch of three important initiatives," Sheikh Salem said, adding "allocating USD 1 billion for investment in Africa through the General Authority for Investment."

"Second, allocating USD one billion to support development projects in Africa through the Kuwait Fund," Sheikh Salem said.

"Third, allocating an annual award of USD 1 million to support development research in the name of the late Dr. Abdulrahman Al-Sumait," Sheikh Salem added.

"It is with great sorrow that Kuwait follows the continuation of the military conflict in the Republic of Sudan," the minister said.

"Kuwait calls on both parties to immediately reach an agreement and end the conflict by peaceful means."

The State of Kuwait highly values its historic and strategic relationship with the countries of the African continent," the minister said.

"We look forward to continuing to boost cooperation and coordination across all levels to ensure further progress and prosperity for our peoples," the minister added.

Meanwhile, the State of Kuwait is also keen on bolstering the culture of peace worldwide to avoid more tragedy, hatred and violence, said a diplomat on Thursday.

In a statement to the UNGA session on the culture of peace, first secretary in the Kuwaiti mission at the UN headquarters in New York Fahad Haji affirmed that boost peace globally required inten-

sive efforts by the world community.

He reflected support towards the UN General Secretariat's recommendations on bolstering efforts in promoting peace and dialogue amongst religions and cultures around the world.

Hatred and racism had been festering around the world and people must stand against such notions to ensure peace, security, and coexistence, Haji reiterated.

All sectors of society must be involved to bolster peace and understanding, Haji noted, pointing out that peace was an important part of the 2030 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Haji indicated that sustainable development could not flourish or be achieved without the presence of peace, driving the point further by saying that the culture of peace must be built on solid foundations of understanding, tolerance, and dialogue.

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European tour eyed: Foreign Affairs Minister Sheikh Salem Al-Abdullah is preparing for an official European tour in the coming days, reports Al-Qabas daily quoting sources from the diplomatic sector.

Sources disclosed the tour will start on June 27; indicating the minister will visit France, Austria, Hungary and other European countries. Sources said the visit is aimed at strengthening Kuwaiti-European relations and discussing issues of mutual concern, as well as the latest developments in the region.

Sources affirmed the exemption of Kuwaitis from the Schengen visa is one of the vital issues that the minister will discuss with officials of the European countries that he will visit.

In a related development, the minister recently met with ambassadors, heads of diplomatic missions and charges d'affaires of a number of European countries in Kuwait; during which he stressed the need to ease the Schengen visa issuance procedures for Kuwaitis. He called for removing obstacles that Kuwaitis face in applying for a Schengen visa, opening more visa application appointment slots, speeding up the issuance of visas, and longer visa validity period.



KUNA photo
Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah with the Dean of the African Diplomatic Corps, Ambassador of the Republic of Togo to the country, Mohamed Oro.



Picture taken during the meeting .

Oman hosts GCC envoys

The Embassy of the Sultanate of Oman in Kuwait hosted at its headquarters on Sunday the second coordination meeting for GCC ambassadors.

The meeting was headed by Omani Ambassador to Kuwait Dr. Saleh Al-Kharusi and attended by UAE Ambassador Matar Al-Neyadi, Bahrain Ambassador Salah Al-Maliki, Deputy Head of Mission at the Saudi Embassy Minister Plenipotentiary Yahya Al-Qahtani, Qatar Ambassador Ali Al-Mahmoud, repre-

sentative of Kuwait Ministry of Foreign Affairs Hamad Al-Farhoud and Deputy Head of Mission at the Omani Embassy Counselor Shihab Al-Rawas.

The meeting dealt with coordination amongst Gulf diplomatic missions and Kuwait's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in implementation of GCC ministerial council decisions, said Al-Kharusi in a press release.

Oman currently chairs the 43rd session of the Supreme Council of the GCC. (KUNA)

No break idea wins support

MPs' reluctance delays gov't formation

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh

Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 18: Several MPs-elect have expressed support for the plan of their colleague — Soud Al-Asfour — to propose the cancellation of the parliamentary summer break and hold additional special sessions on Thursdays.

These MPs-elect including Mete'eb Al- Ra'athan, Majed Al-Mutairi and Muhammad Al-Regaib.

Al-Mutairi said the citizens are waiting for achievements and going on vacation just a few months after the election is a waste of time.

Al-Regaib pointed out that the nation's will has been blocked for years; hence, efforts must be intensified to compensate for the wasted time.

MP Jarrah Al-Fawzan praised the proposal, stressing the need for maximizing the time in the interest of the citizens.

On the other hand, constitutional expert Ibrahim Al-Homoud pointed out that the parliamentary break is a must as per articles 85, 86 and 87 of the Constitution. He was quick to clarify though that he praises the rationale behind the proposal. He added the first parliamentary year starts in October, indicating the period between the inaugural session and the beginning of the parliamentary vacation is cut from the first year of the parliamentary term.

Meanwhile, the newly elected MPs' refusal to assume any ministerial post delayed the formation of the government, which was supposed to be announced on Saturday.

MP Osama Al-Shaheen said he received complains from almost 500 applicants for legal jobs regarding the exams they took. He added they told him that the exams are not in line with Kuwaiti legislation. He then called on the Civil Service Commission (CSC) to conduct the exams in line with the local laws.



KUNA photo

Chief Executive Officer of Kuwait Oil Company Ahmad Al-Aidan talking to the press.

KD 13 bln for oil projects: KOC

Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) plans on spending some KD 13 billion (USD 42.2 billion) on oil-related projects in the next five years, the state-run firm said on Sunday.

Kuwait's oil production capacity is expected to reach three million barrels per day (bpd) by the year 2025, which is in

line with the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries' (OPEC) output policy, KOC CEO Ahmad Al-Aidan told the press.

On Kuwait's future oil production goals, he underlined national commitments towards an output target of four million bpd by the year 2035. (KUNA)

'Five contracts cost \$949 million'

Reform projects to end in '28: MEED

KUWAIT CITY, June 18: According to a report by MEED magazine, all ongoing environmental reform projects in Kuwait are expected to be completed before 2028, reports Al-Anba daily.

The report explained that the project, which was estimated to cost about USD 1.4 billion, was divided into eight work packages that together constitute the largest oil pollution projects in the world.

Head of the reform projects team at the Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) Muthanna Al-Mumin said it is hoped to complete the implementation of all work packages in the project before the end of 2027.

He explained that the value of the five contracts awarded in 2021 amounts to USD 949 million, and is expected to be completed either in late 2025 or early 2026. These five contracts are:

● NKETR A - Sabriya - It is being implemented by a consortium that brings together Kuwait's Al-Kharafi Company with the Finnish Lamor Company, at a value of USD 194 million.

● NKETR B - Rawdattin - It is being implemented by the Kharafi/Lamor comprising the Saudi ETC Company and the Kuwaiti KCPC Company, at a cost of USD 188 million.

● SKETR A - Burgan - It is being implemented by the Kharafi/Lamor consortium at a cost of USD 197 million.

● SKETR B - Burgan - It is being implemented by a consortium of the Kuwaiti company HESCO with the Chinese company Zaubin Hangzhou at a cost of USD 185 million.

● SKETR C - Burgan - It is being im-

Power violations

16 citations issued

KUWAIT CITY, June 18: The Judicial Enforcement Team of the Ministry of Electricity and Water carried out extensive campaigns last week in all six governorates, during which 16 citations were issued against violations related to infringements on the electricity network, reports Al-Anba daily.

According to the Deputy Head of the team Ahmad Al-Shammari, the campaigns were carried out in coordination with the Committee to Address the Bachelors Phenomenon in order to control the violations in each party in accordance with the law and the decisions in force. During the current month, 30 violations were monitored, most of which were concerning the violating electrical installations in shanty towns inhabited by bachelors.

plemented by Al-Sayer Construction Company's alliance with the Italian Company for Water Treatment and Soil Reclamation at a cost of USD 185 million.

In an interview with MEED magazine, Al-Mumin explained that three additional contracts were signed on March 7, 2023, with a total value of USD 460 million. These contracts cover three areas, which are:

● Zone A - It will be implemented by the Kuwaiti Al-Sayer Group at a cost of USD 155 million.

Gulf-German Forum kicks off on Sunday

BERLIN, June 18, (KUNA): The fifth session of the Gulf-German Forum is to start in Berlin on Sunday, mainly to discuss the strategic dialogue, regional and international security, and issues of mutual concerns.

In a statement to (KUNA), Kuwait Ambassador to Germany Najeeb Al-Bader said that Kuwait would participate in the forum, which lasts until June 20, with a number of specialists in the field of security and defense policies, led by former Interior Minister Sheikh Thamer Ali Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah.

Kuwait's participation comes in response to an invitation from the Federal Academy for Security Policies, Arab-German Friendship Association, and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, with the participation of the German Foreign Ministry, Al-Bader noted.

Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Jassim Al-Budaiwi and Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Saudi King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies Prince Turki Al-Faisal, will participate in the forum, along with a group of specialists, parliamentarians, researchers, think-tanks and policy-makers.

Ambassador Al-Bader stated that such dialogues contribute to developing the strategic partnership and deepening the bridges of cooperation between the Gulf and German sides, calling at the same time for developing cooperation between the Gulf states and Germany in various fields and at all levels.

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Attack condemned: Kuwait's Foreign Ministry condemned Saturday the terrorist assault on a school in Mpondwe region, West of Uganda which left scores of students dead and several others injured.

The ministry reiterated Kuwait's unequivocal denunciation of all forms of violence and terrorism.

It extended Kuwait's solidarity with the Republic of Uganda and expressed condolences to the Ugandan government and families of the victims. It also wished the wounded speedy recovery.

Other Voices

Talking epidemic, daily writing

By Ahmad Alsarraf

When scientists invented vaccinations against fatal epidemics, scholars objected. When the lightning rod was invented and artificial rain was made, scholars objected. They also objected when doctors started transplants and when the intensive care units (ICUs) were invented under the pretext that such inventions hinder the Heavenly will and delay the patients' death. When these scholars suffered serious diseases, they rushed to the advanced hospitals in the West and they did not mind being treated in the ICU.

When Johannes Gutenberg, a German, invented the letterpress printing in 1441 that led to the cultural and religious revolution; scholars objected to bringing such machines to Arab countries. They even prohibited bicycles, cars, telephones, radio, television and many other inventions. The scholars prohibited football and objected to sports wear, as well as getting educated in non-Muslim countries.

Throughout history; a few intellectuals like Maarouf Al-Rasafi, Ali Shar'iati, Al-Sadeq Al-Naihoum, Sayyed Al-Qemni, Nawal Al-Saadawi, Ahmed Al-Baghdadi, Taha Husain, Faraj Fouda, Khalil Abdulkareem, Sadeq Jalal Al-Adhm, Nasr Hamed Abu Zaid, Ali Al-Wardi, Abdullh Al-Qessaimi, Bu Ali Yaseen and others opposed the scholars' vision. They

were subjected to oppression and they did not leave any inheritance to their families, except a small amount and a lot of problems.

On the other hand, we have seen the big houses owned by scholars, especially in Western countries which they call the non-believers' homeland. They enrolled their children in the most advanced universities there. Thanks to charities and government support, they managed to own educational institutions, including private schools and private universities. They did everything to enjoy worldly desires. Some of them stole the money of charities they administered. They left an inexhaustible amount to their inheritors.

After all, an ignorant person accuses the secularist and enlightening figures of plunging into life pleasures; forgetting about the eternal pleasure in paradise. The silent ignorant majority cannot see the facts. Furthermore, they prefer to pretend being a fool. They are satisfied with the illusion.

A friend of mine asked me about the reasons behind my insistence on writing continuously despite the problems I have suffered in my life, business and social relations. I know well that my articles have not solved my problems, if any, and they have not found solutions to the nation's problems. However, I believe that writing makes me feel better from inside and makes the world around me much better, as well as long as I refuse to be bound by any inherited ideology.

Perhaps, some people prefer to accompany me on my way, while others prefer to go on the same course either individually or with the company of others.

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Register with caravans, Bedouns told

KUWAIT CITY, June 18: The Hajj and Umrah Affairs Department in the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs has advised Bedouns, who were nominated to perform Hajj this season, to visit the caravans allocated to them within 48 hours in order to complete the registration procedures, reports Al-Anba daily.

The department said the registration period ended at 2:00 pm on Wednesday, affirming it sent letters of nomination to all those who met the conditions.

Meanwhile, Muhammad Ayyed Al-Ajmi, Director of Farwaniya Educational District, has exerted tremendous efforts for the retirees to complete their transactions in the dis-

trict, without the need to visit the Ministry of Education's headquarters in South Surra, reports Al-Anba daily quoting sources.

Sources affirmed Al-Ajmi is currently finalizing the decision; which is aimed at developing work procedures and removing the obstacles that retirees are facing, considering they spent a huge part of their lives in serving the educational sector.

Sources revealed that after the opening of the Visitors Hall in the district, the director realized the need to add a unit for retirees. Sources added the official announcement in this regard will be made soon and the district will be the first of its kind to have such a unit.

diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

'Valuable opportunity for co-op and achieving course of reform'

"RESULTS of the recently concluded election led to a new reality in which the people said their piece and largely sided with the pro-reform discourse, hoping that the election results and the successful candidates would have a conscious, wise and effective role in correcting the path, achieving stability, and taking serious steps toward national development and progress," columnist **Dr Mohammad Hussain Al-Dalal** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.



Dr Al-Dalal

"Many observers have elaborately analyzed the course of the election and its results. I will not delve into this field, as many have fulfilled it and ceased to do so. I want to focus on a remarkable phenomenon in the recent election -- the heightened political awareness of the public in evaluating candidates based on their performance and positions. There is no immunity for whoever advanced in previous elections without good performance. There is no room for more impulsiveness, recklessness and screaming at the expense of achievement. There is no acceptance of any candidate known to be a representative or agent of influential parties that put their own interests above public interests. I stress that this kind of political awareness has something for such a candidate in the future. The responsibility has become greater for members of the National Assembly, the next government and the people. God monitors everyone's performance and everyone is responsible. The Almighty said: 'Do your work, and God, His Messenger and the believers will see your work.' (Surat Al-Tawbah)

"A valuable opportunity ... The election produced a National Assembly whose majority members raised the banner of the desire to achieve reform, stability and development. This majority tends to support HH the Prime Minister-designate Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, as they realized that the general tendency of the prime minister is to support reform and to extend a hand of cooperation with the Assembly. Most of the current lawmakers have a desire to avoid the negative experience of the 2022 Assembly, in which the two parties failed to achieve the desired cooperation, and events led to conflicts and disagreements. Then, the Assembly was nullified through a judicial ruling. These two governmental and parliamentary desires at this point in time are considered an opportunity -- a very valuable opportunity for cooperation and achieving the course of correction and reform.

"One of the most important duties of both the future government and the Assembly is to make good use of the existing opportunity with a common desire for cooperation and achievement. This constructive opportunity must go beyond general reform speeches and slogans to a scientific movement that achieves the people's aspirations of joint and consensual action between the two parties, through which we overcome political crises and weaknesses. In public administration, we achieve the desired reform and development. This article sheds light on some supportive steps to achieve the desired reform and development.

"The first and most important of these steps is working toward cooperation, achievement and team work in a practical way. In this regard, we suggest that the Prime Minister-designate takes an initiative to develop the Council of Ministers, starting with developing the methodology for forming the next government in a way that ensures the presence of ministerial elements with political and executive expertise, competence and honesty, capable of carrying out the tasks of managing the affairs of the Council of Ministers and its affiliated bodies, and then working to develop institutional advisory support mechanisms for the Council of Ministers in a way that goes beyond the pitfalls revealed by previous experiences. In terms of seizing the opportunity, it requires developing the methodology of ministerial formation that the Prime Minister and the majority of the courageous and creative lawmakers must use to support the consensual action for both parties to reach an agreement. The initiative should be taken by the two parties in accordance with the conditions and controls applicable for whoever assumes the ministerial post. This is in addition to a joint work program that includes reform, development, timetable for implementation, and addressing the negative aspects that caused the bridges of rapprochement and cooperation to falter in the past.

"The second of these steps complements the first step. The two parties must define the mechanisms and procedures for cooperation between the National Assembly and the Council of Ministers with regard to parliamentary and governmental performance in accordance with the Constitution. It is important to translate Article 50 of the Constitution into written and disciplined work mechanisms, which should be agreed upon and adopted. The two parties must perform their constitutional roles in a way that puts importance on including the necessary steps to resolve any disagreement whenever it arises.

"The third of these required steps is related to the responsibility of the parliamentary majority that raises the banner of reform. It is absurd to continue in the individual or seasonal situation in performing roles. Therefore, drawn and written coordination mechanisms must be put in place between the representatives of the majority for joint action, accompanied by mechanisms for resolving decision-making, and ending disputes if they arise. Otherwise, with the passage of time, the coordination atmosphere between the majority will recede, such that the individual path overwhelms them, as this path comes with harms much greater than the benefits.

"In conclusion, there are a number of steps to ensure successful parliamentary work. The first of

which is to support the appointment of specialized lawmakers in the relevant parliamentary committees. This is in addition to standing against the desire of non-specialists or non-producers to manage or gain membership of vital committees. The second and most important of these steps is enhancing transparency with the Kuwaiti people by involving them in the parliamentary movement through the implementation of mechanisms that ensure the adoption of their proposals, benefiting from the opinions and experience of experts among them, and informing them periodically and continuously about the developments.

"The people said their piece and they are qualified for a valuable opportunity that would be well exploited, God willing, to achieve progress or at least a part of it. It is wise for all of us to work towards seizing the opportunity well. Poet Mahmoud Al-Baroudi said: 'Take the opportunity and beware of missing it.'"

Also:

"In recent years, small and medium enterprises began to play a bigger role in the global economy, as they are an attractive alternative for individuals who suffer from job instability and lack of security at work," columnist **Lulwa Al-Qenaie** wrote for **Al-Jarida** daily.

"These enterprises help individuals work independently and earn the income they need to gain financial independence. There are many reasons for resorting to these enterprises, considering many individuals suffer from job instability. This includes the ease of laying off employees in the private sector. Also, individuals engage in additional commercial activities aside from their current jobs in order to earn more and improve their income level, mostly due to low salaries in the government sector.

"Regrettably, this segment includes those who hold bachelor's and postgraduate degrees. They have financial problems and obligations due to the high cost of living and low income. They realized that engaging in small and medium enterprises is an opportunity to gain financial and professional independence.

"Small and medium enterprises can contribute significantly to improving the national economy and achieving sustainable growth. For example, these enterprises provide job opportunities for the youths, stimulate investment and trade, contribute to diversifying sources of income, and reduce dependence on the government sector.

"According to reports and statistics on future prospects, the bloated government sector will not be able to absorb the huge numbers of graduates who will enter the labor market in the coming years. The overcrowding of labor is a waste of budgets. It decreases work efficiency, productivity and government performance, thereby, posing a threat to the State.

"Such enterprises will contribute to reducing the demand for work in the government sector. To a large extent, this will help in distributing existing employment and reducing disguised unemployment, thus, improving the economic independence of the State. In addition, small and medium enterprises improve the economic environment, encourage innovation and development, and enhance competitiveness between companies and institutions.

"These enterprises could help provide local goods and services that the community needs, thereby, improving the standard of living of the population. Studies indicate that small and medium enterprises can contribute to improving the national economy and achieving sustainable growth. Therefore, the State must take advantage of them by providing them with financial, technical and training support, and developing programs to encourage entrepreneurship. It is also possible to facilitate administrative procedures, provide land and buildings for these enterprises, and invest in them as a second source of national income after oil. The country desperately needs an alternative source of income."

□ □ □

"The people rejoiced over the firm decision of the first deputy premier and interior minister regarding a certain community, particularly their domestic workers, taking into consideration the intransigence of decision makers and the harshness of their dealings. Some of their laws and requests are tantamount to insulting the visitors of their embassy, which lacks tact or decency," columnist **Mohamad Al-Sagr** wrote for **Al-Anba** daily.

"The suspicious movements of some members of their community are still gnawing under the table with piracy methods for their own interests, the worst of which is getting illegal money by increasing the recruitment fees, especially for domestic workers. They have been warning others against entering the game of blackmailing the pockets of the people of Kuwait, because of the services of domestic workers, only to be bankrupt due to such blackmailing.

"Unfortunately, the overlapping decisions of our concerned ministries 'helped' them in carrying out such unscrupulous acts, not to mention their sluggishness in determining their priorities. One of the issues is the escape of workers from homes and some labor sectors! This was followed by raising fees for the recruitment of workers.

"This is in addition to the deterioration of the performance of some of their workers, unlike in the past. Some decisions also lead to the lack of good quality workers. A popular proverb says: 'Goodness comes from what exists!'

"This is the prevailing situation after the pioneering decisions of the 'Knights of the Stars', including the official decision of our government. Perhaps, we have to avoid overlaps, monitor the negatives in the Social Affairs Ministry, maintain the prestige of the Interior Ministry and clarify the suspicions."

— Compiled by Mai Elsoukary

Important step towards fighting climate change: Dr Al-Kanderi

Kuwait joins Mangrove Alliance for Climate initiative

By Wajad Al-Mutairi

KUWAIT CITY, June 18, (KUNA): The Environment Public Authority (EPA) said that Kuwait has joined the Mangrove Alliance for Climate (MAC) initiative, launched by the UAE in partnership with Indonesia during the COP27 climate summit in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt in 2022.

In a statement to KUNA recently, EPA Director General Dr. Sameera

Al-Kanderi affirmed Kuwait's commitment to the initiative, focusing on protecting mangrove trees ecosystem and enhance their role in reducing the impact of climate change.

This is an important step towards fighting climate change and support efforts to absorb emissions of greenhouse gases worldwide, she noted.

In 2021, EPA had presented Kuwait's contributions to limiting the emission of greenhouse gases by

2035, through a number of projects, aiming to reduce 4.7 percent of the total emissions in the country, Al-Kanderi said.

EPA had also planted mangrove trees across the country, in cooperation with Oman, she noted.

Mangroves are highly salt-tolerant trees that provide a good environment for many sea creatures and birds. They are also great producers of oxygen and protect beaches against erosion.



A photo from the ribbon cutting ceremony.

Vietnam Embassy launches lychee promotion event

The Embassy of Vietnam in Kuwait recently held a three-day sales exhibition of lychee fruit at Dean and De Luca at The Avenues Mall.

The occasion was graced by members of the diplomatic community, and invited guests and the media fraternity.

Speaking at the inauguration, HE Ngo Toan Thang, Ambassador of Vietnam in Kuwait thanked the Star Fruit company, Dean and De Luca, for making the event successful.

The program began with a welcome remark from the Vietnamese envoy followed by video clips promoting the fruit lychee. Guest of Honor His Excellency Nabil Al Dakheel, Assistant Foreign Minister, Chief Protocol of

the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Kuwait, Mrs. Ghadir Srour Executive Manager of Star Fruit, Florent from Dean and De Luca and Miled from Maison Du Fromage and Vietnamese envoy performed the ceremonial cutting of the ribbon.

During the event, guests were treated to taste the freshest lychees and try the lychee mocktail made from the bartenders of Monin. There was also a lucky draw section to give out prizes to lucky participants.

Lychee and other agricultural products are one of the main strengths that boost Vietnam exports to Kuwait. The two countries established relations in 1976 and has seen cooperation in many fields, mainly trade, investment and tourism.

Specialist warns of upcoming crisis in domestic labor sector

'Number of requests at recruitment offices doubles'

KUWAIT CITY, June 18: In the absence of alternative recruitment markets for domestic workers, a specialist in domestic labor affairs Bassam Al-Shammari warned of a severe crisis looming in the coming months due to the large and continuous demand for domestic workers, reports Al-Rai daily.

In a press statement, Al-Shammari said, "Kuwait's average need for female domestic workers ranges from 420 thousand to 450 thousand annually. The average demand for male domestic workers is about 360 thousand. The high demand for male domestic workers is due to urban expansion movement.

It is expected that the crisis will appear clearly in the last quarter of this year due to the expiry of most of the contracts of domestic workers in Kuwait, and the possibility of the workers not wanting to renew their contracts for another two years.

At the present time, there is no labor force that is fluent in the English language due to the large demand for it from neighboring countries at values higher than the values specified for their recruitment to Kuwait. The number of requests at labor recruitment offices has doubled significantly this month, with a severe shortage of labor exporting countries."

Al-Shammari explained that the current status for recruitment of domestic labor from the top labor-exporting countries are as follows:

- Philippines: Suspension of issuance of new visas.
- Ethiopia: Suspended and awaiting the signing of the bilateral agreement between the two countries.
- India: Difficulty in obtaining female domestic workers but easier to get male workers.
- Indonesia: Suspended since 2008.
- Nepal: There is no agreement between the two countries, and the recruitment of domestic workers is through India or Dubai.
- Bangladesh: Suspended.
- Sri Lanka: Available.

KFF warns about use of 'charcoal'

KUWAIT CITY, June 18: Kuwait Firefighting Force (KFF) has warned about the careless use of incense charcoal, since it is one of the major causes of fire outbreaks, reports Al-Rai daily.

The Public Relations and Media Department at KFF published a public awareness video on the safe way of using incense charcoal; warning against leaving it in the wardrobe unattended or in the hands of children or throwing its waste in the waste basket without making sure that the fire is completely extinguished, as incense charcoal is one of the main causes of fire outbreaks in homes.

Meanwhile, firefighters have contained a fire that erupted at warehouses in the industrial zone Ardiya recently, Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) declared.



Honoring Kuwaiti winners of Arab Radio and Television Festival.

Tunis hosts 4-day activities

Kuwait wins three awards at 23rd Arab Radio, TV Festival

TUNIS, June 18, (KUNA): The Kuwaiti Ministry of Information, through radio and TV bodies, won three awards at the 23rd edition of the Arab Radio and Television Festival, which concluded on Thursday, with an artistic ceremony on the stage of the Carthage Theater in Tunis.

The competitions committee of the Arab States Broadcasting Union (ASBU) announced that the series "Saleh in the Heart of Astronomy," which was produced by Kuwait Radio, won first place in the drama category.

Kuwait TV also won two awards at the festival, where the TV program "What's Next" won first place in the talk show category, while "Kids Studio" won second place in the children's program competition.

The four-day activities of the Tunis-hosted 23rd edition concluded last Thursday under the theme "Arts and Culture Bring Us Together", with the participation of 15 TV organization members of ASBU in the competition for various program and news items.

Bid to up job level of Kuwaiti moms children

KUWAIT CITY, June 18: The Minister of Health, Dr. Ahmed Al-Awadi has issued a ministerial decision to raise the level of workers in the field of auxiliary medical services including children of Kuwaiti women, who are appointed by contract and are expected to receive benefit just like their counterparts based on the decisions and regulations issued by the concerned authorities, reports Al-Rai daily.

The decision comes based on the recommendations of the competent sectors, and based on the provisions of Article 80 of Law No. 70 of 2020 regarding the practice of the medical profession and its auxiliary professions, and the rights

of patients and health facilities that empower the Minister of Health to exercise all the powers prescribed for the Civil Service Council and the Civil Service Bureau as stipulated in laws, regulations and decisions.

Nursing and auxiliary nursing services, oral health and dental laboratories, physiotherapy and occupational therapy, optics, radiology, nuclear medicine and radiation protection, medical and health laboratories, prosthetics, medical emergencies, speech and hearing, public health, and therapeutic nutrition are considered among the professions assisting the medical profession.



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Event enabled conversations on current legal frameworks of AI in GCC

Al-Tamimi & Company hosts a seminar on artificial intelligence

KUWAIT CITY, June 18: Al-Tamimi & Company hosted a seminar in partnership with ABCK-AmCham Kuwait and the German Business Council, with the support of Mashreq Kuwait, and The World Bank Kuwait. The event was held in the state-of-the-art auditorium of the prestigious Burj Al Shaya building and saw over a hundred people in attendance, including delegates from banking and financial institutions in Kuwait, Government agencies and regulatory bodies, as well as many start-ups from the technology, media, and telecommunications sector.

As generative artificial intelligence (AI) systems become increasingly prevalent in our daily lives and workplaces, many legal issues have emerged; The event enabled conversations on the current legal frameworks of AI in the GCC, the regulations on said systems, and the potential implications of the usage of AI in the financial services industry.

David Yates, Head of Digital and Data at Al-Tamimi & Company, said that one of the first issues that came to mind regarding the usage of AI was the terms and policies of popular systems such as ChatGPT. Companies that provide AI services and platforms must ensure that users understood the terms and conditions governing the usage of these tools, as well as their data privacy policies. This is especially important because AI systems collect vast amounts of personal and sensitive data, which creates significant legal challenges that have to be addressed.

Yates mentioned that data protection compliance is another key issue that companies must address when deploying AI systems. Companies must ensure that they are complying with all data protection laws and regulations, including the applicable privacy laws. This includes obtaining proper consent from users and implementing appropriate security measures to protect sensitive data as the legal landscape surrounding artificial intelligence (AI)-generated material is still evolving and can vary across jurisdictions.



Al-Tamimi & Company hosted a workshop in partnership with ABCK-AmCham Kuwait and the German Business Council, with the support of Mashreq Kuwait, and The World Bank Kuwait. The event enabled conversations on the current legal frameworks of AI in the GCC, the regulations on said system, and their effects throughout the industry, namely the banking and finance sector, as the usage of AI has potential implications.

Yates provided a general overview of how the law typically addresses potential legal risks connected with AI-generated material, especially in client interactions and financial decision-making processes.

Yate's presentation was followed by a panel discussion

that included Ammar Boumajdad, Country Head of Mashreq Kuwait, moderated by Ghassan Alkhoa, Country Representative for The World Bank. The panel discussed the potential implications of utilizing AI in the financial services sector, including considerations such as intellectual property rights

and copyright law. They provided recommendations to companies/banks regarding secure infrastructures, workforce awareness, and incident response planning to ensure that any AI-generated content is checked for accuracy, and copyright infringement and sensitive information is not input into said systems. Companies must take steps to minimize the risk of error or improper actions by their AI systems and ensure that they have comprehensive, adequate policies.

Boumajdad explained that AI systems can have a significant impact on the financial services industry through the automation of certain critical processes such as risk assessment and the detection of fraudulent activities. But there was also almost unlimited scope to use this technology to enhance the client experience and potentially make products and services available when the customer needs them. However, he made it very clear that despite the obvious benefits of applying AI, it was critical that companies – without exception – were fully compliant with all regulatory, ethical, and legal requirements relevant to the use of the technology.

In conclusion, while GPT systems offered potentially significant benefits, companies implementing them must first carefully consider all legal and ethical implications and take all necessary steps to mitigate the associated risks. Panelists closed the discussion by highlighting the fact that companies' current governance frameworks may not necessarily cover all potential applications of AI and therefore, they may need to be comprehensively revised in order to keep pace with the ever-evolving technology. The objective here would be to take full advantage of the benefits the AI can deliver, whilst remaining fully compliant with all privacy laws, ethics, and other regulations applicable to the usage of AI and associated systems.



KUWAITI participants with the Jordanian Minister of Youth, the Saudi Ambassador and the participating delegations.

Kuwait partakes in Exploration & Coexistence Forum for Girls

'Arab youth programs deepen cooperation'

AMMAN, June 18, (KUNA): The activities of the 'Exploration and Coexistence Forum for Girls' kicked off in the Jordanian capital Sunday, organized by the Jordanian Ministry of Youth, in cooperation with the Arab Gulf Cooperation Council, by highlighting Jordan's history and its human and cultural impact.

Jordanian Minister of Youth Mohammed Al-

Nabulsi said in his speech during the opening of the events that "this forum, in which 25 girls from Kuwait, Jordan, Qatar, Oman and the UAE participate, is the result of a deep and solid relationship linking Jordan with the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council."

Al-Nabulsi stressed the importance of creating Arab youth programs that deepen cooperation and enhance the exchange of experiences between the youth of Jordan and the GCC countries.

For her part, Director of the Center for Research and Studies for Youth and Community Development at the

Public Authority for Youth, head of the Kuwaiti delegation, Sondos Al-Sindi, said in a statement to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that "the forum constitutes an opportunity to exchange the experiences of Kuwaiti girls in particular and the Cooperation Council in general with Jordanian girls in the framework of a field activity sheds light on the history of Jordan and its human and cultural impact."

Al-Sindi stressed the importance of adopting the forum as an annual activity whose program develops to include opportunities and challenges facing Arab youth and cooperation in facing them.

Framework

For his part, First Secretary at the Kuwaiti Embassy in Jordan, Saleh Al-Harran, said in a statement to KUNA that "Kuwait's participation in the forum comes within the framework of the strong relationship that binds the two countries and Kuwait's keenness to participate in regional and international forums to exchange expertise and experiences among youth and convey Kuwait's message and its cultural role."

In the speech of the girls of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf during the opening of the events, Omani Israa Al-Rashdi stressed the importance of the forum, which is held for the first time to exchange expertise and experiences in the field of exploration and coexistence, and to introduce the history of Jordan and its cultural and human heritage through a field program that includes various regions of Jordan.

The forum, which lasts five days, includes field activities and meetings with Jordanian figures, in order to activate the minutes of the ninth meeting of the joint working group between the Gulf Cooperation Council countries and Jordan regarding joint programs and activities proposed by both sides for the year 2023.

The Kuwaiti delegation participating in the forum includes, in addition to Al-Sindi, are Khansaa Al-Qaoud from the General Authority for Youth and female students Fajr Al-Anzi, Duha Al-Loughani and Fatima Al-Sirafi.



Her Excellency the Turkish Ambassador to Kuwait, Tuba Nur Sonmez, during her field visit to Dasman Diabetes Institute.

Turkish Ambassador visits Dasman Diabetes Institute

KUWAIT CITY, June 18: Her Excellency the Turkish Ambassador to Kuwait, Tuba Nur Sonmez, paid a field visit to Dasman Diabetes Institute, which was established by Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences. H. E. was met by Mr. Tarek Abdullah Aleryan, Manager of Public Relations and Media at Dasman Diabetes Institute. Her Excellency's visit aimed of getting to know closely the important institutions in Kuwait and strengthening scientific cooperation. During her visit to the institute, many scientific and research topics and issues of common interest between the two sides were discussed.

The Ambassador was briefed about the institute's scientific progress, its importance, and its role in the service of scientific research in Kuwait, discussing ways to enhance joint research and scientific cooperation. In turn, H.E. praised the institute's impressive developments and achievements.

Kuwait sends 15th aid plane to Sudan

KUWAIT CITY, June 18, (KUNA): The State of Kuwait on Sunday sent its 15th Air Force aircraft carrying 10 tons of food and medical supplies to violence-hit Sudan.

The aid plane is part of Kuwait's humanitarian initiative "Kuwait Is by Your Side", and was directed by Kuwait's political leadership, aiming at helping the Sudanese people amid their country's tough circumstances due to ongoing fighting there, Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) Media Chief Khaled Al-Zeid told KUNA.

Since Kuwait's relief aid airlift was launched, 150 tons of humanitarian aid have been dispatched to Sudan, he said, noting that the charity is doing its utmost to ease out the humanitarian consequences of the current situation in Sudan.

Napoleon said:

Continued from Page 1

This is due to the fact that the success of a state based on cheating cannot continue. A cheater manages his failure by obscuring the message of the government, and does not see the goals that serve the leader who has a clear and specific message in his mind, and a vision for the future.

In fact, he does not realize how to reach the end point, and so he uses helpers who work to prepare the right ground to reach the goal.

There is a saying by Napoleon Bonaparte - "We do not rule people unless we show them the future; a leader trades with hope."

"That is why Allah says in the Qur'an - "And their matter is consultation among them..." And the Messenger Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said - "The advisor is entrusted."

The lesson, as the ancient ones said, is - "A successful leader is the one who balances the culture of leadership and its principles with the general mood of his followers."

Kuwait celebrates

Continued from Page 1

regime putting the Kuwaiti people on a path of progress and prosperity.

On September 7, 1961, an Amiri decree was signed specifying the shape and colors of the Kuwaiti flag, the very first flag to be flown following the independence.

At that time, the State of Kuwait ac-

complished 43 laws and legislation, including the nationality law, monetary law, passports law and the organization of government departments.

New departments were established in order to cope with the development of the nation, like public works, health, publication, knowledge, municipality, post and telephone, electricity and water, social affairs, awfaq, radio and television.

Over the past 62 years, Kuwait had become reputable for its humanitarian contributions and its levelheaded foreign policy. Today, under the leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Kuwait remains on a steady path of preventative diplomacy, crises mediation and effort contributing to solving outstanding regional and international issues.

Blinken kicks

Continued from Page 1

Chances for such a meeting could come at a Group of 20 leaders' gathering in September in New Delhi and at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in November in San Francisco that the United States is hosting.

Since the cancellation of Blinken's trip in February, there have been some high-level engagements. CIA chief William Burns traveled to China in May, while China's commerce minister traveled to the U.S. and Biden's national security adviser Jake Sullivan met with Wang in Vienna in May.

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The Conversation

Schools fail to prepare graduates for well-paying jobs

Cost, quality drive students to leave for-profit colleges in US

By Molly Ott, Arizona State University and Thomas Zimmerman, Rutgers University

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

For the majority of students, the college where they enroll is often the one from where they will graduate. But not so for the approximately 1 million students who transfer each year from one school to another. Of these 1 million, about 100,000 students transfer from one of the approximately 2,300 for-profit universities that exist in the US. That's a sizable portion of the approximately 777,000 students who attend for-profit colleges.

As researchers who specialize in higher education, we are especially interested in why students leave for-profit universities. These schools have been criticized for deceptive recruiting practices, being overpriced and failing to adequately prepare graduates for well-paying jobs.

In an effort to better understand the reasons behind the transfers, we interviewed 12 students who transferred from a private for-profit to a public university in the fall of 2021. Below are four main themes that emerged from our conversations.

1. Too expensive

Affordability came up repeatedly among the students we interviewed. A quarter said attending a for-profit initially seemed less expensive than a public university option. However, after they enrolled, the costs went up. They initially received a scholarship from the for-profit but did not realize it was only for the first year and nonrenewable. Their experiences are not unusual. Financial aid offers are often vague about the total costs that students are expected to pay.

Half of those we interviewed also shared that despite receiving some institutional scholarships, they had to take out loans to cover the balance. As they watched their debt grow, particularly in cases in which their initial scholarships expired, they realized transferring to a public university would be cheaper.

Their experiences are consistent with national trends that show college students who attend for-profits are more likely to have student loan debt - with higher balances - than people enrolled at other types of schools. A 2019 study found that 74% of full-time students who attended for-profit colleges had outstanding loans, compared to 21% at community college and 47% at four-year public schools. On an annual basis, for-profit students borrowed about \$8,000, compared to the average community college student's debt of approximately

\$4,700 and four-year public student average of \$7,000.

As of the 2020-2021 academic year, the average net cost of attendance at for-profit institutions was \$24,600, while it was \$14,700 at public institutions.

2. Lack of majors

About half of those we interviewed transferred in part because their original school did not offer their desired major. Some initially chose the for-profit for reasons like convenient location, easy admission process or perceived affordability. Later they realized none of the majors offered were exactly what they wanted. For others, their interests shifted over time.

For-profit universities mainly offer majors that are vocationally oriented and do not cost much to teach, such as business, engineering-related technologies and health professions. Nonprofit institutions tend to have more diverse offerings.

We found that before deciding to transfer, most students asked their academic advisors to help identify alternative majors. Though this may seem like a good idea, the reality is many for-profit universities, in an effort to keep revenue flowing, often direct their employees to find ways to keep students enrolled.

Indeed, several students told us their advisors recommended staying and switching to a different major rather than exploring options at other schools that may better align with their interests. The advisor for one aspiring lawyer initially suggested the for-profit's justice studies major. After taking introductory courses, the student realized justice studies was intended for future law enforcement officers, not lawyers. The advisor then placed her in the university's government program, which was also not a good fit.

The student independently researched the best majors for future lawyers and determined that political science would be the best preparation. Since the for-profit university did not have a political science program, she transferred to a public university.

3. Inflexible schedules

Unlike students at nonprofit and public universities, students at for-profit universities don't get to pick the classes they take. Students are enrolled in courses each term by their academic advisors without much choice over the course's topical focus, the professor who'll teach it or the day and time that the class is taught.

The predetermined structure of for-profit degree programs appeals to some students, such as those with caretaking responsibilities or inflexible work schedules. However, we found the practice also motivated many to transfer.

While they valued advisors' input, the students we interviewed wanted more transparency, control and freedom over their schedules, instructors and course topics.

4. Questions of quality

Scholars and policymakers have long called the quality of for-profit colleges into question. However, only two students we interviewed mentioned quality as a reason for transferring. They had concerns that instructors were inexperienced and courses were too easy.

The Biden administration recently proposed new rules, referred to as gainful employment regulations, aimed at ensuring degrees lead to positive employment outcomes for graduates. The rules would revoke the ability of schools to offer students federal financial aid if graduates' student loan payments exceed 8% of their income or 20% of their discretionary income. The US Department of Education states that the objective is to "ensure quality and accountability in postsecondary education."

To avoid the potential pitfalls associated with for-profit colleges, we suggest a few options that students can explore prior to enrollment.

They may want to pay special attention to academic program structure, costs and quality. Seeking information from sources unaffiliated with any specific university is a good strategy. The Bureau of Labor Statistics' Occupational Outlook Handbook has good information about majors that lead to different jobs. Schools that do not offer the degrees in majors that lead to a student's desired career should be avoided.

The College Scorecard, an online tool provided by the Department of Education, lets people search for schools according to majors offered, location and other criteria. With this information, the scorecard provides earnings and student debt data of recent graduates.

Students should also pay close attention to the fine print of financial aid packages. Especially, students should ask explicitly whether scholarship offers are renewable. If the answer is yes, it pays to clearly understand the criteria required in order to maintain eligibility.

If scholarships are not renewable, students should account for this when estimating the overall cost of attending the school over the expected span of time it takes to earn a degree. Our research shows that for-profit institutions may be less affordable in the long run than they initially appear. Conversely, nonprofit institutions that initially seem more expensive than for-profit institutions may be more affordable over the course of a student's degree. (AP)

ICS 'Live in Concert' a huge success

Rasika stuns fans with power-packed show

KUWAIT CITY, June 18: Indian Cultural Society has undoubtedly been the pioneer of quality entertainment & producer of continual hit shows in Kuwait since the past 18 years. Indian Cultural Society presented "Rasika Shekar Live" on Friday, June 2 at AIS Auditorium at 7 pm. Not only did she stun the audience by her melodious voice but also her breath-taking hold on flute and power packed energy.

This Live in Concert was a huge success in Kuwait, loved by all. ICS begins their shows by respecting and showing gratitude to both our Nations; Kuwait and India by their respective National Anthem. This event was followed by Partho Bardhan who mesmerized the audience with his

choice of evergreen song and Kaiser Ali Khan who sang one of the most famous songs in Bollywood and they were both applauded and appreciated much by the audience. As always, Indian Cultural Society promotes our young and local talent which was presented by The Dancing Divas of Ms. Jyoti Patel where the children of different age groups showcased their performance.

The event was blessed with the presence of our supportive sponsors and guests and the Souvenir release took place. They spoke of Indo-Kuwait friendship, cultural exchange, and contribution of India to the world. They have appreciated efforts of ICS to promote art and culture along with campaign for "Noble Cause & Welfare

Services".

Jerry producer and actor promoted his film Rolex, on the stage of ICS. He is a multi-talented individual who captured his entire movie in Kuwait. This also brought numerous opportunities for the talent in Kuwait to be a part of this movie. He has proved to show that our local talent, if provided with acceptance and support can do wonders. Rasika Shekar, the American-Indian based artist entered the stage with her proficiency in flute, leaving the audience in awe.

The audience welcomed her with a massive cheer as they started singing along the hit collections. Rasika Shekar brought the audience to their surprise as she gave an enthusiastic and zestful performance keeping the audience stuck to their seats. She sang, played the flute, and danced her way nonstop for 200 minutes without a sip of water! Her interaction with the audience was so strong and engaging keeping them really excited. Rasika sang a variety of songs from old to new, and slow to fast numbers with each and every person vibing to every beat. Rasika has her musical roots of being classically trained in Karnatik music. Her excellence in the field of music was recognized and respected by all the music lovers of Kuwait.

Everyone cherished the evening with conceding the use of high techno production, superb quality stage decor and well-organized event in Kuwait by ICS. The artist, musicians and the local talent were presented with ICS mementos and Ooredoo- Samsung mobile from our sponsor. Team ICS ensured best hospitality, comfortable seating, and smooth execution of the event.

The ICS President Ashfaque Ahmed Khan expressed his gratitude to all executives of ICS, Volunteers, Supporters, Techno staff, Media and Press wings.

By the end, Rasika made the audience to rise on their feet accompanied by Mubarak Al Rashid, singing one of the favorite collections of the industry. Mubarak Al Rashid from Kuwait is quite professionally known and admired by the Indian music lovers. The class and quality audiences cheered every time they appeared on the giant LED screen with their cheer reverberated in the venue.



A collage of photos from 'Rasika Shekar Live' concert in Kuwait.

ated in the venue.

Team ICS promised and is committed for social and welfare work,

as well as quality entertainment for future events. Indian Cultural Society never fails to conduct quality

events with legends and high rank artists. Stay tuned for ICS forthcoming event.

'Our environments shape our cultures'

20% of cultural differences in societies due to ecological factors

By Alexandra Wormley and Michael Varnum
Arizona State University

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

In some parts of the world, the rules are strict; in others they are far more lax. In some places, people are likely to plan for the future, while in others people are more likely to live in the moment. In some societies people prefer more personal space; in others they are comfortable being in close quarters with strangers.

Why do these kinds of differences exist?

There are a number of theories about where cultural differences come from. Some social scientists point to the role of specific institutions, like the Catholic Church. Others focus on historical differences in philosophical traditions across societies, or on the kinds of crops that were historically grown in different regions.

But there's another possible answer. In a growing number of cases, researchers have found that human culture can be shaped by key features of the environments in which people live.

Just how strong is this ecology-culture connection overall? In a new study, our lab, the Culture and Ecology Lab at Arizona State University, set out to answer this question.

How does ecology shape culture?

Ecology includes basic physical and social characteristics of the environment - such factors as how abundant resources are, how common infectious diseases are, how densely populated a place is, and how much threat there is to human safety. Variables like temperature and the availability of water can be key ecological features.

The three examples of cultural differences we started with illustrate how this can work. It turns out that the strength of social norms in a given culture is linked to the amount of threat, from such factors as war and disasters, a society faces. Stronger norms may help members of a society stick together and cooperate in the face of these dangers.

Places with less access to water tend to be more future-oriented. When fresh water is scarce, the thinking goes, there is more need to plan so that it doesn't run out.

Personal

And in places with colder temperatures people feel less need for lots of personal space in public, perhaps because there tend to be fewer germs, or maybe from an impulse, on some basic level, to keep warm.

All of these examples show that cultures are shaped, at least in part, by the basic features of the environments people live in. And in fact, there are many other examples in which researchers have linked particular cultural differences to particular differences in ecology.

For over 200 societies, we gathered comprehensive data on nine key features of ecology - such as rainfall, temperature, infectious disease and population density - and dozens of aspects of human cultural variation - including values, strength of norms, personality, motivation and institutional characteristics. With this information, we created the open-access EcoCultural Dataset.

Using this data set, we were able to generate a range of estimates for just how much of human cultural variation can be explained by ecology.

We ran a series of statistical models looking at the relationship between our ecological variables and each of the 66 cultural outcomes we tracked. For each of the cultural outcomes, we calculated the average amount of the cultural diversity across societies that was explained by this combination of nine different ecological factors. We found that nearly 20% of cultural variation was explained by the combination of these ecological features.

Importantly, our statistical estimates take into account common issues in cross-cultural research. One complicating factor is that societies that are close to each other in space will be similar in ways beyond the variables measured in any particular study. In the same way, there will likely be unmeasured similarities between societies with shared historical roots. For example, cultural similarities between southern Germany and Austria may be accounted for by their shared cultural and linguistic heritage, as well as similar climates and levels of wealth.

Twenty percent may not sound impressive, but in fact this is several times larger than the average effect in our field of social psychology, in which typically up to around 4% or 5% of the variation in an outcome is explained.

Because the EcoCultural Dataset contains not only contemporary measures of ecology, but also information about their variability and predictability over time, we believe it will be a rich resource for other scholars to mine. We've made all of this data free for anyone to access and explore.

Ecology isn't the only reason people around the world think and behave differently. But our work suggests that, at least in part, our environments shape our cultures. (AP)

A flyer of the event.



President Joe Biden speaks during a political rally at the Philadelphia Convention Center in Philadelphia, Saturday, June 17, 2023. (AP)

Biden strikes economic populist tone during campaign rally

President Joe Biden delivered an unapologetically economic populist message Saturday during the first rally of his reelection campaign, telling an exuberant crowd of union members that his policies had created jobs and lifted the middle class. Now, he said, is the time for the wealthy to "pay their fair share" in taxes.

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Market Movements

18-06-2023

Table with market movements for UAE, JAPAN, PHILIPPINES, EGYPT, DFM, Nikkei, PSEI, EGX 30.

Table with market movements for PAKISTAN, SAUDI, KSE 100, Tadawul.

Business

US headline inflation eases but still sizzles

Business activity and sentiment shaky

United States

Act Dovish, Talk Hawkish

US headline inflation fell to a lower than expected 4.0% year-on-year in May from 4.9% in April, largely due to lower energy costs and slowing food inflation.

As widely expected, the Federal Reserve left interest rates unchanged at their June meeting after ten consecutive rate hikes over the past 15 months.

Mixed economic data and the Fed's dovish move weighed on the greenback, giving peers room to run.

United Kingdom

Ticket to Tighter Times

Britain's labor market tightened unexpectedly in April, as wages shot up and unemployment fell, in another sign that the Bank of England (BoE) has not yet done enough to bring down stubbornly high inflation.

Economic activity bounced back in April as strong growth in the retail and creative industries sectors offset a slowdown in construction and manufacturing.

Highlights

- As widely expected, the Federal Reserve kept interest rates unchanged this month after both CPI and PPI softened.
- Price pressures may have showed signs of easing, but the labor market in the United Kingdom and Australia have both shown extraordinary robustness.

Manufacturing fell 0.3% in April, with pharmaceuticals and computers dragging down the figures.

The semi-positive start to the second quarter reduces the risk of recession for now. However, bets that the BoE will keep raising interest rates through the summer are adding to the prospect of a downturn later in the year.

The cable gained ground against the dollar, closing the week past the 1.26 range it was in to 1.2821.

Europe

Interest Rate Rises to 22-Year High

Germany's ZEW survey showed an improvement in investor expectations in June. The expectations index rose to -8.5 from -10.7 in May, above the median forecast.

Higher borrowing costs are a further headwind to recovery after the economy entered a technical recession in Q1 2023 and digested the tide of rate hikes from the European Central Bank (ECB).

Budget battle with GOP takes shape

Some Democrats are already warning of a government shutdown

WASHINGTON, June 18, (AP) Speaker Kevin McCarthy's bid to appease Republican hard-liners and get the House moving again after a recent party rebellion on the floor has some Democrats warning of a difficult road ahead when it comes to passing legislation that will keep the government running.

Republicans tied up votes this past week on guns and on censuring one of former President Donald Trump's most prominent critics, Rep. Adam Schiff, D-Calif.

The most consequential move of the week, however, was an announcement from GOP leadership that arrived with little fanfare.

McCarthy argued that the numbers he negotiated with the White House amount to a cap and "you can always do less."

Republicans who had criticized McCarthy, R-Calif., and opposed the debt ceiling legislation because they felt that agreement allowed too much spending.

"It is a prelude to a shutdown - what they are engineering," said Connecticut Rep. Rosa DeLauro, the top Democrat on the House Appropriations Committee.

Partial government shutdowns have become increasingly common in the modern era, with the longest coming under President Donald Trump as he demanded money for a U.S.-Mexico border wall.

The tension created by the GOP's pursuit of more non-defense spending cuts was evident during hearings held Wednesday and Thursday of the House Appropriations panel.

Democrats accused House Republicans of going back on their word. "Do you think any of us would have made a deal if we thought your '22 number was the deal?"

"You knew that wasn't a ceiling," said Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz, D-Fla. "Traditionally, that's where we are starting. Caps are not ceilings in our world. They are a starting point and then we negotiate from those numbers we have agreed to."

But Republicans said McCarthy was clear during negotiations that spending had to come down from current levels.

"We can try to fool the American people with smoke and mirrors and pretend, but the speaker was clear. We are in a debt crisis in this country," said Rep. Andy Harris, R-Md.

Under the debt ceiling agreement, the White House said nondefense spending was expected to be roughly flat in the next budget year and increase by 1% the following year.

A few Republicans have urged leadership not to bend to a minority within the conference.

"I think we've just got to be really careful not to allow, you know, a small portion of our conference to continu-

was flagged at May's policy meeting. The decisions were underpinned by fresh quarterly projections suggesting inflation will moderate more slowly than previously envisaged, to 2.2% in 2025.

The single currency edged higher after the ECB's meeting, climbing past 1.08 to close the week at 1.0937.

Asia-Pacific

China: Stuttering Economic Growth

China's central bank ramped up its monetary stimulus to help spur the economy amid signs of a weakening property market, a slump in business investment and record joblessness among young people.

The latest batch of official data showed the economy's recovery lost further momentum in May. Consumer spending is moderating after surging early this year when China dropped pandemic restrictions.

The PBOC timed its easing just as the Federal Reserve paused its rate hiking cycle for the first time in 15 months.

Japan: The Dove Doves On

Producer prices in Japan slowed for a fifth consecutive month, rising 5.1% year-on-year in May after a revised 5.9% increase in April.

data showed, a sign cost-push pressure that has driven up consumer inflation may be subsiding. On the other hand, prices of beverage and food goods rose 7.9% in May from a year earlier and those of electric equipment were up 5.5%.

The Bank of Japan (BoJ) maintained its ultra-easy monetary-policy on Friday despite stronger-than-expected inflation and signs of wage growth.

The Australian labor market figures made an extraordinarily strong report in May, blowing past expectations. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) showed net employment rose by 75,900 in May from April.

Australia: Labor Market Still Sizzling

The Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA) has more work to do to tame inflation, even after tightening by 400 basis points to an 11-year high of 4.1% and a surprise rise earlier this month.

The aussie made a notable gain rising from the 0.6700 region to close the week at 0.6879.

Kuwait

Kuwaiti Dinar USD/KWD closed last week at 0.30715.

Rates - 18th June, 2023

Table with columns: Currencies, Previous Week Levels (Open, Low, High, Close), This Week's Expected Range (Minimum, Maximum), 3-Month Forward.



Rep. Rosa DeLauro, D-Conn., the ranking member of the House Appropriations Committee, surrenders her electronic devices as she arrives for a closed Defense Subcommittee markup hearing on the Fiscal Year 2024 spending bill for the Pentagon, at the Capitol in Washington, June 15, 2023.

ally be chipping away at previously agreed upon issues," said Rep. Steve Womack, R-Ark. "That top-line number was agreed to in the (debt-ceiling bill.) They may not like it. They voiced their displeasure last week. They kind of shut the House down, but we've got

work to do. We need to be doing it." Republicans only have a five-seat majority in the House, which magnifies the power that a small bloc can have. It took just 11 members, mostly members of the House Freedom Caucus, to stall House votes on legislation in ear-

ly June and send lawmakers home early. One of those 11, Rep. Bob Good, R-Va., said moving to 2022 spending levels for nondefense programs will be good for Republican candidates in next year's general election because that's what voters are demanding.

INVESTMENT STRATEGY & RESEARCH

KAMCO INVEST

Oil Market Monthly Report June 2023

Oil reverses from an 18-month low on hopes of a rate pause and China stimulus.

Consistent decline in crude oil prices since the start of the year and further declines during June-2023 pushed prices to the lowest point since December-2021 by the second week of June-2023. The declines came after several datapoints pointed to a slowdown in demand in the near term especially in China, the US and Euro Area. The latest economic forecast from the OECD highlighted sluggish growth in these regions resulting in a 2.7% growth in global GDP this year followed by a marginal improvement next year at 2.9%. Moreover, hopes of robust demand for jet fuel faded as latest data pointed to moderate weekly growth in global passenger flights. The decline in oil prices came despite Saudi Arabia announcing additional voluntary cuts of around 1 mb/d in July-2023 aimed at stabilizing prices, over and above its existing quota of cuts. The news that OPEC+ would extend the ongoing cuts of around 3.66 mb/d in 2024 also failed to support crude oil prices.

Nevertheless, there were several positive news in the market that reversed the course of crude oil. This included the hopes of moderating inflation in the US and an expected rate pause by the US Fed which may support oil demand. The US government's tender to purchase 3 million barrels of oil to refill its SPR and an additional 12 million barrels of planned purchases for this year also supported prices of sour oil in the US. On the other hand, China is reportedly planning an economic stimulus to boost consumption.

On the demand front, the latest export figures from China pointed to a slowdown in factory output indicating a weak global demand especially emanating from developed markets due to higher inflation in US and Europe. Exports from China declined at a faster-than-expected pace of 7.5% y-o-y during May-2023 while imports contracted by 4.5%. To counter this slowdown in export demand, the Chinese government announced small cut to its seven day reverse repo rate that was aimed at boosting domestic demand. Moreover, a summer-cooling led demand in Europe as temperatures peaked in the region was countered by ample inventories in the region. Meanwhile, prices in the physical market aimed at India took a hit after a cyclone led to force majeure at key oil and container ports on the western coast.

On the supply side, the wildfires in Canada affected light oil and natural gas production. A report from Rystad Energy said that around 0.3 mb/d or 20% of oil and gas production may be affected in British Columbia. On the other hand, the forecasted growth for US shale oil production was modest. The Permian basin in the US is expected to add merely 767 b/d next month, the slowest pace of growth in the region since February-2023, led by inflation and investor pressure on drillers to maintain fiscal discipline. Oil production by the OPEC also plunged around 0.5 mb/d during May-2023 to 28.1 mb/d mainly led by steep cuts implemented by Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Kuwait that was partially offset by higher production in Nigeria.

Oil Prices

Oil traded within a tight range of USD 70 and USD 80 per barrel over the last few weeks led by pressure on the demand front that was countered by supply adjustments. Brent futures closed at the lowest level in 18 months on 12-June-2023 led by fears of slow demand recovery this year, in addition to ample supply and inventories. Although prices witnessed more than 3% recovery on 13-June-2023 led by hopes of a rate pause and China's stimulus plans, the market remained fragile eyeing slow economic growth in most major oil consuming countries. The ECB, on the other hand, is expected to implement a 25 bps hike on Thursday, further affecting demand from the region. Market also ignored the steep cut announced by Saudi Arabia for July-2023 as well as an extension to the existing cuts by OPEC countries. A report from Refinitiv showed Brent crude oil's six month

Average Crude Oil Prices, USD/b	Apr-2023	May-2023	Change (USD)	YTD Avg. 2022	YTD Avg. 2023
OPEC Reference Basket	84.1	75.8	(8.3)	102.8	80.2
Arab Light	85.7	77.7	(7.9)	103.7	82.0
Basrah Light	81.8	73.3	(8.4)	101.4	77.1
Bonny Light	85.9	75.6	(10.3)	106.0	81.0
Djeno	77.5	68.4	(9.1)	97.1	73.2
Es Sider	84.0	75.3	(8.7)	104.3	79.6
Girassol	87.0	77.2	(9.8)	106.4	81.9
Iran Heavy	84.6	76.5	(8.1)	102.9	80.5
Kuwait Export	85.5	77.4	(8.1)	103.9	81.6
Merey	62.6	56.2	(6.4)	79.1	59.8
Murban	84.1	75.7	(8.5)	101.6	80.8
Rabi	84.4	75.4	(9.1)	104.1	80.2
Saharan Blend	85.4	76.4	(9.0)	107.5	81.8
Zafro	85.9	76.8	(9.1)	106.1	80.9
Other Crudes					
Brent	84.9	75.8	(9.1)	104.6	80.6
Dubai	83.4	75.1	(8.3)	99.7	79.8
Isthmus	72.6	65.8	(6.8)	97.4	67.9
LLS	81.3	73.7	(7.6)	101.4	78.2
Mars	78.3	71.1	(7.2)	97.4	74.3
Minas	81.4	73.7	(7.6)	100.3	78.9
Urals	60.0	55.2	(4.8)	85.6	53.7
WTI	79.4	71.6	(7.8)	99.3	75.7
Differentials					
Brent/WTI	5.5	4.2	(1.3)	5.3	5.0
Brent/LLS	3.6	2.1	(1.5)	3.2	2.4
Brent/Dubai	1.5	0.7	(0.8)	4.9	0.9

Source: OPEC Monthly Oil Market Report - June-2023

World Oil Demand - 2021/2022, mb/d	2021	Q1-22	Q2-22	Q3-22	Q4-22	2022	Y-o-Y Growth	% Chg.
Americas	24.32	24.77	24.98	25.33	24.95	25.01	0.70	2.86
of which US	20.03	20.38	20.41	20.62	20.32	20.43	0.40	1.98
Europe	13.13	13.19	13.43	14.07	13.34	13.51	0.38	2.90
Asia Pacific	7.38	7.85	6.99	7.22	7.68	7.43	0.05	0.70
Total OECD	44.82	45.81	45.39	46.62	45.97	45.95	1.13	2.52
China	15.00	14.77	14.45	14.67	15.51	14.85	(0.15)	(0.98)
India	4.77	5.18	5.16	4.95	5.26	5.14	0.37	7.66
Other Asia	8.67	9.13	9.31	8.77	8.89	9.02	0.36	4.11
Latin America	6.23	6.32	6.36	6.55	6.52	6.44	0.21	3.38
Middle East	7.79	8.06	8.15	8.53	8.44	8.29	0.50	6.45
Africa	4.22	4.51	4.15	4.25	4.69	4.40	0.18	4.21
Russia	3.61	3.67	3.42	3.45	3.71	3.56	(0.05)	(1.48)
Other Eurasia	1.21	1.22	1.16	1.00	1.21	1.15	(0.06)	(5.07)
Other Europe	0.75	0.79	0.75	0.73	0.80	0.77	0.01	1.75
Total Non-OECD	52.25	53.65	52.90	52.89	55.03	53.62	1.36	2.61
Total World	97.08	99.45	98.29	99.51	101	99.57	2.49	2.57

Source: OPEC Monthly Oil Market Report - June-2023

World Oil Demand - 2022/2023, mb/d	2022	Q1-23	Q2-23	Q3-23	Q4-23	2023	Y-o-Y Growth	% Chg.
Americas	25.01	24.61	25.14	25.51	25.09	25.09	0.08	0.31
of which US	20.43	20.16	20.43	20.75	20.37	20.43	0.00	(0.01)
Europe	13.51	12.93	13.33	14.10	13.37	13.43	(0.07)	(0.53)
Asia Pacific	7.43	7.89	7.05	7.27	7.70	7.47	0.04	0.55
Total OECD	45.95	45.44	45.52	46.87	46.15	46	0.05	0.10
China	14.85	15.63	15.56	15.43	16.16	15.70	0.84	5.69
India	5.14	5.40	5.41	5.21	5.50	5.38	0.24	4.75
Other Asia	9.02	9.40	9.65	9.14	9.24	9.35	0.33	3.67
Latin America	6.44	6.60	6.49	6.71	6.68	6.62	0.19	2.90
Middle East	8.29	8.63	8.47	8.86	8.73	8.67	0.38	4.55
Africa	4.40	4.69	4.34	4.43	4.88	4.59	0.19	4.21
Russia	3.56	3.68	3.45	3.59	3.87	3.65	0.09	2.49
Other Eurasia	1.15	1.24	1.16	1.02	1.22	1.16	0.01	1.15
Other Europe	0.77	0.84	0.76	0.75	0.83	0.80	0.03	3.61
Total Non-OECD	53.62	56.12	55.29	55.16	57.1	55.92	2.30	4.29
Total World	99.57	101.55	100.80	102.03	103.25	101.91	2.35	2.36

Source: OPEC Monthly Oil Market Report - June-2023

backwardation has fallen to the lowest since March-2023, indicating a declining market confidence in higher demand for oil as compared to supplies.

Data from Baker Hughes showed aggregate oil rig count increase modestly by 1 rig for the first time in six weeks. This confirms data a recent government report that showed marginal growth in production in the near term. However, the latest weekly report on oil production showed US output reaching 12.4 mb/d during the week ended 2-June-2023, the highest level in three years.

Oil prices remained below the USD 80/b mark since the start of May-2023 resulting in the biggest monthly decline in five months. OPEC crude basket averaged at a 17-month low level during May-2023 at USD 75.8/b registering a m-o-m decline of 9.9%. The fall in average Brent spot prices was even higher and in double digit at 10.7% at an average of USD 75.8/b while average Kuwait crude grade witnessed a slightly smaller decline of 9.7% and averaged at USD 77.4/b. In terms of forecast, the EIA upgraded its forecast for Brent crude by for 2023 to USD 79.54 per barrel from its previous forecast of USD 78.65/b issued last month. The forecast for 2024 was also raised to USD 83.5/b from USD 74.47/b in the previous forecast. The broader Bloomberg consensus expectation for Brent crude showed downgrades for the next four quarters vs. last month.

World Oil Demand

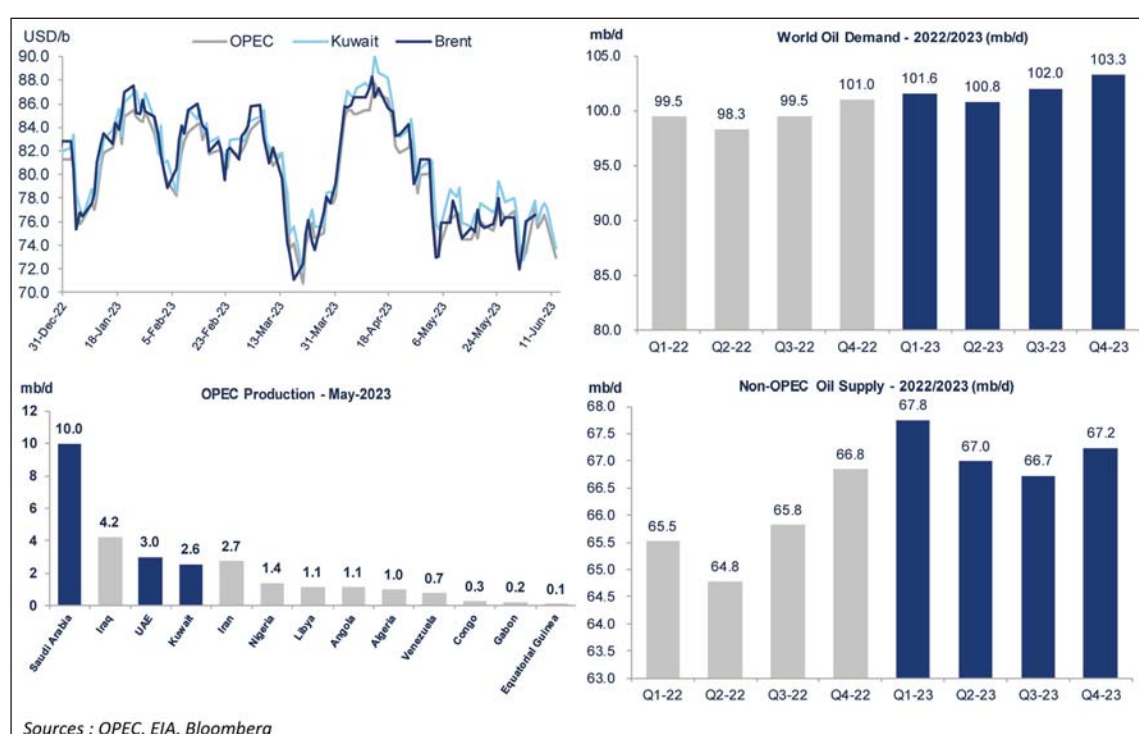
World oil demand growth estimate for 2022 was kept unchanged at a growth of 2.5 mb/d to average at 99.57 mb/d during the year. However, adjustments were made at the country level for data for Q4-2022 including a small upward adjustment to demand data for the OECD Americas region.

For 2023, demand growth forecast was also kept unchanged with a growth of 2.3 mb/d to average at 101.91 mb/d during the year. However, country-level data for China, Latin America and for the Middle East region witnessed an upward adjustment that was offset by downward revision to data for OECD Europe, Other Asia and Africa. The downward adjustments reflected weak demand during 2Q-2023 led by economic challenges. China's economy witnessed better-than-expected performance that led to the upward revision in the forecast. Although recent economic data from China pointed to a decline in imports (slow domestic demand) and exports (a slowdown in advanced markets), oil imports in China jumped during May-2023 by 12.2% y-o-y and by 17.4% q-o-q to 12.11 mb/d, according to government data. The increase came after refiners resumed production post maintenance and started stockpiling crude oil, according to OilPrice.com. In addition, in its third batch of oil import quotas, the Chinese government effectively increased total volumes during 1H-2023 by 20% y-o-y to 194.1 million tons, according to Reuters. On the other hand, oil demand in India rose by a strong 9.7% y-o-y during May-2023 to reach 20.03 million tons, according to data from the oil ministry. Consumption of diesel reached a record high of 8.22 million tons after increasing by 5.1% m-o-m while gasoline consumption saw double digit growth of 16% as compared to April-2023 to reach 3.35 million tons. Crude oil demand in the US expected to be constrained in 2Q-2023, especially for industrial fuels led by slow manufacturing activity, according to OPEC monthly report, although transportation fuel demand is expected to remain steady. For Q3-2023, demand is expected to increase led by expected slowdown in inflation as well as peak driving season. For the OECD region, demand is expected to be supported by transportation fuels during this quarter and in Q3-2023, although overall demand is expected to decline slightly.

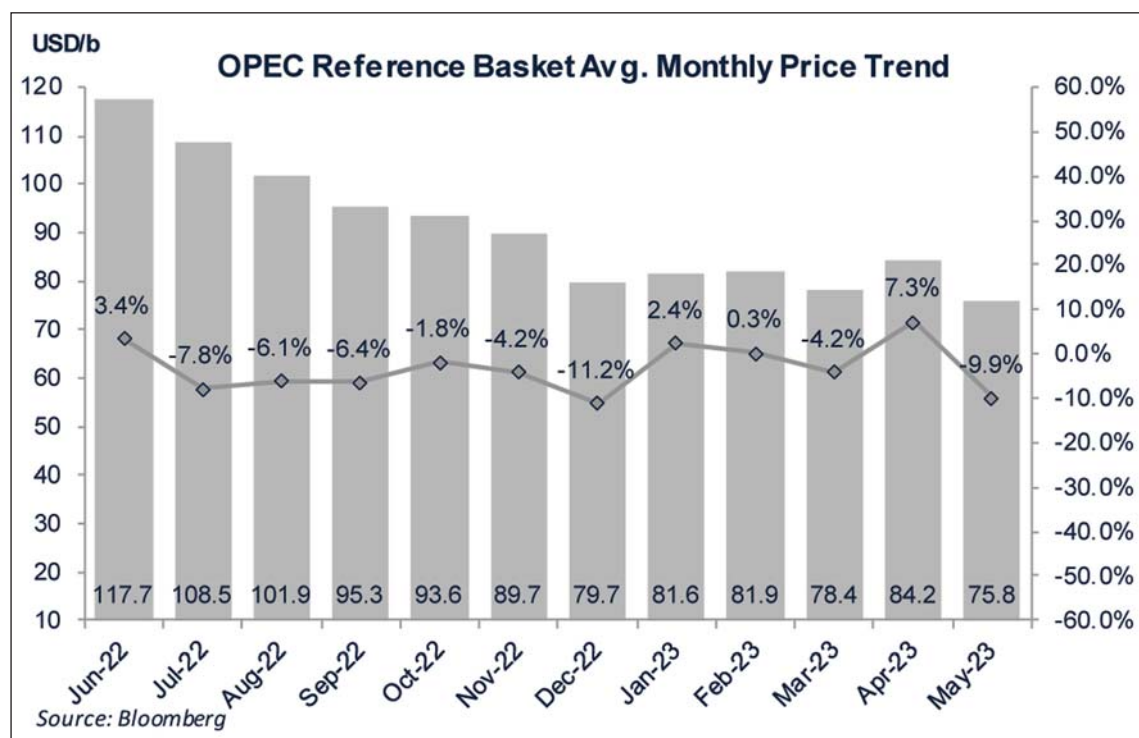
World Oil Supply

Global liquids production recorded a monthly decline for the third consecutive month during May-2023 after showing growth during the first two months of the year. According

to preliminary data, global oil supply dropped by 1.02 mb/d to reach an average of 100.2 mb/d. The decline during the month was led by a fall in production in both non-OPEC and OPEC producers. Non-OPEC liquids production (including OPEC NGLs) declined by 0.6 mb/d during May-2023 to average at 72.2 mb/d mainly led by a fall in production once again in Russia and Canada that more than offset higher output in Other Asia and Other Eurasia. OPEC production also witnessed a decline of around 0.5 mb/d resulting in a market share of 28.0%.



Sources : OPEC, EIA, Bloomberg



Source: Bloomberg

Non-OPEC liquids supply growth estimates for 2022 was kept unchanged at a growth of 1.9 mb/d to average at 65.74 mb/d as compared to 65.76 mb/d expected in OPEC's previous forecast. The forecast for 2023 was also kept broadly unchanged at a growth of 1.43 mb/d to average at 67.17 mb/d although minor downward adjustments were made to supply forecast data for Other Asia and some other countries that were offset by revisions to data for the OECD Americas region. Supply forecast for the US was raised by 20 tb/d while that of Canada was lowered by 15 tb/d. The lowered forecast for Canada reflected the disruption caused by the wildfires, in our view. According to a report from Rystad Energy, the wildfires is expected to affect 0.3 mb/d of oil and gas output or 20% of output from British Columbia region. On the other hand, oil production in the US reached 12.4 mb/d during the week ended 2-June-2023, the highest since pre-pandemic levels. A report from EIA showed shale output reaching a record level next month, although the monthly growth is expected to be marginal.

OPEC Oil Production & Spare Capacity

OPEC crude oil production declined for the third consecutive month during May-2023 to reach the lowest level in 16 months. According to Bloomberg data, production during the month stood at 28.3 mb/d in May-2023 vs. 28.8 mb/d during April-2023, registering a decline of 500 tb/d. This

was the biggest monthly decline in the last five months and the aggregate decline in OPEC production in the last three months stood at around 1mb/d. By contrast, OPEC secondary sources showed a slightly smaller production decline of 464 tb/d to reach an average production of 28.1 mb/d during May-2023 as compared to 28.5 mb/d during the previous month. The decline in output during the month mainly reflected a steep fall in production in Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Kuwait and Algeria that was partially offset by a steep increase in production in Nigeria and Angola and smaller increase output in other OPEC countries.

Oil production in Saudi Arabia dropped below the 10 mb/d mark, according to data from Bloomberg. Output during May-2023 was the lowest since December-2021 at 9.96 mb/d after declining by 510 tb/d during the month. The output is expected to fall further next month after the Kingdom pledged to make additional voluntary output cuts of 1 mb/d. On the other hand, Nigeria regained its status as the top crude oil producer in Africa after increasing production by close to 0.2 mb/d during May-2023. According to reports, the increase reflected oil discovery by TotalEnergies in offshore Nigeria. Meanwhile, other African producers, Libya and Angola also increased output in May-2023.

In its latest meeting, the OPEC+ decided to make several changes to targets and baseline production quotas for member countries. According to the announcement, the 3.36 mb/d cuts would be extended until the end of 2024. The group also agreed to reduce overall production targets starting next year by 1.4 mb/d vs. current levels to 40.46 mb/d, although there may not be a real impact as this reflects actual current production levels for Russia, Nigeria and Angola. On the other hand, OPEC+ allowed the UAE to increase its output target by around 0.2 mb/d to 3.22 mb/d, according to a Reuters report. A recent report also showed OPEC+ raising Russia's production baseline by 120 tb/d to 9.949 mb/d.

Non-OPEC Oil Supply - 2021/2022, mb/d	2021	Q1-22	Q2-22	Q3-22	Q4-22	2022	Y-o-Y Growth	% Chg.
Americas	25.45	26.09	26.50	27.26	27.50	26.84	1.40	5.48
of which US	18.04	18.51	19.07	19.57	19.68	19.21	1.17	6.47
Europe	3.79	3.72	3.46	3.51	3.59	3.57	(0.22)	(5.79)
Asia Pacific	0.51	0.49	0.51	0.43	0.49	0.48	(0.03)	(6.23)
Total OECD	29.75	30.30	30.48	31.20	31.58	30.89	1.14	3.85
China	4.32	4.54	4.54	4.42	4.42	4.48	0.16	3.70
India	0.78	0.79	0.78	0.76	0.76	0.77	(0.01)	(0.80)
Other Asia	2.42	2.37	2.32	2.24	2.31	2.31	(0.11)	(4.74)
Latin America	5.96	6.11	6.18	6.46	6.59	6.34	0.38	6.35
Middle East	3.19	3.23	3.28	3.32	3.30	3.29	0.10	3.16
Africa	1.34	1.31	1.30	1.31	1.28	1.30	(0.04)	(3.17)
Russia	10.8	11.33	10.63	11.01	11.17	11.03	0.23	2.15
Other Eurasia	2.93	3.04	2.76	2.59	2.92	2.83	(0.10)	(3.34)
Other Europe	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.10	0.10	0.11	(0.01)	(6.36)
Total Non-OECD	31.85	32.82	31.90	32.22	32.86	32.45	0.60	1.89
Total Non-OPEC Production	61.6	63.12	62.38	63.42	64.44	63.34	1.75	2.84
Processing gains	2.29	2.40	2.40	2.40	2.40	2.40	0.11	4.90
Total Non-OPEC Supply	63.88	65.52	64.78	65.82	66.84	65.74	1.86	2.91
OPEC NGLs and non-conventionals	5.28	-	-	-				

Warba announces weekly 'Sunbula' winners

Warba Bank - the best bank in banking services for the corporate sector and banking services for the investment sector in Kuwait - announced the winners of the weekly Sunbula draw. The Bank will continue to make weekly draws for 10 winners for the Sunbula account in the presence of a representative of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and Warba Bank employees. As for the lucky customers for the weekly Sunbula draw, 10 winners were chosen from Warba Bank's cus-

tomers, each of whom received 1,000 Kuwaiti dinars. The Winners are: Mr. Khaled Thamer Mohammad Al-Azmi, Mr. Mohammad Kadmos Al-Daihani, Mr. Adnan Abdulmohsen Al-Tayyar, Mr. Ahmed Hamed Abdullah Al-Saleh, Mr. Thamer Ayed Sarhan Al-Anzi, Mr. Abdullah Hussain Jassim Al-Fares, Mr. Hussain Fadel Najm Al-Shammari, Mr. Ahmed Saleh Falah Al-Azmi, Mr. Khaled Khadaan Mohammad Al-Mutairi, and Mrs. Farha Ayed Sultan Hantoush.

The Sunbula account is the perfect choice for all those who wish to save money and achieve great financial returns on their balances at the same time; in addition to multiple opportunities to win cash prizes throughout the year. With regards to the conditions for winning the Sunbula, Mr. Abdulaziz Soud Al-Bekheet - Area Manager of Retail Banking Group states: "Only 100 KD is required to enter the weekly Sunbula draws and other major

draws, whereby the customer still gets one chance per every 10 KD in the account, and the chances are calculated according to the lowest balance in the account during a month. Therefore, a full month must have passed in the account to qualify for the weekly draw, and two full months for the major draws to calculate the opportunities. There are no restrictions or limits for withdrawal and deposit, the higher the deposited amount, the greater the customer's chances of winning.



Abdulaziz Al-Bekheet - Area Manager of Retail Banking

The Conversation

EU files antitrust charges against Google

Here's how the ad tech at the heart of the case works

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

By Eric Zeng

Carnegie Mellon University

The European Union filed an antitrust case against Google on June 14, 2023, charging that the company abused its power in the online advertising market to disadvantage its competition. The U.S. Department of Justice filed a similar civil antitrust suit against Google on Jan. 24, 2023.

The online ad ecosystem is largely built around "programmatic advertising," a system for placing advertisements from millions of advertisers on millions of websites. The system uses computers to automate bidding by advertisers on available ad spaces, often with transactions occurring faster than would be possible manually. Google runs the dominant advertising platform and has 28% market share of global advertising revenue.

Most websites outsource the task of selling ads to a complex network of advertising tech companies that do the work of figuring out which ads are shown to each particular person. Programmatic advertising is also a powerful tool that allows advertisers to target and reach people on a huge range of websites.

As a postdoctoral researcher in computer science, I study these technologies and companies, including how sketchy ads, like those for miracle weight-loss pills and suspicious-looking software, sometimes appear on legitimate, well-regarded websites.

The modern online advertising marketplace is meant to solve one problem: match the high volume of advertisements with the large number of ad spaces. The websites want to keep their ad spaces full and at the best prices, and the advertisers want to target their ads to relevant sites and users.

Rather than each website and advertiser pairing up to run ads together, advertisers work with demand-side platforms - tech companies that let advertisers buy ads. Websites work with supply-side platforms - tech companies that pay sites to put ads on their page. These companies handle the details of figuring out which websites and users should be matched with specific ads.

Most of the time, ad tech companies decide which ads to show through a real-time bidding auction. Whenever a person loads a website, and the website has a space for an ad, the website's supply-side platform will request bids for ads

from demand-side platforms through an auction system called an ad exchange. The demand-side platform will decide which ad in their inventory best targets the particular user, based on any information they've collected about the user's interests and web history from tracking users' browsing, and then submit a bid. The winner of this auction gets to place their ad in front of the user. This all happens in an instant.

Google runs a supply-side platform, demand-side platform and an exchange. These three components make up an ad network. Google's control of these three components sets the stage for the company to manipulate the market, as the EU and Justice Department allege the company has done. A variety of smaller companies such as Criteo, PubMatic, Rubicon and AppNexus also operate in the online advertising market.

This system allows an advertiser to run ads to potentially millions of users, across millions of websites, without needing to know the details of how that happens. And it allows websites to solicit ads from countless potential advertisers without needing to contact or reach an agreement with any of them.

Malicious advertisers, like any other advertiser, can take advantage of the scale and reach of programmatic advertising to send scams and links to malware to potentially millions of users on any website. I study how malicious online advertisers take advantage of this system. This means that online advertising companies have a big responsibility to prevent harmful ads from reaching users, but they sometimes fall short.

There are some checks against bad ads at multiple levels. Ad networks, supply-side platforms and demand-side platforms typically have content policies restricting harmful ads. For example, Google Ads has an extensive content policy that forbids illegal and dangerous products, inappropriate and offensive content, and a long list of deceptive techniques, such as phishing, clickbait, false advertising and doctored imagery.

However, other ad networks have less stringent policies. For example, MGID, a native advertising network my colleagues and I examined for a study and found to run many lower-quality ads, has a much shorter content policy that prohibits illegal, offensive and malicious ads, and a single line about "misleading, inaccurate or deceitful information." Native advertising is designed to imitate the look and feel of the website that it appears on, and is typically responsible for the sketchy looking ads at the bottom of news articles. Another native ad network, content.ad, has no content policy on their website at all.

Websites can block specific advertisers and categories of ads. For example, a site could block a particular advertiser that has been running scammy ads on their page, or specific ad networks that have been serving low-quality ads.

However, these policies are only as good as the enforcement. Ad networks typically use a combination of manual content moderators and automated tools to check that each ad campaign complies with their policies. How effective these are is unclear, but a report by Confiant, a firm that tracks malware in advertising, suggests that between 0.14% and 1.29% of ads served by various supply-side platforms in the third quarter of 2020 were low quality.

Malicious advertisers adapt to countermeasures and figure out ways to evade automated or manual auditing of their ads, or exploit gray areas in content policies. For example, in a study my colleagues and I conducted on deceptive political ads during the 2020 U.S. elections, we found many examples of fake political polls, which purported to be public opinion polls but asked for an email address to vote. Voting in the poll signed the user up for political email lists. Despite this deception, ads like these may not have violated Google's content policies for political content, data collection or misrepresentation, or were simply missed in the review process.

Lastly, some examples of "bad" ads are intentionally designed to be misleading and deceptive, by both the website and ad network. Native ads are a prime example. They are effective because native advertising companies claim higher clickthrough rates and revenue for sites. Studies have shown that this is likely because users have difficulty telling the difference between native ads and the website's content.

You may have seen native ads on many news and media websites, including on major sites like CNN, USA Today and Vox. If you scroll to the bottom of a news article, there may be a section called "sponsored content" or "around the web," containing what look like news articles. However, all of these are paid content. My colleagues and I conducted a study on native advertising on news and misinformation websites and found that these native ads disproportionately contained potentially deceptive and misleading content, such as ads for unregulated health supplements, deceptively written advertorials, investment pitches and material from content farms.

This highlights an unfortunate situation. Even reputable news and media websites are struggling to earn revenue, and turn to running deceptive and misleading ads on their sites to earn more income, despite the risks it poses to their users and the cost to their reputations.

Microsoft says disruptions to Outlook and cloud platform were cyberattacks

Shadowy hacktivist group claimed responsibility

BOSTON, June 18, (AP): In early June, sporadic but serious service disruptions plagued Microsoft's flagship office suite - including the Outlook email and OneDrive file-sharing apps - and cloud computing platform. A shadowy hacktivist group claimed responsibility, saying it flooded the sites with junk traffic in distributed denial-of-service attacks.

Initially reticent to name the cause, Microsoft has now disclosed that DDoS attacks by the murky upstart were indeed to blame.

But the software giant has offered few details - and did not immediately comment on how many customers were affected and whether the impact was global. A spokeswoman confirmed that the group that calls itself Anonymous Sudan was behind the attacks. It claimed responsibility on its Telegram social media channel at the time. Some security researchers believe the group to be Russian.

Microsoft's explanation in a blog post Friday evening followed a request by The Associated Press two days earlier. Slim on details, the post said the attacks "temporarily impacted availability" of some services. It said the attackers were focused on "disruption and publicity" and likely used rented cloud infrastructure and virtual private networks to bombard Microsoft servers from so-called botnets of zombie computers around the globe.

Microsoft said there was no evidence any customer data was accessed or compromised.

While DDoS attacks are mainly a nuisance - making websites unreachable without penetrating them - security experts say they can disrupt the work of millions if they successfully interrupt the services of a software service giant like Microsoft on which so much global commerce depends.

It's not clear if that's what happened here.

"We really have no way to measure the impact if Microsoft doesn't provide that info," said Jake Williams, a prominent cybersecurity researcher and a former National Security Agency offensive hacker. Williams said he was not aware of Outlook previously being attacked at this scale.

"We know some resources were inaccessible for some, but not others. This often happens with DDoS of globally distributed systems," Williams added. He said Microsoft's apparent unwillingness to provide an objective measure of customer impact "probably speaks to the magnitude."

Microsoft dubbed the attackers Storm-1359, using a designator it assigns to groups whose affiliation it has not yet established. Cybersecurity sleuthing tends to take time - and even then can be a challenge if the adversary is skilled.



Abdullatif W. Al Nusif delivering his speech.



2nd Kuwait PPP Conference (PPPKW2). Honoring Al Nusif

Markaz participates in PPPKW2 as a Gold sponsor

Strengthening its ongoing efforts towards bridging the public and private sector

Markaz Participates in the 2nd Kuwait Public Private Partnership Conference (PPPKW2) as a Gold sponsor

Kuwait City, June 18, 2023: Kuwait Financial Centre "Markaz" participated at the 2nd Kuwait Public Private Partnership Conference (PPPKW2) as a Gold sponsor under the theme "Partnership for Development", which was held from 12-14 June, 2023 at the Al-Hashemi Ballroom at the Radisson Blu Hotel. Markaz's sponsorship and participation bolster its CSR strategy under the pillar of "promoting good governance in the business environment", which aims to promote cooperation between the private and public sector in the country.

The conference was held under the Patronage of Dr. Khaled Mahdi, Secretary-General of the Supreme Council for Planning & Development, and was organized by the Kuwaiti

Federation of Engineering Offices and Consultant Houses (KFEOCH), headed by Eng. Bader Al-Salman, in collaboration with Razen Events. The 3-day event hosted a series of panel discussions and saw the participation of government entities and private sector institutions, concerned with public and private partnership and development projects. PPPKW2 sought to shed light on all the legislative and legal aspects necessary to succeed in such partnership projects and showcased methods to overcome any potential obstacles along the way. The conference also highlighted some of the best international practices in the field.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, Mr. Abdullatif W. Al-Nusif, Managing Director of Wealth Management and Business Development at Markaz, said: "At Markaz, we believe in the immense potential of public and private sector partnership, which can strengthen the country's economy. There is no doubt

that such partnerships will contribute to the creation of job opportunities and the diversification of income sources. Markaz has always participated in strategic partnerships by bidding on several projects in the residential, industrial, and infrastructure sectors.

We have also pioneered innovation in the financial sector by offering innovative solutions, including enabling individual investors to invest with small amounts in the real estate sector to overcome prevalent entry barriers. We believe that there are still many unexplored avenues for fruitful collaborations and we hope to continue being part of sustainable development in future projects."

As part of Markaz's panel participation, Mr. Khaled A. AlMubarak, Senior Vice President of MENA Real Estate at Markaz, contributed his insights to the panel discussion under the title, "The partnership between public and private sectors as a tributary of sustainable development."

'Let's Be Aware' campaign continues

ABK offers most secure services to individuals with special needs

KUWAIT CITY, June 18: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) continues to prioritize the provision of superior and secure customized services for individuals with special needs as part of its active involvement in the third consecutive year of the Central Bank of Kuwait and Kuwait Banking Association's 'Let's Be Aware' Diraya banking awareness campaign.

The Bank recently reaffirmed its dedication to delivering unfaltering support for customers with special needs to facilitate their banking transactions at any ABK branch. These efforts are aligned with ABK's unwavering pledge to provide banking services to all customer segments in the community and its eagerness to achieve financial inclusion.

On this occasion, Loai Muqames, CEO-Kuwait at ABK, affirmed, "We leave no stone unturned in ensuring individuals with special needs can access all of our products and services with ease and comfort, on top of providing a supportive hand to guide them during their visit to our branches - a step that undoubtedly aims at enhancing their satisfaction level."

Additionally, Muqames highlighted that ABK has specifically designated select branches to service customers with special needs. These branches, including the Head Office, Al Shaab, Al Jabriya, Al Adan, South Sabahiya, Al Ferdous, and Al Jahra 1, provide easily accessible ATM machines that are equipped with headphones and wheelchair accessibility. The branches also provide dedicated parking spaces in addition to printed material in Braille to support visually impaired customers and trained staff who can communicate in sign language.

Muqames proclaimed, "We consistently train our employees to effectively use sign language while serving customers with hearing and speaking disabilities, adhering to the guidelines established by the Central Bank of Kuwait to facilitate integration and fulfillment of the requirements of people with special needs in society in every possible way."

Moreover, the Bank has endeavored to extend its digital channels to customers with special needs so they can conveniently manage their banking transactions, regardless of their location, in compliance with international standards.

Furthermore, the CEO emphasized ABK's ongoing efforts in enhancing the awareness of individuals with special needs about the range of services and banking rights that correspond to them, as part of the Bank's social responsibility that prioritizes serving customers with special needs. He highlighted the Bank's continuous commitment to empower these customers by en-

riching their knowledge of financial and banking solutions.

Muqames has consistently been an advocate of the Central Bank of Kuwait's initiatives, lauding its persistent efforts to establish a culture of financial excellence among all segments of society. He noted that the 'Let's Be Aware' Diraya campaign has emerged as a distinguished initiative in the region, mainly in driving the understanding amongst local bank customers



Loai Muqames, CEO-Kuwait at ABK

about the critical banking and financial services provided by all key players in the country.

The 'Let's Be Aware' Diraya campaign is designed to heighten awareness, promote secure transactions, bolster financial inclusion, and sustain monetary and economic stability. The initiative aims to educate customers about their rights and responsibilities, extol the benefits of electronic financial transactions while apprehending the associated risks, enhance customer security and achieve optimal cyber protection to safeguard the savings and wealth of society.

ABK acknowledges that corporate social responsibility falls under an ever-evolving long term strategy which aims to make a positive impact. ABK believes that societal impact is simultaneously core to responsible management and a key lever to influence sustainable business outcomes.

Driven by the Bank's mission to consistently provide experiences that simplify and enrich people's lives, ABK endeavors to build strong relationships with the community. Such relationships are established and maintained through strategic activities, awareness campaigns, volunteering, and more. Through responsible banking, including contributions to the community, ABK strives to maintain a good reputation and address societal needs.

For more information about ABK, please follow the Bank's Instagram account @abk_kuwait, visit eahl.com, contact Ahlan Ahli 1 899 899 or visit one of the Bank's branches across Kuwait.

KFH announces winners of Al-Rabeh draw

Kuwait Finance House (KFH) announced the winners of the Al-Rabeh draw with 20 customers winning cash prizes worth KD1,500 each for the 21st and 22nd week of 2023. KFH announced Faisal Al-Faraj as the monthly winner of 1 kilo gram of KFH Gold for the month of May 2023.

The winners of KD 1,500 are: Abdulaziz Al-Fadhli, Najat Boursli, Abdullah Ramadhan, Seeta Al-Enzi, Faisal Al-Khureenij, Fatten Hassan,

Mohammad Al-Azmi, Jufain Al-Hajri, Maha Al-Huraiti, Mohammad Abdellattah, Ahmad Abduljaleel, Fajer Al-Dhafaeri, Fayed Al-Anazi, Othman Al-Anezi, Mahwash Jamil, Ahmad Abduladheem, Faleh Al-Jenaie, Sharifah Al-Sabah, Nourah Al-Ateeqi, Meshal Al-Barrak.

The Al-Rabeh campaign provides prizes and draws that offer customers several chances of winning "weekly, monthly and quarterly". The campaign crowns

536 winners throughout the year. The draw took place under the supervision of a representative from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

The campaign is part of KFH's ongoing efforts to offer exceptional products and services that meet customers' aspirations, enhance the Bank's leadership in the local and global markets, as well as reflect its excellence in offering innovative banking solutions as per

the highest quality standards. The Al-Rabeh account is a salary account available to customers wishing to transfer their salaries and manage their personal accounts. Customers can open Al-Rabeh account in any of KFH branches in Kuwait, or through the Bank's on-line channels. The account can be opened in the Kuwaiti Dinar and is targeted for customers wishing to transfer their salaries and manage their personal accounts.



The campaign visual

Program to help participants to get practical experience

KIB partners with co-operative societies to train new graduates

KUWAIT CITY, June 18: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) announced the launch of the Field Training and Part-Time Work Program for Fresh Graduates, in cooperation with Al Fintass Co-Operative Society and Sabah Al-Ahmad City Co-Operative Society. This initiative comes within the framework of the Bank's strategy that aims to focus on training and qualifying participants to contribute to the work of the sales and customer service sector at KIB's Retail Banking Department.

Commenting on the collaborative training initiative, Head of Central Sales at KIB, Abdulaziz Al-Shammari, said: "This training program is an advanced step and a unique oppor-



Abdulaziz Al-Shammari



Mohammad Alkandari

tunity for young Kuwaiti fresh graduates, as it will enable them to enjoy practical learning, develop skills in the banking field, and gain relevant experience for a smooth transition into the labor market. Through this 60-day program, KIB will also provide a monthly cash reward, performance incentives, and accredited certificates of completion to participating trainees in the program."

To qualify for the training program, participants should be Kuwaiti nationals, fresh graduates from a university or college with a diploma or high school, and residents of Al Fintass area or Sabah Al-Ahmad city. Those wishing to join the program can submit their applications, along with a copy of

their civil ID and curriculum vitae, through the administration of Al Fintass and Sabah Al-Ahmad City Co-Operative Societies between 8 a.m. and 3 p.m. After submitting their applications, the candidates will later undergo one-on-one interviews to determine whether they will join the program.

Acting Assistant Manager - Retail Banking Department, Mohammad Alkandari praised this initiative as it reflects KIB's vision and continuous efforts to empower national talents and to provide educational and training opportunities that enhance their capabilities and contribute to building a thriving society and a promising future for Kuwait. He also noted that the part-

nership with Al Fintass and Sabah Al-Ahmad City Co-Operative Societies is a testament to the Bank's keenness to collaborate and unify efforts toward promoting sustainable development across society.

It serves to note that through this initiative and many other community activities and events, KIB renews its commitment to support young Kuwaiti talents, enhance their job opportunities, and develop their capabilities to match their career aspirations across many sectors, especially the banking sector. To this end, the Bank strives to provide them with the necessary skills to succeed in this vital and dynamic field, facilitating their entry into the labor market and building a successful career.



Zain's blood donation drive

Employees donate blood

Zain marks World Blood Donor Day with its annual blood drive

KUWAIT CITY, June 18: Zain recently held its annual blood drive campaign in celebration of World Blood Donor Day, the globally celebrated initiative held on 14 June of every year. The step came in continuation of the company's strategic partnership with the Central Blood Bank of Kuwait and witnessed wide participation from Zain employees who were keen on contributing by donating to help save lives and add to the nation's strategic blood reserve.

Zain regularly organizes this initiative in line with its Corporate Sustainability and Social Responsibility strategy to support the health sector, where the company actively partners with major health organizations in the country, including the Central Blood Bank and Ministry of Health. The campaign encourages Zain employees to donate blood and save the lives of those who are in most need of blood transfusion, and also aims at raising awareness of the health benefits donors gain by participating.

As always, Zain's blood drive campaign was positively received by employees who were eager to donate, and the entire process was operated by the Central Blood Bank's medical staff. Zain strives to contribute to the community through its numerous

corporate social responsibility initiatives and is pleased with the success this particular activity has achieved.

The company is keen on organizing internal blood drives to encourage employees to donate blood and save lives, further reinforcing the company's productive role in social and health activities. Such campaigns contribute to saving people that are in urgent need of blood, especially people with rare blood types.

World Blood Donor Day is celebrated around the globe on June 14 of every year. The initiative was organized for the first time in 2004 by four core international organizations: the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC); the International Federation of Blood Donor Organizations (IFBDO), and the International Society of Blood Transfusion (ISBT).

The annual campaign aims to raise awareness of the need for blood and blood products, as well as the importance of having a strategic and sustainable blood reserve. The initiative also highlights the vital role donors play by thanking them for their voluntary, life-saving contributions.

KUWAIT CITY, June 18: As part of its keenness to reward its customers, and women in particular, Gulf Bank announced exclusive benefits and packages for Female Kuwaiti Salary Account customers, when transferring their salary to Gulf Bank.

The benefits that women get when transferring their salary to Gulf Bank include:

1. In cooperation with Zain, offers an exclusive offer that includes iPhone 14 pro, free calls, free internet for two years, media subscriptions, and a golden number as a salary transfer gift.
2. In cooperation with many car dealerships, women get an exclusive offer that includes an additional discount when buying a new car.
3. In cooperation with Rove, provides a ride for customers with a car loan, to receive their new car at the dealership.
4. In cooperation with Nazek, provides a special customized office desk gift for new Kuwaiti salary account customers.
5. Women get to enjoy a two-year annual fee waiver for Rose Gold credit cards.
6. Women receive two complimentary local concierge services when issuing a Rose Gold credit card.
7. The bank offers investment opportunities for women with a WISE account, with a minimum investment amount of USD 5,000.

Additionally, new Kuwaiti women employees working in government, semi-government, or the oil sector, benefit from this offer when transferring their salary to Gulf Bank, provided that the minimum salary amount is KD 500.

Furthermore, Gulf Bank's salary account customers enjoy many other benefits, such as: Automatic enrollment in the best and fastest rewards program in Kuwait, discounts at leading car dealerships, a personal loan of up to KD 25,000 with a repayment period of 5 years, housing loans up to KD

70,000 with a repayment period of 15 years, as well as a free credit card and safety deposit box for one year.

Gulf Bank has recently launched the "Get Cash in A Flash" offer, which enables new customers, or those transferring their salaries to the Kuwaiti Salary Account, to receive a cash gift of up to KD 1,200, in addition to a grace period of one year for those obtaining a loan. This means that customers who transfer their salary to Gulf Bank, and apply for a loan, have a period of 12-months

to payback the first installment, following the date of obtaining it.

Gulf Bank's vision is to be the leading Kuwaiti Bank of the Future. The Bank is constantly engaging and empowering its employees as part of an inclusive and diversified workplace in recognition of every employee's role in delivering customer excellence and serving the community at large. With its extensive network of branches and innovative digital services, Gulf Bank is able to give its customers the choice

and their families. On this occasion, Head of corporate Communication department at AUB, Mrs. Faten Al-Tamimi said: "We are pleased with this kind gesture that comes as part of our fruitful cooperation with LoYAC organization, which is known for its notable initiatives in community and charitable work. We see that the "Eid Clothing" initiative to support children of under privileged families and to make them thrilled in these blessed days is part of our vision of community work that originates from solidarity, helping underprivileged groups and alleviate their suffering.

Al-Tamimi underlined that AUB strongly believes in the importance of its role in CSR area and its mission in supporting underprivileged families and providing them with the necessary under privileged d on various occasions, underscoring that Kuwait is a country of goodness, giving and generosity, and is an example of solidarity and sympathy among society members.

Al-Tamimi highlighted that Ahli United Bank's CSR program pays special attention to all kinds of targeted social initiatives, whether in the fields of health, religious, sports or charity.

iPhone 14 pro, additional car discounts offered

Gulf Bank offers exclusive rewards to female Kuwaiti salary account holders



Newly elected executive committee members (from left to right): CA Aditya (vice chairperson), CA Umesh (treasurer), CA Rohit (secretary), CA Sweta (excom member), CA Shailesh (excom member), CA Rabin (chairperson), CA Sriram (immediate past chairperson), CA Anup (excom member), CA Venkata (excom member), CA Mathen (excom member).

Gonsalves elected as the chairperson

KCICAI elects executive committee 2023-24

KUWAIT CITY, June 18: The premier accounting body The Kuwait Chapter of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (KCICAI) is one of the largest accounting body of finance professionals representing over 450+ registered members. The core services of the chapter towards its members include education, training, technical support and advocacy.

The KCICAI held its Annual General assembly meeting on June 3rd at Crowne Plaza.

The meeting was well attended by its members the Kuwait-based Indian Chartered Accountants in large numbers. CA Rabin Gonsalves was nominated and elected as the Chairperson for the term 2023-24.

The elected executive committee will be assisted by the following members who volunteered into the various Sub committees to serve the fraternity: CA Dhruv Sharma, CA Andaleeb Girkar, CA Surin Gandhi, CA Kriti Buchasia, CA Nisha Jalan, CA Manish Chaturvedi

CA Ajay Jain, CA Kirti Mishra, CA Firoz Ali, CA Vipin Sharma

The Chairman (elect) CA Rabin Gonsalves thanked the predecessor CA Sriram Gopalakrishnan for his excellent stewardship and conveyed deep sense of gratitude to his entire Executive Committee for their dedicated services to the chapter and its members in the past one year.

CA Rabin Gonsalves shared his views on Kuwait economy and the role of Indian Chartered Accountants in the emerging challenges of reporting and regulatory requirements of the recent past.

Quality

CA Rabin believes that the economy gradually recovering to its pre-pandemic levels and the Kuwait Chapter of ICAI shall continue aspire to provide high quality continuing professional education programs and will strive to maintain its preminent position in the local business community by upskill-

ing its members to meet the latest economic and regulatory challenges and requirements.

He mentioned that the members of the chapter occupy key positions in auditing and advisory, banking, finance, investments, risk management and accounting sectors in Kuwait and hence play vital role in strengthening the Kuwaiti economy.

He further emphasised that the chapter will also continue to work closely with the Kuwait Accountants and Auditors Association (KAAA), the local body for the regulation of the accountancy and audit profession in Kuwait.

CA Rabin also highlighted that the Chapter facilitates the conduct of the Indian Chartered Accountancy examinations in Kuwait and encourage aspirants to take advantage of the same.

CA Rabin urges all the finance professionals to visit Chapter website www.icai.kw to know more about the KCICAI activities and its social media platforms.

Campaign aims to share Eid joy with needy families

AUB organizes drive for buying Eid Al-Adha clothes for underprivileged kids

KUWAIT CITY, June 18: In line with its annual habit and CSR strategy, which focuses on the importance of achieving social solidarity, Ahli United Bank (AUB), in cooperation with LoYAC, organized a campaign for buying Eid clothes for children under privileged families. This campaign aimed to share the joy of Eid Al-Adha with children of underprivileged families, where a social volunteer was designated for each child, to accompany him/her on a shopping tour to buy Eid clothes like other children without being affected by the limited conditions of their families. The initiative had a positive impact on those children



AUB organizes a campaign for buying Eid Al-Adha clothes for under privileged children in cooperation with LoYAC.

and their families.

On this occasion, Head of corporate Communication department at AUB, Mrs. Faten Al-Tamimi said: "We are pleased with this kind gesture that comes as part of our fruitful cooperation with LoYAC organization, which is known for its notable initiatives in community and charitable work. We see that the "Eid Clothing" initiative to support children of under privileged families and to make them thrilled in these blessed days is part of our vision of community work that originates from solidarity, helping underprivileged groups and alleviate their suffering.

Al-Tamimi underlined that AUB

strongly believes in the importance of its role in CSR area and its mission in supporting underprivileged families and providing them with the necessary under privileged d on various occasions, underscoring that Kuwait is a country of goodness, giving and generosity, and is an example of solidarity and sympathy among society members.

Al-Tamimi highlighted that Ahli United Bank's CSR program pays special attention to all kinds of targeted social initiatives, whether in the fields of health, religious, sports or charity.

Cancer claims nearly 2,000 lives daily in US

Walgreens, Freenome to up diversity in cancer research detection

DEERFIELD, Ill. June 18: Walgreens and Freenome has announced a multi-year relationship to advance clinical studies of Freenome's blood-based tests for the early detection of cancer. Walgreens will combine its national footprint, patient insights, compliant recruitment technology and local infrastructure to engage diverse patient populations in Freenome's multi-cancer research program.

"At Walgreens, our aim is to help every community we serve see clinical research as a viable care option," said Ramita Tandon, chief clinical trials officer, Walgreens. "Through our nationwide presence and trusted pharmacists, we can reach and engage previously underserved patient populations for clinical trials. Supporting the identification of cancers when they are most treatable is one more way we are helping to improve health outcomes of our communities and patients while advancing research in oncology."

Working together with technology provider Curebase, Walgreens will initially recruit patients across diverse populations for Freenome's Sanderson Study, which aims to evaluate blood-based early detection tests for multiple cancers. Using Curebase's platform, Walgreens will deliver targeted outreach to potentially eligible patients and caregivers of all backgrounds via text, email or in-person consultation at the pharmacy. After completing a pre-screen, eligible patients are invited to enroll in the study. Walgreens healthcare providers will then perform a single blood draw at one of the company's clinical trial locations and conduct a telehealth patient follow-up one year after their participation.

"Freenome's goal is to make early cancer screening more convenient for everyone, and our clinical research should reflect that availability and accessibility. With community reach, study conduct capabilities, national presence and real-world data generation resources, Walgreens is a natural partner to help deliver on that goal," said Lance Baldo, chief medical officer, Freenome. "This collaboration is an important step in advancing early cancer detection."

The Sanderson Study will enroll approximately 8,000 participants through its clinical study partner network, which includes Walgreens.

Improving

Clinical trials inclusive of diverse communities are critical to improving health outcomes, especially in cancer research. The collaboration between Walgreens and Freenome aligns with the National Cancer Plan's goals of detecting cancer early and eliminating inequities. Cancer claims nearly 2,000 lives daily in the United States, but proactive screening tests can help find cancer at an early stage even before symptoms appear. Additionally, Black individuals of all ages have higher mortality rates than any other racial or ethnic groups for many cancer types.

Walgreens and Freenome will also work together on building risk-prediction models and population health software. The aim is to help close existing care gaps and identify people who are eligible and stand to benefit from standard-of-care cancer detection testing. Real-world data collected by Walgreens as part of this collaboration will inform the development of new products and services in Freenome's multi-cancer detection research, including the company's blood-based colorectal cancer screening test.

Since launching in June 2022, Walgreens clinical trials business has directly addressed industrywide access, experience and diversity challenges via its three service lines focused on patient recruitment, decentralized clinical trials and real-world evidence. Built on a fully compliant regulatory framework, the central focus of the Walgreens clinical trials experience remains patient choice. Walgreens recently achieved a

milestone of conducting outreach to its 1 millionth patient for potential participation in the ongoing trials it supports.

Walgreens (www.walgreens.com) is included in the US Retail Pharmacy and US Healthcare segments of Walgreens Boots Alliance, Inc. (Nasdaq: WBA), an integrated healthcare, pharmacy and retail leader with a 170-year heritage of caring for communities. WBA's purpose is to create more joyful lives through better health. Operating nearly 9,000 retail locations across America, Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands, Walgreens is proud to be a neighborhood health destination serving nearly 10 million customers each day. Walgreens pharmacists play a critical role in the US healthcare system by providing a wide range of pharmacy and healthcare services, including those that drive equitable access to care for the nation's underserved populations. To best meet the needs of customers and patients, Walgreens offers a true omnichannel experience, with fully integrated physical and digital platforms supported by the latest technology to deliver high-quality products and services in communities nationwide.

Freenome is a biotechnology company with a comprehensive multiomics platform for the early detection of cancer using a standard blood draw. The company combines its deep expertise in molecular biology with advanced computational biology and machine learning to detect disease-associated patterns among billions of circulating cell-free biomarkers. Freenome is headquartered in South San Francisco, California.

Also:

MONTREAL: Sol-Gel Technologies, Ltd. (NASDAQ: SLGL) ("Sol-Gel") a dermatology company and Searchlight Pharma Inc. ("Searchlight"), a private Canadian specialty pharmaceutical company, have announced the signing of exclusive license agreements for TWYNEO and EPSOLAY for the Canadian market. TWYNEO and EPSOLAY are two innovative, large-market, dermatology products that were developed by Sol-Gel. Both products recently launched in the US, and Searchlight is to commercialize in Canada over a fifteen-year term that is renewable for subsequent five-year periods.

● TWYNEO (tretinoin, 0.1%, and benzoyl peroxide, 3%, cream) is used for the treatment of acne vulgaris in adults and pediatric patients 9 years of age and older.

● EPSOLAY (benzoyl peroxide, 5%, cream) is used for the treatment of inflammatory lesions of rosacea in adults.

"We are pleased to partner with a leading and dynamic specialty pharmaceutical company, Searchlight Pharma, to introduce our two innovative dermatology drugs to Canadian patients and to generate non-dilutive capital for our shareholders," stated **Alon Serilevsky**, Ph.D., Chief Executive Officer of Sol-Gel. "With this partnership, we look forward to expanding our strong commercial presence in North America and further strengthening our growing revenue base."

As part of the agreement terms, Sol-Gel will receive up to \$11 million in potential upfront payments and regulatory and sales milestones for both drugs, combined. In addition, Sol-Gel will be entitled to royalty percentages of all Canadian net sales ranging from the low-double-digits to high-teens.

Mark Nawacki, President and Chief Executive Officer of Searchlight Pharma Inc., commented, "TWYNEO and EPSOLAY are valuable additions to our growing portfolio in line with our philosophy to acquire innovative and unique specialty healthcare products in therapeutic areas within our strategic interest. Both products have had encouraging uptake by physicians in the US over the past year, and we look forward to commercializing both products for patients in Canada."

HEBRON, Ky., June 18: ZEISS Vision Care has announced the release of a new product: ZEISS Warm Eye Masks. The individually wrapped and disposable ZEISS Warm Eye Masks use the latest technology to provide consumers with a solution to refresh and soothe dry, tired eyes.

ZEISS Warm Eye Masks use gentle heat to soothe, relax and stimulate the oil glands (meibomian glands) in your eyelids. The warmth helps to unblock the glands which support natural tear fluid production that keeps eyes moist and refreshed.

The masks are comfortable, designed to fit any face with soft ear loops. ZEISS Warm Eye Masks are not only relaxing but they are also convenient and extremely easy to use. They instantly selfheat to a gentle yet effective temperature that lasts 15 minutes to stimulate the eye's own natural moisture level. Because they are individually wrapped, they are hygienic and convenient for use at home, while traveling or on-the-go.

The masks can be used for dry eye relief as well as to relieve discomforts of daily life such as sore or tired eyes, excessive screen use, airborne pollution or air conditioning. With regular use ZEISS Warm Eye Masks bring effective relief from dryness and irritation leaving eyes soothed and refreshed.

Excited

"Finding new solutions to improve the quality of people's lives is core to the ZEISS brand. ZEISS Warm Eye Masks do just that and we are excited to further expand our range of disposable lens cleaning and eyecare solutions," said Jens Boy, president of ZEISS Vision Care North America. ZEISS Warm Eye Masks are now available in North America.

ZEISS is an internationally leading technology enterprise operating in the fields of optics and optoelectronics. In the previous fiscal year, the ZEISS Group generated annual revenue total-



The individually wrapped and disposable ZEISS Warm Eye Masks use the latest technology to provide consumers with a solution to refresh and soothe dry, tired eyes.

ing 8.8 billion euros in its four segments Semiconductor Manufacturing Technology, Industrial Quality & Research, Medical Technology and Consumer Markets (status: 30 September 2022).

For its customers, ZEISS develops, produces and distributes highly innovative solutions for industrial metrology and quality assurance, microscopy solutions for the life sciences and materials research, and medical technology solutions for diagnostics and treatment in ophthalmology and microsurgery. The name ZEISS is also synonymous with the world's leading lithography optics, which are used by the chip industry to manufacture semiconductor components. There is global demand for trendsetting ZEISS brand products such as eyeglass lenses, camera lenses and binoculars.

With a portfolio aligned with future growth areas like digitalization, healthcare and Smart Production and a strong brand, ZEISS is shaping the future of technology and constantly advancing the world of optics and related fields

with its solutions. The company's significant, sustainable investments in research and development lay the foundation for the success and continued expansion of ZEISS' technology and market leadership. ZEISS invests 13 percent of its revenue in research and development – this high level of expenditure has a long tradition at ZEISS and is also an investment in the future.

With over 38,000 employees, ZEISS is active globally in almost 50 countries with around 30 production sites, 60 sales and service companies and 27 research and development facilities (status: 30 September 2022). Founded in 1846 in Jena, the company is headquartered in Oberkochen, Germany. The Carl Zeiss Foundation, one of the largest foundations in Germany committed to the promotion of science, is the sole owner of the holding company, Carl Zeiss AG.

Also:

HOUSTON: At ASMS 2023, **PreOmics GmbH** has announced the launch of its new **ENRICH-iST™** kits,

which enable biologically unbiased enrichment of lower abundant plasma and serum proteins onto non-functionalized paramagnetic particles, enhancing typical depths of plasma proteomics analysis by 50% to more than 100%, compared to neat plasma or serum proteomics without depletion or enrichment. The novel ENRICH-iST workflow enables fast and robust processing of up to 96 plasma samples in parallel for reproducible large-cohort translational and clinical research and validation. The affordable ENRICH-iST routine enrichment workflow nicely complements existing ultra-deep plasma proteomics discovery research workflows that either use automated bead depletion or nanoparticle array enrichment.

The ENRICH-iST technology offers a simple, fast (5h total) and cost-effective solution for proteomic sample processing of plasma or serum from various species, including human, rodents, NHPs, dogs and pigs. Requiring only 20 µL of starting material, it consistently delivers reproducible, enhanced results for LC-MS analysis, e.g., by DIA-PASEF timsTOF 4D Proteomics mass spectrometry. Utilizing non-functionalized paramagnetic microbeads, the technology enables biologically unbiased enrichment of lower abundant proteins, and supports liquid handling automation platforms, such as Tecan FLUENT systems.

Dr. **Andreas-David Brunner**, Drug Discovery Sciences, **Boehringer Ingelheim Pharma GmbH & Co. KG**, states: "We routinely work with biofluid cohorts collected from pre-clinical species. The novel ENRICH technology from PreOmics allowed us to achieve reliable and in-depth proteomic data without laborious method development. The new kit worked out of the box; the workflow is intuitive and can be completely automated. This solution allows us to standardize our processes completely, and significantly improves our throughput."

EMA approval sought for fruquintinib

Takeda drug holds hope for previously treated CRC

OSAKA, Japan, June 18: Takeda (TSE:4502/NYSE:TAK) and Hutchmed (China) Limited (Nasdaq:AIM: HCM, HKEX: 13) (HUTCHMED) has announced that the European Medicines Agency (EMA) has validated and accepted for regulatory review the marketing authorization application (MAA) for fruquintinib, a highly selective and potent inhibitor of vascular endothelial growth factor receptors (VEGFR) -1, -2 and -3 for the treatment of adult patients with previously treated metastatic colorectal cancer (CRC). If approved, fruquintinib will be the first and only highly selective inhibitor of all three VEGF receptors approved in the European Union (EU) for previously treated metastatic CRC.

"European patients with metastatic colorectal cancer have not benefited from a treatment advancement in over a decade," said Awmy Farajallah, M.D., head of Global Medical Affairs Oncology at Takeda. "We are thrilled to have submitted the marketing authorization application to the EMA,

bringing us one step closer to potentially offering this innovative therapy to patients with advanced disease. We believe fruquintinib has the potential to address the longstanding unmet need for patients with previously treated metastatic colorectal cancer regardless of their biomarker status, and we look forward to working with the regulators throughout the process."

The MAA for fruquintinib includes results from the Phase 3 FRESCO-2 trial along with data from the Phase 3 FRESCO trial conducted in China. FRESCO-2 is a global Phase 3 multi-regional clinical trial (MRCT) conducted in the US, Europe, Japan and Australia investigating fruquintinib plus best supportive care (BSC) vs placebo plus BSC in patients with previously treated metastatic CRC. The FRESCO-2 trial met its primary and key secondary endpoints, showing a significant and clinically meaningful improvement in overall survival (OS) and progression-free survival (PFS), respectively. Fruquintinib has been generally well tolerated in patients to date.

"Based on fruquintinib's clinical profile to date, we are optimistic about its potential as a choice for patients and physicians in the EU who find treatment options to be limited for previously treated metastatic colorectal cancer," said Dr. Michael Shi, Head of R&D and Chief Medical Officer, HUTCHMED. "We believe the EMA validation of the marketing authorization application for fruquintinib represents an exciting initial step toward advancing treatment for patients in Europe and look forward to supporting Takeda as it pursues this goal."

Granted

The validation follows the acceptance by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) of a new drug application (NDA), announced on May 25, 2023, which was granted Priority Review and assigned a Prescription Drug User Fee Act (PDUFA) goal date of November 30, 2023. Submission of an NDA to the Japan Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices Agency (PMDA) is also planned in

2023. Fruquintinib is currently approved in China under the brand name ELUNATE®. Approval in China was based on the results of the FRESCO study, a Phase 3 pivotal registration trial of fruquintinib in 416 patients with metastatic CRC in China, published in The Journal of the American Medical Association, JAMA, in June 2018 (NCT02314819).³ In March 2023, HUTCHMED and Takeda closed an exclusive licensing agreement to further the global development, commercialization and manufacture of fruquintinib outside of China.

Fruquintinib is a highly selective and potent oral inhibitor of VEGFR -1, -2 and -3. VEGFR inhibitors play a pivotal role in blocking tumor angiogenesis. Fruquintinib was designed to improve kinase selectivity with the intention of minimizing off-target toxicities, improving tolerability and providing more consistent target coverage. Fruquintinib has been generally well tolerated in patients to date and is being investigated in combinations with other anti-cancer therapies.

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Grammy Awards: Only 'human creators' eligible to win

LOS ANGELES, June 18, (AP) — The Recording Academy are making several changes to the Grammy Awards, including a rule that stipulates "only human creators" can win the music industry's highest honor in a decision aimed at the use of artificial intelligence in popular music.

"A work that contains no human authorship is not eligible in any category," they said, under new "Artificial Intelligence (AI) Protocols" released Friday.

The rule was set following the semiannual academy's board of trustees meeting last month, where it was determined that work that features elements of AI are eligible, as long as a human creator is responsible for a "meaningful" contribution to the music and/or lyrics.

"The human authorship component of the work submitted must be meaningful," the new requirements read in part.

The news arrives shortly after Paul McCartney announced on Tuesday that a forthcoming "last Beatles record" had been composed using artificial intelligence by extracting John Lennon's voice from an old demo. At the time, he described AI as "kind of scary but exciting," adding: "We will just have to see where that leads."

In addition to the AI rule, the Recording Academy announced that there have been swift changes made to other categories: now, to win a nomination for the album of the year category, a music creator has to account for at least 20% of the work. That includes all credited artists, featured artists, songwriters, producers, engineers, mixers and mastering engineers, and differs from a decision made in 2021, which allowed anyone who worked on the album to receive a nomination.

The number of those eligible in the "Big Four" categories - best new artists as well as album, song, and record of the year - has been decreased from 10 to eight nominees.

Previously, to be nominated for the "best music film" category, 50% of the documentary footage had to be performance based. The Recording Academy has lifted that requirement.

The change better reflects the evolution of the music doc format, often a collection of verité and archival footage, like Apple TV's "Billie Eilish: The World's a Little Blurry". Biopics and dramatic feature films are still ineligible.

Create

Also eligible: "Music-focused and individual music videos that together create a visual album (if videos are packaged and entered together as one cohesive film)," evidence of a trend spearheaded by Beyoncé's 2016 "Lemonade" film, and explored across genres, like in Halsey's 2021 "If I Can't Have Love, I Want Power."

The Recording Academy also announced that the best improvised jazz solo award has been renamed best jazz performance, and best regional Mexican music album (including Tejano) has been renamed best música Mexicana album (including Tejano). To qualify in the latter category, 50% of the lyrics must be sung in Spanish, or the majority of the musical content must reflect a traditional style of Mexican music, like banda, norteño, corridos, gruperos, mariachi, rancheros, sierrero, jaracho, huasteco and huapango.

Those changes follow the addition of three new categories, an-

nounced on Tuesday: best pop dance recording, best African music performance, and best alternative jazz album.

Also:

NEW YORK: Performing in a fairy tale musical with songs by the Princess of Pop can be both magical and daunting. That's the way **Justin Guarini** and **Briga Heelan**, who star in "Once Upon a One More Time," see their roles in the jukebox musical that features songs by **Britney Spears**.

The musical debuted at the Shakespeare Theatre Company in **Washington, D.C.**, in 2021 and now it's on Broadway with Heelan and Guarini reprising their roles as Cinderella and Prince Charming.

On a recent two-show day, fans of all ages were wearing Britney-themed attire waiting to be seated and both actors are well aware that Spears' dedicated fan base has high expectations.

Guarini, the runner-up to **Kelly Clarkson** on the first season of "American Idol," said Spears' music reminds him of the "iconic moments of growing up." So honoring the Princess of Pop was "a huge honor" for him, the chance to share "in the joy and so much of the fun that she has created for millions of people across the world."

As a veteran of the Broadway stage with seven shows under his belt, Guarini still finds the line between performer and fan a bit more challenging on this one. And so does his co-star.

Heelan, who starred in the sitcom, "Great News" is making her Broadway debut. A self-proclaimed hard-core Britney fan, she says her mission for each performance is to "do justice to her spirit."

Music

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Features

ARABIC TIMES

MONDAY, JUNE 19, 2023



This image released by Disney/Pixar Studios shows Ember, voiced by Leah Lewis, in a scene from the animated film 'Elemental.' (AP)

Film

Rare kids' movie rekindles some of old Pixar magic

'Elemental' won't set the world on fire

By Jake Coyle

Pixar's "Elemental" conjures a diverse metropolis where the elements - fire, water, earth and air - live like ethnicities mostly ghettoized from one another. For fire and water, especially, mingling can be combustible. A bad splash could consume fire; a strong flame could evaporate water. This is the rare kids' movie where subway rides are actually more fraught with danger than in the real world.

"Elemental" is the 27th Pixar feature and the second from longtime studio veteran Peter Sohn ("The Good Dinosaur"). But in many ways, it feels like a spiritual sequel to the Disney Animation release "Zootopia," a likewise gleaming urban tower of anthropomorphized racial metaphors with occasional interactions with municipal bureaucracy.

In "Elemental," Ember Lumen (voiced by Leah Lewis) is the daughter of immigrants from Fireland: Ernie (Ronnie Del Carmen) and Cinder (Shila Omni), both of whom were handed English names while passing through an Ellis Island-like customs entry.

Like countless real-life immigrants before them, Ernie and Cinder have scraped together a thriving life and business, a bodega of literally hot foods that Ember is expected to inherit. Her temper is a problem. Ember, a red-haired flame capable of going "full purple," can resemble Lewis Black's Anger of "Inside Out." But her more pressing issue is a basement leak out of which flows Wade Ripple (Mamoudou Athie), a water person and building inspector who immediately spots a few dozen code violations that would shut the place down.

"Elemental" may not be anywhere near top-tier Pixar, but, with water and fire hazards everywhere, it's certainly an insurance man's dream.

So where does it slide into the Pixar canon? Probably in the lower half. But "Elemental" - sincere and clever, with a splash of dazzle - comes closer to rekindling some of the old Pixar magic than some

recent entries.

Yet the marriage of elemental high concept with a classical immigrant tale never quite achieves alchemy. Aside from a beautiful elevated subway that splashes water below whenever a train glides through, Element City doesn't come across a fully fleshed-out world. Despite basing the movie in the building blocks of life, there's little feel for the natural world.

Opening on the heels of raging wildfires, "Elemental" manages to be a movie about fire and water without even a passing reference to today's climate realities. Missed opportunities abound. Earth and air are relegated to bit players. Not a soul sings "The Eternal Flame." Earth Wind and Fire go cameo-less.

But if the comic potential of "Elemental" goes untapped, its central story is more convincing and tenderly drawn.

Sacrifice

Ember, who travels the city with a stylish cloak to keep from igniting things in her path, is one of Pixar's strongest protagonists. The sacrifice and burden of being a first-generation immigrant daughter is movingly rendered in her.

"Elemental's" strongest scenes are with Ember and her father as they navigate a familiar crossroads. As responsible as Ember feels to her family, she's pulled in another direction. Her real talent is glass-making, which she can exquisitely do in a moment, with a few quick puffs. She'd be a runaway champ on "Blown Away."

Ember, I think, would have been enough to build a movie around. But that's not "Elemental," my dear. Instead, Sohn's film, scripted by John Hoberg, Kat Likkel and Brenda Hsueh, is too much given over to a "West Side Story"-esque romance between her and Wade as they rush around an Element City that, like "Chinatown," has a water problem.

As they hurry to plug a mysterious leak, Wade is soon carrying a torch for Ember. The puns fly.

"You're so hot," he says. "Excuse me?" she replies. "No," he stutters. "Like smoking."

It's a seemingly impossible love story; they fear even touching each other. And they come from much different worlds. Wade, who sort of resembles a watery Colin Jost, lives with his family in a doorman building. But as a match for Ember, he's a bit of a drip. He gushes tears at the mere mention of butterflies and speaks wide-eyed about "embracing the light." "Elemental" begins to push against a here-to-unknown threshold: There may be only so far you can take a romance when your leading man is a translucent blob named Wade.

An extra word, though, on the short that precedes "Elemental." "Carl's Date" picks back up with Carl Fredricksen and the squirrel-chasing Doug. Here, Carl nervously prepares for his first date since the death of his beloved Ellie. Doug's advice: "Bring a toy." It's both a fitting companion to "Elemental" (the boy from "Up," Russell, was loosely inspired by Sohn) and poignant swan song for Ed Asner, who recorded his dialogue prior to his death in 2021.

"Elemental," a Walt Disney Co. release, is rated PG by the Motion Picture Association for Rated PG for some peril, thematic elements and brief language. Running time: 103 minutes. Two and a half stars out of four.

Also:

LOS ANGELES: On Disney+, a new original documentary about the late Stan Lee premiered Friday. "Stan Lee," directed by **David Gelb**, promises to explore Lee's life and cultural impact. Lee, who died in 2018 at 95, co-created an army of comic book characters including Spider-Man, the X-Men, Iron Man, the Incredible Hulk, the Fantastic Four, Ant-Man and many more who have in the past 15 years become household names thanks to the popularity of Marvel films, many of which feature fun Stan Lee cameos. (AP)

WARSAW, Poland: An exhibition by a provocative Chinese artist that criticizes the country's human rights record opened at a Polish state-run museum on Friday despite pressure from the Chinese Embassy to cancel it.

The director of the Center for Contemporary Art in the capital, Warsaw, said the No. 2 diplomat at the Chinese Embassy in Warsaw visited his museum demanding the cancellation of the exhibition by the artist, who goes by the name **Badiucao**.

"It wasn't a request but a firm demand," said museum director **Piotr Bernatowicz**, describing the Chinese government's behavior as unacceptable. He said the Chinese official warned that having the exhibition could harm Polish-Chinese ties. A Chinese representative also sent a letter of protest to Poland's Culture Ministry, he said.



Jagger



Hamrick

Badiucao, who has lived in exile in **Australia** for many years, said the Chinese government accused him of hurting the feelings of Chinese patriots. He insisted his works are in no way against the Chinese people or nation, merely against the government.

The exhibition is titled "Tell China's Story Well." Its promo-

tional image shows President **Xi Jinping** eating human flesh. It also takes on other sensitive issues.

Among them are the **Tiananmen Square** massacre of 1989, **Hong Kong** pro-democracy demonstrations quelled by China and what the museum is calling "the disturbing relationship between China and **Russia** in light of the

war in **Ukraine**."

In a performance for reporters ahead of the opening, **Badiucao** threw eggs filled with paint at a portrait of **Mao Zedong** in tribute to protesters who were arrested in the Tiananmen Square protests who did the same. He described his performance as a continuation of their struggle. (AP)

People & Places

MILAN
a guy thing

Neil Barret



Federico Cina



Emporio Armani



Emporio Armani



Dolce & Gabbana



Neil Barret

Models wear creations as part of the Dolce & Gabbana, Emporio Armani, Federico Cina and Neil Barret men's Spring Summer 2024 collections presented in Milan, Italy, Saturday, June 17. (AP)

MSGM offers adventure

Timeless menswear

MILAN, June 18, (AP) — Menswear is looking for post-pandemic footing during Milan Fashion Week, landing somewhere between resort, adventurer and tailoring.

Dolce & Gabbana offered an interpretation of quiet luxury, reinventing masculine silhouettes with feminine tailoring tricks without the brand's usual color and bling. Neil Barret dipped into the archives for crisp, uniform looks that are timeless. MSGM offered adventure with an off-road collection inspired by African travels.

On the tailoring side, Ralph Lauren showed its high-end Purple line in its patrician Milan villa, focusing on made-in-Italy detailing for everyday luxury, including burnished footwear, unconstructed cotton-linen blend jackets, and chunky Fair Isle knitwear.

Margherita Maccapani Missoni chose the menswear shows to unveil her new brand, using her paternal Maccapani family name instead of the more familiar Missoni from mother Angela.

Some highlights from shows Saturday on the second day of mostly menswear previews for Spring-Summer 2024.

Dolce & Gabbana

Designers Domenico Dolce and Stefano Gabbana feminized the menswear silhouettes this season, with tailoring tricks long deployed in their women's line.

The wide-ranging collection of nearly 80 looks was a departure for the designing duo in any season, a play on quiet luxury, a reinvention of timelessness, with the designer's fancy coming through in the silhouettes. There were no prints, no color and no bling. Instead, the focus was on shape and materials, with a neutral color palette of black, white and camel and ivory.

Tops were ruched around the waist, creating a cummerbund effect but reminiscent of the duo's provocative ruched dresses. Tunics featured chest-baring deep-Vs and long, trailing sleeves. A sheer organza top and pants were prettily decorated with floral appliques on the cuffs. Sheer panels gave an ephemeral touch over trousers. Wide satiny trousers were paired with a form fitting mock turtleneck, a look that would equally suit women.

Emporio Armani

The new Emporio Armani collection was a meditation on timelessness, set against the backdrop of a large ginkgo leaf, itself a symbol of endurance.

The ginkgo, which the designer notes has endured for 250 million years, appears throughout the collection as a motif in jacquards, prints and as elegant golden jewelry.

The loose silhouette had hints of Asia and North Africa, in super wide-leg trousers, sleeveless tunic and robe jackets. The color palette was of blacks and creams, often with a sheen, so even black stands out against the nighttime background. The silhouette was loose and elongated, with deep V's in silken tops or long knitwear jackets. Leafy cutouts created a lace-like effect on coats.

MSGM

MSGM, at 13, is growing up.

Creative director and fashion house founder Massimo Giorgetti said backstage that the collection was inspired by a recent trip to Tanzania, specifically the hours just before sunrise, which he likened to the moment "when you realize a desire to grow up, but remain youthful in the head."

Models - including some older men, in a brand-first - emerged through mist into a striated cavern beneath Milan's main railroad tracks, as if from a cave into the African dawn. They were accompanied by rhythmic electronic music.

Style



Emporio Armani



Emporio Armani



Dolce & Gabbana



Dolce & Gabbana

Fashion

ism in London, comes 33 years after his comic novelist father, Kingsley, received the honor from Charles's mother, the late Queen Elizabeth II.

Martin Amis' great literary friend, Ian McEwan, was also made a Companion of Honor, one of the highest honors that can be bestowed by the king, who ascended to the throne last September after the queen died.

McEwan, the author of "Amsterdam" and "Atonement," said the honor came as "a complete surprise" and amounted to "a really good review."

Also joining the order are Vogue's editor-in-chief Anna Wintour and Professor John Bell for his services to medicine and medical research.

Introduced in 1917 by Charles's great-grandfather King George V, the



Amis



Danticat

Variety

NEW YORK: Edwidge Danticat is this year's winner of the PEN/Malamud Award for Excellence in the Short Story, a lifetime achievement honor named for the late writer Bernard Malamud.

Danticat, a Haitian-American author

who writes often about memory and identity, is known for her novel-in-stories "The Dew Breaker" and for such collections as "Krik? Krak!" and "Everything Inside," which in 2020 won the Story Prize for outstanding short fiction.

"Many of my short stories pay homage to the oral tradition I was steeped in as a child in Haiti and as an immigrant in the United States," Danticat, 54, said in a statement this week.

"The short story has also been a unique space for me to experiment, explore, and grow as a storyteller, which makes this award even more gratifying."

Previous winners of the Malamud prize include George Saunders, Jhumpa Lahiri and Yiyun Li. (AP)

LONDON: Martin Amis, one of the most consequential British authors of his generation and who died last

month, has been knighted by King Charles III in his first birthday honors list, which were unveiled late Friday.

Amis, who died of esophageal cancer at the age of 73 at his Florida home, accepted the knighthood for services to literature shortly before he died. His knighthood, according to the honors list, stands from May 18, the day before he died.

The knighthood for the author of "Money," a satire about consumer-

award recognizes people who have made "a major contribution to the arts, science, medicine, or government lasting over a long period of time." There can only be a maximum of 65 recipients at any time. Current members include environmentalist David Attenborough, singer-songwriter Elton John and Canadian author Margaret Atwood.

Other household names to be rewarded include the former Arsenal soccer player turned pundit Ian Wright, who was handed the Order of the British Empire, or OBE, for services to his sport as well as for his charitable activities. Davina McCall, host of many staple reality programs on British television over the past couple of decades, including "Big Brother," becomes a member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire, or MBE.

Richard Moore, chief of the MI6 overseas intelligence agency, has also been knighted, for his "outstanding contribution" to British foreign policy and national security, leading the organization during "an exceptionally challenging period" following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Terry Waite, who was held hostage in Lebanon for nearly five years until late 1991, was also knighted for his services to charity.

The honors don't just reward people in the public eye. More than half, 52%, of the 1,171 recipients are people who performed "outstanding work" in their communities, either in a voluntary or paid capacity, which was a core focus behind this year's list, according to those behind the selection process.

Exactly half of the recipients are women, down slightly from last year's 51.5%. Still, women accounted for at least half of the Birthday Honors list for the third year in a row.

The oldest recipient, 106-year-old Joan Willett, was given a British Empire Medal for her charitable fundraising for the British Heart Foundation, while the youngest, Junior Jay Frood, 18, received the same honor for services to vulnerable children.

"It feels really amazing and good because it shows no matter how young you are you can receive this award," Frood said.

Some 11% of the awards went to people from an ethnic minority background. Though down from last year's equivalent 13.3%, it's still higher than the level during the 2010s. The proportion of recipients who are disabled or have a long-term health condition was 13%, up from 9.3% last year. (AP)

Climate

Wildfire warnings in EU

June temperatures breached key limit

BERLIN, June 18. (AP) — Worldwide temperatures briefly exceeded a key warming threshold earlier this month, a hint of heat and its harms to come, scientists worry.

The mercury has since dipped again, but experts say the short surge marked a new global heat record for June and indicates more extremes ahead as the planet enters an El Niño phase that could last years.

Researchers at the European Union's Copernicus Climate Change Service said Thursday that the start of June saw global surface air temperatures rise 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial levels for the first time. That is the threshold governments said they would try to stay within at a 2015 summit in Paris.

"Just because we've temporarily gone over 1.5 degrees doesn't mean we've breached the Paris Agreement limit," cautioned **Samantha Burgess**, deputy director of the Copernicus program. For that to happen the globe needs to exceed that threshold for a much longer time period, such as a couple of decades instead of a couple of weeks.

Still, the 11 days spent at the 1.5-degree threshold shows how important it is for scientists to keep a close watch on the planet's health, not least because previous spikes above 1.5 have all happened during winter or spring in the northern hemisphere, she said. "It's really critical to monitor the situation, to understand what implications this has for the summer to come."

"As a climate scientist I feel like I am watching a global train wreck in slow motion. It's quite frustrating," said University of Victoria's Andrew Weaver, who wasn't part of the measurements.

That's because a three-year La Niña phase - which tends to dampen the effects of global warming - has given way to the opposite, an El Niño period, which could add another half-degree or more to average temperatures.

"The expectation is that 2024 will be even warmer than 2023 as this El Niño continues to develop," said Burgess.

Extreme

"We know as well the warmer the global climate is, the more likely we are to have extreme events and the more severe those extreme events may be," she said. "So there's a direct correlation between the degree of global warming and the frequency and intensity of extreme events."

Stefan Rahmstorf of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research said the Copernicus data "are a reminder of how close we are to the 1.5 C global warming limit, beyond which there are major risks for humanity in terms of climate instability and ecosystem system losses."

Rob Jackson, a Stanford University climate scientist who like Rahmstorf wasn't involved in collecting the Copernicus data, said its significance is still unclear.

"But sometime in the next few years we will shatter global temperature records," he said. "It's the coming El Niño, yes. But it isn't just El Niño. We've loaded the climate system. No one should be surprised when we set extended global records. 1.5 C is coming fast; it may already be here."

Meanwhile, summer is wildfire season in southern Europe, but this year the continent's north is also at risk, with forest fire warnings in effect from Scotland to the Nordic and Baltic countries.

A lack of rain and rising temperatures have led to dangerously dry conditions in the region, leading to worries of a repeat of the summer of 2018 when major wildfires swept across Sweden in particular.

Small wildfires are already burning in Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Scotland and experts worry it could get much worse unless there's significant rainfall in coming weeks.

Unlike the sun-soaked Mediterranean countries, which have to deal with wildfires every summer, the phenomenon is rare in the countries of northern Europe, where summers are normally cool and wet by comparison.

"These countries are relatively new to drought problems," said Niclas Hjerdt, head of hydrological forecasting at Sweden's weather agency SMHI. "We usually have an excess of water up here in northern Europe and Scandinavia. So there isn't this historic knowledge of how to deal with drought situations that you could find in countries further south in Europe."

SMHI says southern Sweden received very little rain in May and not a single drop so far in June, leaving the soil exceptionally dry. The agency says the risk of wildfires is now "extremely high" in the southern half of the country, including the Stockholm region, and even though there's some rain in the forecast this weekend, it's unlikely enough to have a significant impact, Hjerdt said.

In neighboring Finland, the Finnish Meteorological Institute this week warned of dry terrain and a "high risk" of forest fires in most of the country, with a "very high risk" in southwestern Finland and the Aaland islands in the Baltic Sea. Both Sweden and Finland are mostly covered by forests.

Similar warnings have been issued in Norway, Denmark and the Baltic countries while Scotland has put in place its fourth wildfire warning in three weeks. Campfires are banned or discouraged in affected areas.

Drought

Experts say the drought could be related to the transition of La Niña to El Niño climatic conditions in the Pacific, which shifts weather patterns across the world, and often leads to dry summers in northern Europe.

Hjerdt said it's too early to draw any link to climate change but added that in general, a warming climate is making the Nordic region more vulnerable to forest fires by making summers longer and winters shorter, prolonging the "vegetative" season when most precipitation evaporates or transpires rather than sinking deeper into the ground.

Temperatures are heating up in the region and are expected to hit 30 degrees Celsius (86 Fahrenheit) in coming days in Finland - rare for a country straddling the Arctic Circle.

"The heat wave can stay on the surface for next week as well and spread all the way to Lapland," said the Finnish institute's meteorologist Tuomo Bergman, referring to Finland's northernmost area. No substantial rain was expected in Finland until around Midsummer, June 24, he said, when traditional bonfires will be banned.

Denmark's farming minister, Jacob Jensen, said that "the drought has already had a major impact on our agriculture in the past few weeks, and with the prospect of a summer without rain, we will have to have a clear plan for how we can help agriculture in the best possible way."

The Federation of Swedish Farmers said the drought had already affected grassland crops and could have an impact on cereals.

"If there is no rain soon, future harvests will suffer," the industry group said in a statement. It noted that due to the hot and dry summer of 2018, the industry lost almost the entire grain harvest at a cost of approximately 10 billion Swedish kronor (\$1.2 billion).

Globally, the month of May was a joint-second warmest May on record, according to the European Commission's Copernicus Climate Change Service, with temperatures in Canada and the northern United States particularly warm. Canada saw major wildfires that sent hazardous haze deep into the US.



Burgess



A screen displays a patient's vital signs at a hospital in Baltimore on Nov. 28, 2016. Research published in the New England Journal of Medicine on Friday, June 16, suggests testosterone replacement therapy is safe for men with 'low T' who have cardiovascular disease or are at high risk for it. (AP)



Sports commentator and allergy sufferer, Erin Andrews, plants a female tree as part of the Claritin® DiverSiTree Project, which aims to reduce pollen levels through the planting of pollen-free female trees on Wednesday, June 14, in Dallas. (AP)



L'Heureux

Metz

Discovery

'El Niño caused birds deaths': When hundreds of birds were found dead along Mexico's Pacific coast earlier this year, experts immediately suspected avian flu.

But the government said Thursday that the warming Pacific ocean currents associated with El Niño, not bird flu, were responsible for the mass die-off.

Mexico's Agriculture Department said Thursday that tests on the dead birds revealed they had died of starvation, not flu.

The department said that warming surface water in the Pacific caused by El Niño can drive fish into deeper, cooler water, making it harder for birds to find food.

Most of the dead birds were Sooty Shearwaters, seagulls and pelicans. They died in states ranging from Chiapas, on the border with Guatemala, all the way north and west to Baja California.

"According to autopsies carried out by veterinarians and specialized biologists, it was found that the animals died of starvation," the department said. "The most probable cause of this epidemiological event is the warming of the waters of the Pacific due to the El Niño meteorological effect, which causes fish to seek deeper, colder waters, preventing sea birds from catching food."

El Niño is a natural, temporary and occasional warming of part of the Pacific that shifts weather patterns across the globe.

In May, US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration climate scientist **Michelle L'Heureux** said El Niño had formed this year a month or two earlier than usual, which "gives it room to grow," and there's a 56% chance it will be considered strong and a 25% chance it reaches super-sized levels. (AP)

Meerkats die of poisoning: The sudden deaths of all five meerkats at the Philadelphia Zoo this month were apparently caused by an accidental poisoning linked to a dye that is used to mark the animals, zoo officials said, but an investigation into the deaths remains ongoing.

The meerkats - named Nkosi, Lula, Nya, Kgala, and Ari - came to the zoo as a group of siblings about a decade ago. The animals are gregarious and are known for their playfulness and communal living style.

Zoo officials use dye to mark the animals as a way to differentiate them as individuals, according to **Rachel Metz**, the zoo's vice president of animal well-being. She said the zoo has been using the same dye for more than three decades without incident.

The dye was used on the meerkats June 1, and one of them was found dead about 30 minutes later, officials said. The four others started showing signs of acute illness minutes later, so veterinary staff anesthetized them and pumped their stomachs. But three of the meerkats then died within 36 hours. The last one died Monday night after being

Health

Doctors warn treatment no youth serum

'Low T' treatment safe for men

NEW YORK, June 18. (AP) — Testosterone replacement therapy is safe for men with "low T" who have heart disease or are at high risk for it, a new study suggests.

But doctors warn the popular treatment is no "anti-aging tonic."

The research, published Friday in the New England Journal of Medicine, found that heart attacks, strokes and other major cardiac issues were no more common among those using testosterone gel than those using a placebo.

That implies the gel is also safe for men without cardiovascular problems who have low T, said Dr. Steven Nissen, a cardiologist at the Cleveland Clinic and senior author of the study. But, he added, it doesn't mean the treatment should be used by men without low T - a condition also known as hypogonadism that's measured by levels of the sex hormone in the blood.

"What we've shown here is that for a very specific group of men, testosterone can be given safely," Nissen said. "But it is not to be given as an anti-aging tonic for widespread use in men who are aging."

More than 5,000 men ages 45-80 at 316 trial sites throughout the US were randomly assigned to get the testosterone gel or the placebo, which they rubbed on their skin daily for an average of about 22 months. "Major cardiac events" occurred in 182 patients in the testosterone group and 190 patients in the placebo group.

Cardiovascular

The testosterone group did have a higher incidence of less severe problems, such as atrial fibrillation, acute kidney injury and issues from blood clots in veins.

The large study helps address "a gap of understanding" about how testosterone treatment affects cardiovascular outcomes for men with true low T, said Dr. Alan Baik, a cardiologist at the University of California-San Francisco who was not involved in the research.

But he'd like to see more research, he said, on whether testosterone therapy can actually reduce cardiovascular risk factors in men with low T, who seem more likely to have conditions like high blood pressure and diabetes.

Treating low T has been a big business for many years, largely driven by advertisements for pills, patches, gels and injections. Online sites and clinics across the nation offer the treatment, and many tie low T to common issues such as fatigue and weight gain.

The new study, led by the Cleveland Clinic and funded by a consortium of

Suicides, homicides among young Americans rose early in pandemic

NEW YORK, June 18. (AP) — The homicide rate for older US teenagers rose to its highest point in nearly 25 years during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the suicide rate for adults in their early 20s was the worst in more than 50 years, government researchers said Thursday.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report examined the homicide and suicide rates among 10- to 24-year-olds from 2001 to 2021.

The increase is alarming and "reflects a mental health crisis among young people and a need for a number of policy changes," said Dr. Steven Woolf, a Virginia Commonwealth University researcher who studies U.S. death trends and wasn't involved in the CDC report. Experts cited several possible reasons for the increases, including higher rates of depression, limited availability of mental health services and the number of guns in U.S. homes.

Guns were used in 54% of suicides and 93% of homicides among the age group in 2021, the most recent year for which statistics were available.

"Picture a teenager sitting in their bedroom feeling desperate and making a decision, impulsively, to take their own life," Woolf said. If they have access to a gun, "it's game over."

Suicide and homicide were the second and third leading causes of death for 10- to 24-year-olds, after a category of accidental deaths that includes motor vehicle crashes, falls, drownings and overdoses. Other researchers have grouped the data by the method of death, and concluded that guns are now the biggest killer of U.S. children.

Earlier this year, Woolf and other researchers looking at CDC data noted dramatic increases in child

drug companies, was done in response to a 2015 mandate by the Food and Drug Administration for makers of testosterone products to carefully examine the risk of heart attack or stroke. A previous FDA review had shown that many men got low T treatment even though their testosterone levels hadn't been checked.

Nissen said while low T is a "very

and adolescent death rates overall at the beginning of the pandemic, and found suicide and homicide were important factors.

The report also found: ■ Suicide and homicide death rates remained far higher for older teenagers and young adults than they were for 10- to 14-year-olds.

■ In 2021, there were about 2,900 suicides in youths ages 10 to 19, and 4,200 in 20- to 24-year-olds. About 3,000 homicide deaths were reported in the younger group, and nearly 3,900 in the adults in their early 20s.

■ The homicide death rate jumped from 8.9 deaths per 100,000 teens aged 15 to 19 in 2019 to 12.3 in 2020. It rose to 12.8 deaths per 100,000 in 2021, the highest since 1997, according to CDC data.

■ Homicide deaths became more common than suicide deaths among 15- to 19-year-olds, while suicide was more common in the younger and older age groups.

■ While large increases were seen in homicide rates for young Black and Hispanic people in the U.S., there were not significant increases for their white counterparts, other CDC data shows.

■ Among 20- to 24-year-olds, the homicide death rate jumped 34% from 2019 to 2020 - from 13.4 per 100,000 population to 18 per 100,000. It held stable in 2021, but the suicide rate rose enough in 2021 - to 19.4 per 100,000 - to surpass the homicide rate.

Suicide death rates in children and teens were rising before COVID-19, but they jumped up at the beginning of the pandemic. Dr. Madhukar Trivedi, a psychiatrist at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, said the reasons may be hard to pinpoint, but that isolation during COVID-19 lockdowns could be a factor.

common disorder," aging men also want to feel like they're 18 again and "have the sexual performance they had when they were young," he said.

But the treatment, he added, "should not be used by bodybuilders. It should not be used by athletes. The concerns about the misuse of testosterone are quite high. And I think we have to be very cautious."

under medical supervision for more than a week.

Metz said the zoo is conducting a detailed investigation and noted that necropsy results are pending. (AP)

Sharks, human coexist peacefully: You're gonna need a bigger ... drone.

That's right, "Jaws" fans. Researchers at California State University, Long Beach-based Shark Lab used drones to study juvenile white sharks along the Southern Cali-

fornia coastline and how close they swim to humans in the water.

Turns out, it's pretty close. Almost within the bite radius.

Still, it's safe. There were no reported shark bites in any of the 26 beaches surveyed between January 2019 and March 2021, according to the Shark Lab.

The juvenile white sharks mostly grouped together in two locations - in southern Santa Barbara County and central San Diego County - the researchers discovered through roughly 1,500 drone flights over the two years. Adult white sharks are generally solitary animals.

In those two spots, the juvenile sharks swam near humans on 97% of the days surveyed, the researchers wrote in a paper published Friday. The sharks often swam within 50 yards (45.72 meters) of the wave breaks - closest to surfers and stand-up paddle boarders.

"Most of the time water users didn't even know the sharks were there, but we could easily see them from the air," said Patrick Rex, a Cal State Long Beach graduate student who led the study.

The researchers confirmed that surfers, swimmers and sharks can coexist peacefully but "we never expected to see so many encounters every day with no incidents" of bites, said Chris Lowe, a marine biology professor and the Shark Lab's director. (AP)



Boats lie on the beach of Niendorf at the Baltic Sea, northern Germany, Sunday, June 18. (AP)

SPORTS

NBA's Board of Governors unlikely to approve sale

Jordan's decision to sell the Hornets leaves some team decisions in flux

CHARLOTTE, N.C., June 18, (AP) — The timing of Michael Jordan's decision to sell his majority ownership stake in the Charlotte Hornets has left the organization in flux, with several looming key personnel decisions.

The Hornets have the No. 2 pick in the NBA draft on Thursday night. They also have some difficult decisions to make in free agency in early July, including whether to resign embattled restricted free agent Miles Bridges.

With the NBA's Board of Governors unlikely to approve the team's sale to an ownership group led by Gabe Plotkin and Rick Schnall until at least another month or two, the question becomes who will sign off on general manager Mitch Kupchak's potentially franchise-altering decisions this summer.

Will it be Jordan, a lame duck majority owner? Or will the new ownership have a major input? Jordan will remain on as a minority owner after the sale is approved, so he still has a vested interest in the organization.

Bobby Marks, a front-office insider for ESPN, said the timing of the announcement makes this an unusual situation. "Whether it's Mitch or Michael making the decisions, I

think you have to keep these guys from the new ownership group in the loop," Marks said. "... At the end of the day, they don't technically have a say in anything yet, but I would think they have to be part of the conversation, particularly when it comes to taking on future money."

On the surface, the No. 2 pick wouldn't be a complicated one, with the Hornets likely choosing between G League star

this year, which means money out of their pockets? I would think you would want to get (the new ownership group's) blessing before taking on money like that," Marks said.

ESPN commentator Jeff Van Gundy agrees. "I would suspect there would be conversations about who they want to draft and sign before anything is finalized," Van Gundy said.

Both Marks and Van Gundy believe the toughest decision ahead involves whether to re-sign Bridges.

A former first-round pick out of Michigan State, Bridges had a breakout season in 2021-22. He led the team in scoring and rebounding and appeared on the verge of a huge payday last summer before felony domestic violence charges put his career on hold.

The 25-year-old Bridges wound up pleading no contest to the charges and agreed to three years of probation. He missed all of last season.

The NBA ultimately determined Bridges will serve a 10-game suspension once he returns to the league. The league officially suspended him for 30 games, but determined 20 games of the suspension have been served because Bridges

already missed all 82 games in 2022-23.

"In terms of the new owners you have to wonder, is that what you want your first signing to be?" Marks said.

Added Van Gundy: "There is more to that (decision) than just basketball."

Van Gundy believes the Hornets are in good hands in terms of personnel decisions with Kupchak at the helm. He believes both Jordan and the new owners will rely heavily upon the longtime GM's opinion moving forward during this time of transition.

As a player, Jordan was a six-time NBA Finals MVP with the Chicago Bulls, a 14-time All-Star and a two-time Olympic gold medalist. He's in the conversation as the greatest basketball player of all time.

But he never approached that level of success as an owner. The Hornets were 423-600 in his 13 years as majority owner and never won a playoff series. Charlotte has failed to reach the playoffs seven straight seasons, the longest drought in the NBA.

Still, Van Gundy said he was surprised when reports first surfaced that Jordan was looking to sell the team.

BASKETBALL

Scout Henderson and Alabama's Brandon Miller.

But Marks said the trade rumors swirling around the New Orleans Pelicans potentially being open to moving former No. 1 overall pick Zion Williamson to secure the second or third pick in the draft complicates things for the Hornets.

Essentially, would a trade that has long-lasting implications sit well with new ownership?

"If they have a chance to move out of the two spot, what happens when you have salary involved that stretches past

Vela 'stars' as LAFC top Sporting KC to end skid

Nashville SC extend unbeaten run

KANSAS CITY, Kan., June 18, (AP) — Carlos Vela scored in the final minute of regulation to rally Los Angeles FC to a 2-1 victory over Sporting Kansas City on Saturday night, snapping the club's six-match winless streak in all competitions.

Alan Pulido scored on a first-half penalty kick and Sporting KC (5-9-5) took a 1-0 lead into halftime. Pulido's PK score gave Sporting KC the lead in the 17th minute. Pulido has four goals in his last three matches after scoring just once in his previous 19 appearances.

LAFC (8-3-5) pulled even early in the second half when rookie defender Denil Maldonado took a pass from Mateusz Bogusz in the 48th minute and scored his first career goal.

Vela scored for a fifth time this season, using a pass from Aaron Long in the 90th minute to help the defending champions earn a much-needed victory. The three points pull LAFC into a tie with expansion team St. Louis City for the top spot in the Western Conference, one point in front of the idle Seattle Sounders.

John McCarthy had six saves for LAFC. Kendall McIntosh saved two shots for Sporting KC.

LAFC entered play 0-5-1 in its previous six matches in all competitions. The club had just three losses in its previous 26 matches. LAFC's longest run without a victory came in 2021 when it had a 0-3-5 stretch.

Sporting KC had won four straight at home entering play after a 0-3-1 start.

LAFC lost by shutouts in four straight matches in all competitions coming into play. The club had failed to score in five of its last six matches after being shut out five times in its previous 67 matches in all competitions.

Sporting KC snapped a three-match skid against LAFC with a 1-1 draw earlier this season in LA.

Hany Mukhtar scored three goals, the second one on a second-half penalty kick, and Nashville SC defeated St. Louis City 3-1, upping its unbeaten run to a club-record 10 straight matches.

Mukhtar gave Nashville (10-3-5) the lead early, scoring unassisted in the 11th minute.

Nicholas Gioacchini scored his seventh goal of the season, unassisted in



Portland Timbers midfielder Cristhian Paredes (left), defends against San Jose Earthquakes defender Tommy Thompson (22) during the second half of an MLS soccer match in San Jose, Calif. (AP)

the 41st minute to pull St. Louis City (9-6-2) even at halftime.

Mukhtar gave Nashville the lead for good in the 70th minute, scoring after St. Louis City defender Kyle Hiebert picked up a second yellow card that left the expansion team a man down.

Mukhtar wrapped up the victory and polished off his hat trick when he took passes from Dax McCarty and Alex Muihl in the 75th minute and scored his league-leading 13th goal of the season. Mukhtar, the reigning MVP, entered play in a four-way tie for first place in the race for the Golden Boot, which Mukhtar won last season.

Mukhtar has had a hand in at least one goal in six straight matches at home (8 goals, 4 assists). He has been involved in 51 goals at home since the start of the 2021 season, 14 more than any other player in the league.

Joe Willis finished with one save for Nashville. Roman Bürki saved two shots for St. Louis City.



Portland Timbers midfielder Evander (right), gets the ball next to San Jose Earthquakes midfielder Judson during the first half of an MLS soccer match in San Jose, Calif. (AP)

Nashville has won all four of its home matches against expansion teams

with clean sheets in the first three.

St. Louis City won its first three road matches but has since gone 0-4-1 away from home.

Nashville had a nine-match unbeaten streak in 2021.

Pablo Ruiz scored from midfield in the first half, Danny Muscovski added a second-half goal and Real Salt Lake

SOCCER

held off D.C. United 2-1.

Things went bad for DC United (6-8-5) after defender Steven Birnbaum sent off for a red card in the 26th minute.

Ruiz staked Real Salt Lake (6-7-5) to a 1-0 halftime lead when he took a pass from Andrew Brody at midfield in the 41st minute and drilled a shot over the outstretched arm of Tyler Miller and into the back right corner of the net. It was Ruiz's fourth goal of the season.

Real Salt Lake went up 2-0 early in the second half when Musovski used assists from Andrés Gómez and Jasper Löffelsend in the 51st minute to score his third goal this season.

DC United answered two minutes later with a goal by Chris Durkin. Ruan picked up an assist on Durkin's second netter of the campaign.

Miller totaled three saves for DC United. Zac MacMath stopped one shot for Real Salt Lake.

Real Salt Lake won for just the second time in 14 all-time road matches with DC United.

DC United entered play with a 3-0-2 record in its last five home matches in all competitions. The three victories were by shutouts. United had just two clean sheets in its previous 16 home matches in all competitions.

Real Salt Lake improves to 6-0-2 in its last eight road matches, tying a club record set spanning the 2013-14 seasons.

West Virginia basketball coach resigns

Lou announces retirement

ATLANTA, June 18, (AP) — Lou Williams announced his retirement from the NBA on Sunday, ending a career after winning the league's Sixth Man award three times and scoring more points off the bench than anyone in history.

Williams played for six teams - Philadelphia, Toronto, the Los Angeles Lakers, Houston, the Los Angeles Clippers and Atlanta. He

last played in the 2021-22 season with the Hawks.

Out of 1,123 regular-season games played over 17 seasons, Williams came off the bench in 1,001. He scored 13,396 points off the bench, which is 2,117 more than Jamal Crawford and 2,249 more than Dell Curry.

Williams and Crawford are the only three-time recipients of the Sixth Man award in league history.

Williams was the 45th pick in the 2005 NBA draft. Out of the 60 players taken that year, only Chris Paul scored more points in the NBA than Williams - who went straight to the league out of high school.

He finishes his career with 15,593 points, 131st in NBA history.

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West Virginia basketball coach Bob Huggins has resigned a day after his arrest on suspicion of drunken driving in the latest incident in a Hall of Fame career that imploded quickly.

The 69-year-old Huggins leaves as the third-winningest coach all-time in Division I with 935 career victories, behind only Mike Krzyzewski of Duke (1,202) and Jim Boeheim of Syracuse (998), both of whom are retired. Unlike the others, Huggins had

BASKETBALL

no national titles, taking Cincinnati to the Final Four in 1992 and West Virginia in 2010.

Huggins had 16-year stints each with the Bearcats and Mountaineers. Both ended in the aftermath of arrests for drinking and driving.

Huggins was charged with driving under the influence on Friday night after his SUV had stopped in the middle of traffic in Pittsburgh with a shredded tire and the driver's side door was open at about 8:30 p.m. According to a criminal complaint, a breath test determined Huggins' blood alcohol content was more than twice the legal limit.

Huggins was charged with driving under the influence, released from custody and will appear at a later date for a preliminary hearing, according to a police report.

In a statement to the West Virginia community on Saturday night, Huggins said: "Today, I have submitted a letter to President Gordon Gee and Vice President and Director of Athletics Wren Baker informing them of my resignation and intention to retire as head men's basketball coach at West Virginia University effective immediately."

In a separate statement Saturday night, West Virginia's athletic department said it accepted the resignation "in light of recent events. "We support his decision so that he can focus on his health and family. On behalf of West Virginia University, we share our appreciation for his service to our University, our community and our state."

Courage shut out Pride

Angel City earn comeback win over Wave

WASHINGTON, June 18, (AP) — Paige Nielsen and M.A. Vignola scored to rally Angel City to a 2-1 win against the San Diego Wave in the National Women's Soccer League on Saturday.

The win marked Angel City's first match since former head coach Freya Coombe was fired on Thursday after a rocky start that put the team in 11th place at the midway point of the season. Assistant coach Becki Tweed took over and will serve as the interim head coach until a permanent replacement is selected.

SOCCER

Kristen McNabb opened the scoring for the Wave in the 57th minute, running onto a pass from Alex Morgan at the top of the box and blasting a shot through the legs of defender Ali Riley and into the right corner.

It was San Diego's fifth goal from outside the box, most in the NWSL.

Nielsen tied it in the 70th, bringing down a corner kick at the far post and squeezing her shot into the near-post corner.

In the 89th minute, Angel City (3-6-3) found its game-winning goal. Scarlett Camberos pounced on a poor touch from the Wave and passed to Vignola, who finished from close range. All three goals were scored by defenders.

Angel City became the first team

this season to win a match when trailing in the 65th minute. San Diego, who entered the weekend at the top of the league standings, moved to 6-4-2.

Courage 3, Pride 0

Brazilian Kerolin scored her league-leading eighth goal and North Carolina shut out visiting Orlando.

The Courage put the pressure on early, but Pride goalkeeper Anna Moor-

house made two crucial stops, coming out to poke the ball away from Kerolin on a breakaway in the 7th minute and getting big to stop Tess Boade's shot five minutes later.

Playing in front of the home crowd at WakeMed Soccer Park in Cary, North Carolina, the Courage found their breakthrough in the 32nd minute, as Kerolin placed a back pass from Boade into the right corner.

Boade thought she got a second goal for the Courage in the 63rd, but it was called back for offside.

In the 78th minute, Meredith Speck doubled the lead, taking a touch around her defender before sliding a shot under Moorhouse.

Kerolin forced a Pride (4-7-1) own goal in the 83rd to put the home team up 3-0.

The Courage (6-4-2) now have a league-best six shutouts this season.

Dash 0, Reign 0

The Houston Dash went down a player for 45 minutes in a brutally hot and humid match, but held on at home for a scoreless draw against OL Reign.

With the heat index near 110 degrees at kickoff, both teams had limited chances in a slower first half. Jordyn Huitema's shot on a breakaway went wide for the Reign, while a free kick from María Sánchez was pushed away by goalkeeper Phallon Tullis-Joyce.

Just before halftime, Houston's Natalie Jacobs was given a red card for denying a goal-scoring opportunity when she fouled Tziarra King.

Even with the extra player, the Reign couldn't beat the heat and finished with just eight shots and only one shot on goal. Houston (4-3-5) had the better opportunities in the second half, forcing a goal-line clearance from Ryanne Brown and five saves from Tullis-Joyce.



Spain's Jorge Martin, of the Prima Pramac Racing team, (left), celebrates on the podium after winning the German Grand Prix, (left), as third-placed France's Johann Zarco, also of the Prima Pramac Racing team, celebrates with him, at the Sachsenring racing circuit, in Hohenstein-Ernstthal, Germany. (AP)

Freese 'declines' induction into St Louis Cardinals' Hall of Fame

ST. LOUIS, June 18, (AP) — David Freese has decided to decline his induction into the St. Louis Cardinals' Hall of Fame. The former third baseman was a postseason hero for his hometown team in helping the Cardinals win the 2011 World Series.

He was chosen for the Hall of Fame by fans, garnering the most votes in online balloting for this year's class.

But in a statement Saturday, the Cardinals said Freese recently informed them he wanted to withdraw his candidacy. That leaves José Oquendo and Max Lanier to be enshrined during ceremonies on Aug. 20.

BASEBALL

"This is something that I have given an extreme amount of thought to, humbly, even before the voting process began. I am aware of the impact I had helping the team bring great memories to the city I grew up in, including the 11th championship, but this honor means more to me," Freese said in the statement.

One of baseball's most storied and successful franchises, the Cardinals count the likes of Lou Brock, Bob Gibson, Rogers Hornsby and Stan Musial among members of their robust Hall of Fame.

Freese was the MVP of the 2011 World Series and NL Championship Series. He batted .397 with five home

runs and 21 RBIs in 18 postseason games that year.

With the Cardinals down to their final out in Game 6 of the World Series against Texas, he hit a two-run triple that tied the score in the bottom of the ninth inning. His leadoff homer in the 11th gave them a 10-9 victory that forced Game 7, which St. Louis won 6-2 with the help of Freese's two-run double.

Freese spent his first five major league seasons with the Cardinals, hitting .286 with 44 homers, 237 RBIs and a .783 OPS. He was traded to the Los Angeles Angels, and later played for the Pittsburgh Pirates and Los Angeles Dodgers.

"I look at who I was during my tenure, and that weighs heavily on me. The Cardinals and the entire city have always had my back in every way. I'm forever grateful to be part of such an amazing organization and fan base then, now and in the future," Freese said.

The 40-year-old Freese attended St. Louis Community College and went to high school in the city's suburbs. The Cardinals said he "plans to remain an active member of the team's alumni activities and fan-related events."

"Although we are disappointed that David has declined to be inducted into our Hall of Fame, we respect his decision and look forward to celebrating his great Cardinals career in other ways going forward," Cardinals President Bill DeWitt III said. "He is always welcome at Busch Stadium."

Phillies edge Athletics for 5th straight victory

Royals halt 10-game losing streak

OAKLAND, Calif., June 18, (AP): Kyle Schwarber hit a go-ahead single in the 12th inning and the Philadelphia Phillies beat the Oakland Athletics 3-2 on Saturday for their fifth straight win.

Cristian Pache began the inning on second base and scored on Schwarber's first hit of the day, off Ken Waldichuk (1-5). Bryson Stott hit a tying single in the sixth and go-ahead sacrifice fly in the 11th inning, only for the A's to tie it in the bottom half.

Andrew Vasquez (2-0), Philadelphia's seventh pitcher, struck out the final two A's in the 10th then gave up Carlos Pérez's tying double in the 11th. He earned the victory as the Phillies won their sixth in seven and 12th of their last 14 following a five-game losing streak.

Jeff Hoffman earned his second career save and first since 2020 with Colorado, finishing the 3-hour, 27-minute game.

BASEBALL

Pérez broke up a scoreless game with a home run leading off the fifth inning once the Phillies turned to their bullpen. Pérez connected for his fourth homer on the fourth pitch he saw from Matt Strahm, who manager Rob Thomson called upon after Christopher Sánchez struck out five over four scoreless innings in his second outing.

Lefty Sánchez, recalled from Triple-A Lehigh Valley to start, didn't allow a baserunner until Esteury Ruiz's hit leading off the fourth.

Cubs 3, Orioles 2

In Chicago, Justin Steele pitched five innings of two-run ball in his return from the injured list, and Chicago got its fifth straight win.

Steele allowed five hits, struck out four and walked one in his first start since May 31. The left-hander had been sidelined by a strained forearm.

Chicago managed just four hits against Kyle Gibson (8-4) and two relievers. But Mike Tauchman delivered a tiebreaking sacrifice fly in the fifth, and the Cubs held on.

After Steele (7-2) departed, Julian Merryweather got three outs and Mark Leiter Jr. worked two innings. Adbert Alzolay then closed it out for his fourth save.

Adley Rutschman hit a two-run homer for Baltimore, and Austin Hays had two of the team's seven hits. Gibson struck out seven and walked two in six innings.

Royals 10, Angels 9

In Kansas City, Samad Taylor hit a walk-off single in his MLB debut and Kansas City snapped a 10-game losing streak.

Aroldis Chapman (2-2) earned the win in relief. Chris Deventsi (3-1) took the loss.

Los Angeles wasted a great start by Griffin Canning, who allowed two runs on three hits in six innings. The Angels were up 8-2 in the seventh inning before the Royals came back.

Brandon Drury hit two home runs and drove in three runs and Shohei Ohtani hit his major league-leading 23rd home run to build the lead for Los Angeles.

Kansas City scored three runs in the seventh off Kolton Ingram, who was also making his major league debut. He allowed two hits and two walks in 1/3 inning. The Royals got three more off Jose Soriano in the eighth. Nick Pratto had an RBI single. Bobby Witt Jr. drove in two with a single.

Mike Mayers gave up six runs on seven hits in five-plus innings for Kansas City.

White Sox 4, Mariners 3, 11 innings

In Seattle, Zach Remillard's base hit in the ninth inning scored the tying run, his RBI single with two outs in the 11th gave Chicago the lead, and the White Sox rallied to beat Seattle.

Andrew Benintendi singled off Seattle reliever Taylor Saucedo (2-1) with two outs in the 11th to put runners at the corners, his sixth time on base in the game. Remillard followed with a line drive into right-center that scored Elvis Andrus.

Jesse Scholtens pitched the bottom of the 11th for his first major league save.

Eloy Jiménez homered for the second time in three games, hitting his eighth of the season for Chicago. Luis Robert Jr. had a two-out RBI single in the fifth to pull the White Sox even at 2.

Seattle's J.P. Crawford homered on Lucas Giolito's first pitch and Teoscar Hernández extended his June tear with an RBI single, but the Mariners failed with a chance to win the game in the 10th inning. Pinch-hitter Cal Raleigh struck out and Eugenio Suárez grounded out against Aaron Bummer (2-1) with Julio Rodríguez standing at third as the potential winning run.

Seattle didn't have a hit after Hernández's single in the fifth.

Padres, 2, Rays 0

In San Diego, Blake Snell struck out 12 over six dominant innings against his former team to lead San Diego past Tampa Bay.

Juan Soto hit a sacrifice fly in the fifth and Manny Machado drove in a run with an infield single off starter Zach Eflin (8-3) after the Padres opened the inning with three consecutive bunts.

Snell (3-6) also fanned 12 in his previous start, a no-decision against Colorado. The left-hander gave up just two hits to the major league-leading

MLB Results/Standings

WASHINGTON, June 18, (AP): Results and standings from the MLB games on Saturday.

Minnesota	2	Detroit	0
Chicago Cubs	3	Baltimore	2
Texas	4	Toronto	2
Cincinnati	10	Houston	3
Kansas City	10	LA Angels	9
Philadelphia	3	Oakland	12 inn
Chicago W. Sox	4	Seattle	11 inn
San Diego	2	Tampa Bay	0
Arizona	6	Cleveland	3
Milwaukee	5	Pittsburgh	0
Atlanta	10	Colorado	2
Miami	5	Washington	2
St. Louis	5	NY Mets	3
San Francisco	15	LA Dodgers	0

American League				
East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Tampa Bay	51	23	.689	—
Baltimore	43	27	.614	6
New York	39	31	.557	10
Toronto	39	33	.542	11
Boston	35	35	.500	14

Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Minnesota	36	35	.507	—
Cleveland	32	38	.457	3-1/2
Chicago	31	41	.431	5-1/2
Detroit	29	40	.420	6
Kansas City	19	51	.271	16-1/2

West Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Texas	43	27	.614	—
Houston	39	32	.549	4-1/2
Los Angeles	40	33	.548	4-1/2
Seattle	34	35	.493	8-1/2
Oakland	19	54	.260	25-1/2

National League				
East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Atlanta	45	26	.634	—
Miami	40	31	.563	5
Philadelphia	37	34	.521	8
New York	33	37	.471	11-1/2
Washington	27	42	.391	17

Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Milwaukee	36	34	.514	—
Cincinnati	36	35	.507	-1/2
Pittsburgh	34	35	.493	1-1/2
Chicago	33	37	.471	3
St. Louis	28	43	.394	8-1/2

West Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Arizona	43	28	.606	—
Los Angeles	39	32	.549	4
San Francisco	38	32	.543	4-1/2
San Diego	34	36	.486	8-1/2
Colorado	29	44	.397	15



Kansas City Royals' Samad Taylor celebrates after hitting a single to drive in the winning run during the ninth inning of a baseball game against the Los Angeles Angels in Kansas City, Mo. (AP)

Rays. He walked three and worked out of jams with multiple runners on base in the fourth and fifth.

Steven Wilson and Nick Martinez each pitched a perfect inning before Josh Hader finished the three-hitter for his 17th save. Tampa Bay struck out 17 times.

Cardinals 5, Mets 3

In New York, Adam Wainwright pitched into the seventh inning for his 198th win, Paul Goldschmidt hit a two-run homer and St. Louis snapped a six-game losing streak.

Jordan Walker also went deep for the Cardinals (28-43), who began the day with the worst record in the National League. Brendan Donovan and pinch-hitter Dylan Carlson each had an RBI single as St. Louis won for only the fourth time in 17 games.

On a windy afternoon in Queens, Brandon Nimmo launched Wainwright's first pitch for his ninth career leadoff homer and second in five days. Luis Guillorme had a two-run shot for the fourth-place Mets, who have dropped 10 of 13.

The 41-year-old Wainwright (3-1) tossed a season-high 6 1/3 innings. He needs two wins to become the fifth active pitcher with 200. Wainwright gave up three runs and struck out three in his longest outing since last Aug. 28.

Jordan Hicks, the Cardinals' third reliever, struck out three in the ninth for his first save since June 13, 2019.

Kodai Senga (6-4) took the loss after giving up four runs and striking out eight in 6 2/3 innings.

Twins 2, Tigers 0

In Minneapolis, Minnesota's bullpen teamed up for a three-inning, and Alex Kirilloff delivered an RBI single in a breakthrough fifth inning to lead the Twins.

José De León started with two perfect innings for the Twins, who opted for an all-reliever game to give their rotation a break during this stretch of 16 games without a day off. Brent Headrick (1-0) claimed his first major league victory with 2 1/3 innings. Jhoan Duran, the sixth pitcher to appear, earned his ninth save in 10 attempts with a crisp ninth aided by a double-play grounder by pinch-hitter Eric Haase.

The Twins had only three hits themselves, thanks to Detroit starter Joey Wentz (1-7). The left-hander had a career-high nine strikeouts over six innings to match his season-high turn.

Rangers 4, Blue Jays 2

In Arlington, Josh Jung and Jonah Heim hit back-to-back homers, Adolis García had his MLB-leading 10th outfield assist among three defensive



San Francisco Giants' LaMonte Wade Jr., (second from left), hits a three-run home run as Los Angeles Dodgers starting pitcher Bobby Miller, (left), and catcher Austin Barnes, (right), watch along with home plate umpire Chris Segal during the fifth inning of a baseball game in Los Angeles. (AP)

gems and Texas beat Toronto.

Corey Seager also homered, his 10th on a solo shot in the seventh, as the AL West-leading Rangers won for just the third time in 10 games.

Jung's two-run homer put the Rangers in front in the second inning after García walked, and Heim made it 3-1 seven pitches later off Trevor Richards (0-1) in a bullpen game for Toronto.

García threw out Vladimir Guerrero Jr. at the plate to end the first after Guerrero's RBI single put the Blue Jays ahead.

Dane Dunning (6-1) allowed six hits - four in the first inning - and two runs, including Daulton Varsho's 12th home run, in six innings. Will Smith pitched around two singles in the ninth for his 12th save.

Marlins 5, Nationals 2

In Washington, Braxton Garrett pitched six strong innings, Bryan De La Cruz had a two-run single and Miami won its third straight.

Joey Wendle had two hits for the Marlins. Luis Arraez, who went 5 for 5 with a homer on Friday night, was 1 for 4 with an intentional walk, leaving his major league-leading batting average at .388.

Jonathan Davis walked leading off the Miami seventh against Chad Kuhl (0-4), and Nick Fortes singled to put runners at the corners. With one out, Washington walked Arraez to load the bases and Kuhl then walked Jorge Soler to force in the go-ahead run. Fortes scored on a wild pitch to make it 3-1.

De La Cruz added a two-run single with the bases loaded in the ninth.

Garrett (3-2) allowed one run and four hits. He walked one and struck out eight. A.J. Puk got three outs for his ninth save.

Diamondbacks 6, Guardians 3

In Phoenix, Jake McCarthy hit a go-ahead homer leading off the eighth, Corbin Carroll added a two-run shot three batters later and Arizona launched three long balls in the inning to beat Cleveland.

McCarthy drove a slider over the right-center wall for a 3-2 lead against starter Shane Bieber (5-4), who also gave up the no-doubter by Carroll. It was a frustrating end to the night for the Cleveland ace, who was excellent until his final few batters.

Christian Walker had a two-run homer to tie it in the fourth, and Lourdes Gurriel Jr. capped the eighth with a solo homer off reliever Nick Sandlin.

Miguel Castro (4-2) got the last out of the eighth for the win. Scott McGough got the last two outs, including a sacrifice fly by José Ramírez, to pick up his third save.

Steven Kwan and Amed Rosario, the top two batters in Cleveland's lineup, both had four hits.

Brewers 5, Pirates 0

In Milwaukee, Wade Miley pitched five scoreless innings in his return from the injured list and Joey Wiemer homered for the second straight game to lead Milwaukee.

The victory pushed the Brewers 1 1/2 games ahead of Pittsburgh atop the NL Central standings.

Miley (4-2) had been one of Milwaukee's most reliable starting pitchers before spending a month on the injured list due to a lat strain. The left-hander was 3-2 with a 3.67 ERA in eight starts before going on the IL on May 16. He returned to form Saturday, limiting the Pirates to two hits and two walks while striking out four.

Wiemer's 10th home run of the season, a two-run shot off Pirates right-hander Mitch Keller (8-3), staked Miley and the Brewers to a 2-0 lead in the third inning. The Brewers moved out to a 4-0 lead in the fifth on a two-out, two-run double by Rowdy Tellez.

The Brewers added a run in the

Canucks buy out Ekman-Larsson's contract

Golden Knights and fans celebrate 1st NHL champ'ship with parade and rally

LAS VEGAS, June 18, (AP): Thousands of Vegas Golden Knights fans lined the Las Vegas Strip on Saturday for a Stanley Cup victory parade and a rally in front of the team's home arena to mark the city's first NHL championship.

For the team that played its first game as an expansion franchise in October 2017 and for tourists in hotel rooms with windows overlooking the parade route in 2023, the event bore echoes of the deadliest mass shooting in modern U.S. history five years ago. Guests in high-rises with views of the strip were awakened by security guards asking to check around windows for guns or other weapons.

The motorcade route proceeded from an area near Flamingo Road about 1 mile (1.6 kilometers) to Tropicana Avenue before a fan rally at Toshiba Plaza and the Park District in front of T-Mobile Arena.

Las Vegas police said they prepared for upwards of 100,000 people to cram street-level viewing areas along Las Vegas Boulevard for the celebration that planners compared with annual New Year's Eve fireworks shows that in past years drew estimates of 400,000 people.

At one point people separated barricades and climbed fences but the crowd otherwise remained orderly.

Above the arena stage where the hockey players gathered with the trophy, a banner displayed the names of victims of the October 2017 mass shooting in Las Vegas that killed 58 people and injured more than 850.

A lone gunman rained bullets from 32nd floor windows of the Mandalay Bay hotel into a crowd of 20,000 people at an outdoor country music festival across the street. Fifty-eight people died that night and two died later of their injuries. Authorities said more than 850 people were injured. The gunman killed himself before police reached him. His motive for the attack was never firmly established.

People in the crowd Saturday recalled the shooting and the role the Golden Knights played in helping to rebuild the spirit of the community.

Players who dubbed themselves the Golden Misfits after being drafted from other NHL teams embraced survivors, first responders and volunteers and the team has over the years become a key part of "Vegas Strong" events aimed at healing community trauma.

That first year, team owner Bill Foley famously predicted the Golden Knights would make the playoffs in three years and win the Stanley Cup in six years. The franchise surprised

many by making the playoffs the first year and advancing to the championship before losing to the Washington Capitals in five games.

This year, the Golden Knights cruised through the playoffs, never facing an elimination game, and routed the Florida Panthers 9-3 in Game 5 on Tuesday. Team captain Mark Stone scored a three-goal "hat trick." Jonathan Marchessault received the Conn Smythe Trophy as playoff MVP.

Marchessault is one of the six original members of the Golden Knights expansion team. He and the others - Reilly Smith, William Karlsson, Shea Theodore, Brayden McNabb and William Carrier - were among the first to hold the Stanley Cup during post-game celebrations.

ICE HOCKEY

All week, players have been spotted celebrating at some of the same glittery resorts the procession passed. The casinos have familiar names: Caesars Palace, Flamingo, Bellagio, Horseshoe, Paris Las Vegas, Cosmopolitan, Planet Hollywood, New York-New York, Aria, MGM Grand.

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The Vancouver Canucks have bought out Oliver Ekman-Larsson's contract, making the 31-year-old Swedish defenseman an unrestricted free agent July 1.

Vancouver said it agreed to pay Ekman-Larsson \$19.33 million, spread over the next eight years to reduce its salary-cap hit. Ekman-Larsson had four years and \$29 million remaining on the eight-year, \$66 million contract he signed with Arizona in 2018.

"The business of hockey is very complex and tough decisions have to be made if you want to remain competitive," Canucks general manager Patrik Allvin said. "Buying out Oliver gives us a lot more flexibility and cap space the next couple of years and significantly reduces his hit in the subsequent season."

The Canucks acquired the former Arizona captain and forward Conor Garland in a July 2021 trade with the Coyotes.

Ekman-Larsson had two goals and 20 assists in 54 games for the Canucks last season, missing the final 27 games because of an ankle injury. In 902 games in 13 seasons with the Coyotes and Canucks, he has 135 goals and 304 assists.



Vegas Golden Knights fans celebrate during a parade along the Las Vegas Strip for the NHL hockey champions in Las Vegas. (AP)

eighth when Blake Perkins slugged his first career pinch-hit homer.

Reds 10, Astros 3

In Houston, Jonathan India hit a two-run homer and Will Benson had three hits and two RBIs to power surging Cincinnati to its seventh straight win.

Hunter Greene (2-4) allowed five hits and two runs in six innings to get his second win of the season.

India's home run off Brandon Bielak (3-4) put the Reds up 2-0 in the first and Benson drove in two with a single in the fifth that pushed it to 5-1.

Cincinnati rookie Ely De La Cruz doubled with two hits and a stolen base after entering the game in an 0 for 13 skid.

Jose Altuve tied a career-best with four hits - three for extra bases - high-

lighted by a solo homer in the seventh inning as the Astros lost their third straight. It was his 35th career four-hit game, passing Craig Biggio for most in franchise history.

Braves 10, Rockies 2

In Atlanta, Matt Olson hit a first-inning grand slam and homer-happy Atlanta won its fifth straight.

Ozzie Albies, Eddie Rosario and Orlando Arcia also went deep as the National League-leading Braves moved a season-high 19 games over .500. They have combined for 42 runs and 52 hits during the winning streak and lead the majors with 122 homers.

After Olson made it 4-0, Michael Harris II's sacrifice fly and Albies' 16th homer put the Braves up 6-0 in

the second. Rosario and Arcia went deep in the third to pad the lead at 9-0.

Bryce Elder (5-1) retired the first 11 batters he faced before Ryan McMahon hit a hard single past Albies at second in the fourth. He gave up Mike Moustakas' homer in the fifth and finished with four hits and one run allowed with no walks and four strikeouts in six innings.

Connor Seabold (1-3) was charged with a career-high nine runs and tied a career high with nine hits allowed. He lasted three innings and gave up four homers as his ERA rose 118 points to 5.88.

Arcia, who added an RBI single in the fifth, went 3 for 4 and is hitting .339.

Giants 15, Dodgers 0

In Los Angeles, LaMonte Wade Jr. hit a three-run homer, J.D. Davis added a pinch-hit grand slam, and San Francisco won its season-high sixth straight.

It was the Giants' largest margin of victory over their NL West rival in 10 years. With the loss, the Dodgers dropped a home series to the Giants for the first time since losing three of four in July 2021.

Wade and Davis drove in five runs apiece, while Brandon Crawford had four of the Giants' 17 hits.

San Francisco did most of its damage in the fifth, sixth and seventh innings. Luis Matos drew a leadoff walk in the fifth, stole second and took third on Bobby Miller's errant pickoff throw. Matos scored on Crawford's RBI single, snapping Miller's streak of scoreless innings at 20 1/3. Miller (3-1) then hit Casey Schmitt and Wade followed with his fifth homer of the season for a 4-0 lead.



Bosnia's Edin Dzeko (left), challenges for the ball with Portugal's Joao Cancelo during the Euro 2024 group J qualifying soccer match between Portugal and Bosnia and Herzegovina, at the Luz Stadium in Lisbon, Portugal. (AP)

Sports

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Scotland stay perfect in Euro qualifying

Portugal win as Austria hold Belgium; Norway lose

LONDON, June 18, (AP): Erling Haaland scored on his return to Norway and it wasn't enough as Scotland came back to win 2-1 and keep a perfect record in qualifying for next year's European Championship.

Elsewhere, Bruno Fernandes scored twice in a 3-0 win for Portugal against Bosnia-Herzegovina as Cristiano Ronaldo played his 199th international game, and Belgium drew with Austria 1-1 without the injured Kevin de Bruyne.

After beating Norway 2-1, Scotland is the group leader with aims of qualifying for back-to-back European Championships for the first time since 1996.

SOCCER

Haaland opened the scoring for Norway from the penalty spot in the 61st minute but when he was substituted, Scotland seized the lead with two goals in two minutes.

Haaland was brought down by defender Ryan Porteous as they vied to meet an incoming cross from Alexander Sorloth. Haaland hit the resulting penalty hard into the bottom left corner for his first goal in six games for club and country since his 35th English Premier League goal against Everton on May 14.

Norway coach Stale Solbakken took off Haaland in the 84th and Scotland scored three minutes later. Defender Leo Skiri Ostigard tried to intercept a Scottish pass but his touch was heavy and Lyndon Dykes hit the loose ball past goalkeeper Orjan Nyland. Two minutes after that, Scotland took the lead when Dykes passed for substitute Kenny McLean to score his first Scotland goal since 2019.

Defeat dealt a heavy blow to Norway's chances of qualifying from Group A after the team stumbled with one point from its first two games when Haaland was injured in March. It was his first international game since September.

Spain has three points from two games, including a loss to Scotland, and did not play on Saturday because it is contesting the Nations League final with Croatia on Sunday.

Georgia beat Cyprus 2-1.

Vaclav Cerny scored twice as the Czech Republic beat the Faroe Islands 3-0 to stretch its lead at the top of the group to four points. Albania leapt from the bottom of the group to third by beating Moldova 2-0 and was level on points with second-placed Poland, which didn't play on Saturday.

Belgium fought back to draw with Austria 1-1 thanks to an equalizing goal from Romelu Lukaku after a deflected shot from Michael Gregoritsch gave the Austrians the lead.

Lukaku was playing as captain in the absence of de Bruyne, who played through a hamstring injury toward the end of the season for Manchester City but had to go off during last week's Champions League final.

Belgium could have won the game when Youri Tielemans hit a shot against the crossbar in added time.

Austria stayed top of the group, three points ahead of Belgium, but has played one more game. Azerbaijan drew with Estonia 1-1.

With group leader Serbia not in action, second-place Hungary had a chance to go top but fell short in a 0-0 draw with Montenegro. Lithuania held on for a 1-1 draw with Bulgaria despite having been reduced to 10 men thanks to a 17th-minute red card.

Portugal has three wins from three games after Fernandes set up Bernardo Silva for the first goal in the 3-0 win against Bosnia-Herzegovina and then scored twice himself.

Ronaldo played the full game



Belgium's Jeremy Doku, (left), fights for the ball with Austria's Stefan Posch during the Euro 2024 Group F qualifying soccer match between Belgium and Austria at the King Baudouin Stadium in Brussels. (AP)



Netherlands' Noa Lang, centre, challenges for the ball with Italy's Wilfried Gnonto (left), and Italy's Rafael Toloi during the Nations League third place soccer match between the Netherlands and Italy at De Grolsch Veste stadium in Enschede, Netherlands. Italy edged Netherlands 3-2. (AP)

Tszyu crushes Ocampo in devastating 1st round to retain WBO interim title

GOLD COAST, Australia, June 18, (AP): Tim Tszyu retained his WBO interim super-welterweight title with a stunning first round knockout of Mexican Carlos Ocampo on Sunday.

It took the Australian just 77 seconds to knock Ocampo down and successfully defend the belt he claimed with a ninth-round stoppage of

BOXING

American Tony Harrison in Sydney in March.

Tszyu first knocked down Ocampo with a big right before finishing the Mexican with a left hook to the delight of the parochial home crowd at the Gold Coast Convention Centre to extend his undefeated record to 23 wins from 23 fights with a 17th KO.

for his 199th cap and can next aim to be the first men's international player to 200 appearances when Portugal plays Iceland on Tuesday. He didn't score on Saturday but had a headed goal disallowed for offside and the game was briefly stopped when a fan ran onto the

"I copped a lot of different adversities going into this fight so for me it was all about getting the job done, just pushing through," Tszyu said. "I didn't think it was going to be this early because this guy's a warrior. But it's Tim Tszyu here."

Tszyu's next opponent is undisputed world champion Jermell Charlo, who he will fight on Oct. 1 for the WBA, WBC, WBO and IBF belts.

The pair's original bout for Jan. 29 was postponed in December when the American broke two bones in his right hand.

"There's no doubt I'm going to America, that's the land I want to conquer," said Tszyu. "The big one's coming up. I've got this interim belt but I'm not satisfied."

"It's not just the belts. I want the name 'Charlo' on my resume."

field to hug him.

Portugal has 13 goals and has yet to concede any in European Championship qualifying. Slovakia was two points behind in second place after beating Iceland 2-1 and Luxembourg rose to third after it beat Liechtenstein 2-0.

'Similar mistake in China'

UEFA president dismisses idea of threat to European soccer from big-spending Saudis

GENEVA, June 18, (AP): European soccer should not be afraid of a player exodus to Saudi Arabian clubs, UEFA president Aleksander Čeferin said Sunday, suggesting the country was making a mistake investing in stars at the end of their careers.

Cristiano Ronaldo and Karim Benzema have taken hundreds of millions of dollars to join Saudi Arabian clubs this year and similar offers were made to Lionel Messi and Luka Modrić. They have combined to win every Ballon d'Or awarded since 2008 and all are aged at least 35.

More players are expected to follow after four top Saudi Arabian clubs were effectively nationalized this month when taken into majority ownership by the Public Investment Fund sovereign wealth operation chaired by Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman.

Čeferin was asked by Netherlands broadcaster NOS if he was scared of a player exodus, and answered emphatically: "No, no, no."

"I think that it's mainly a mistake for Saudi Arabian football," the UEFA president said in an interview broadcast Sunday.

"Why is that a problem for them? Because they should invest in academies, they should bring coaches, and they should develop their own players."

"The system of buying the players that almost ended their career is not the system that develops football," he said. "It was a similar mistake in China when they all brought players who are at the end of their career."

Didier Drogba was the star recruit to the Chinese league in 2012 as clubs there bought Europe-based forwards like Nicolas Anelka and Frédéric Kanouté. The Chinese league and men's national team have made little progress internationally in the years since.

"Tell me one player who is top, top age and who starts his career and went to play in Saudi Arabia?"

Čeferin asked during the interview on the sidelines of the Nations League Finals mini-tournament hosted in the Netherlands.

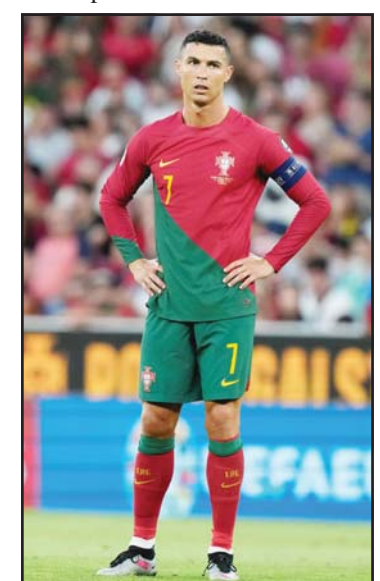
"But it's not about money only. Players want to win top competitions. And top competition is in Europe," the UEFA leader said.

The first wave of superstars targeted by Saudi Arabia all won multiple Champions League titles in Europe. Messi won his first World Cup title with Argentina last year and is joining Inter Miami in Major League Soccer while Modrić seems set to stay at Real Madrid for one more season.

SOCCER

"We didn't lose them," Čeferin said when asked if European soccer had lost top attractions. "They still play football. At the end of their career some players go somewhere to earn some money."

Saudi Arabia already has a place in the Champions League with Newcastle qualifying through a fourth-place finish in the Premier



Portugal's Cristiano Ronaldo reacts during the Euro 2024 Group J qualifying soccer match between Portugal and Bosnia and Herzegovina, at the Luz Stadium in Lisbon. (AP)

League in the club's first full season under 80% ownership by PIF.

Newcastle joins other big-spending, state-owned clubs in the 32-team lineup next season - Qatar's Paris Saint-Germain and Abu Dhabi-backed Manchester City, the new title holder. PSG chairman Nasser al-Khelaifi is a close ally of Čeferin as a member of UEFA's executive committee and also is chairman of Qatari broadcaster beIN Media Group, which is one of UEFA's biggest customers for TV rights.

Čeferin reiterated Sunday that UEFA is looking at rules to impose an overall cap on the budget for salaries and transfers for clubs that qualify to play in European competitions.

"Because we don't want that two or three clubs who have unlimited resources come to a budget of 5 billion or 10 billion," he said. "Then our competition is not interesting any more."

"Practically every club, everyone who I spoke with, agrees with that," Čeferin said, cautioning: "We are far from any decision, we are just thinking about it."

It is unclear how UEFA can introduce such rules within European Union laws and different tax regimes across its 55 member federations. Salary caps have often been considered in the 15 years since European soccer officials shaped "Financial Fair Play" rules to monitor clubs' income and spending.

UEFA under Čeferin's leadership since 2016 also has aired ideas of taking the marquee game in club soccer, the Champions League final, to a host city outside Europe.

That seemed no closer Sunday, he told NOS, and the next two finals will be in London and Munich. "We didn't even discuss moving out of Europe let alone be concrete as in Saudi Arabia or somewhere else," Čeferin said. "For the future I don't give it a big chance that we go out."