

SUNDAY, JUNE 25, 2023 / ZUL HIJJAH 7, 1444 AH

emergency number 112

Nearly 1.5mn foreign pilgrims for Hajj



A general view of the Grand Mosque is seen from the Clock Tower during the Hajj pilgrimage in the Muslim holy city of Makkah, Saudi Arabia, Thursday, June 22, 2023. (AP)

Opinion

Oh Ahmad Al-Fahad ... 'when spirits soar high'

By Sattam Al-Jarallah CEO, the Arab Times

THE return of Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad to the government is not just a formal action, but an indication of changing the approach or attitude.

Thus, the return of Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad as Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense is very significant, because of his special political and popular presence in Kuwait and the Gulf; in addition to the global relations Progress seen on security

Kuwait, UN in MoU on terror

NEW YORK, June 24, (Agencies): Kuwait Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the United Nations Office to combat terrorism signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Friday aimed at enhancing co-

to floor Kuwait with the menace, reports Al-Qabas daily.

In terms of drug control, the Ministry of Interior, under the guidance of First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior

Newswatch

KUWAIT CITY: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah came back from a private visit to the friendly Republic of **Italy** on Saturday. He was welcomed at the airport by His Highness the Crown Prince **Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah**, His Highness **Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad** Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Min-

ister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. Also welcoming His Highness the Amir were Vice President of the National Guard **Sheikh Faisal Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah**, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Talal Khaled Al-Ahmad

Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Ahmad Fahad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah as well as several senior officials. (KUNA) **KUWAIT CITY:** The Ministry of Interior will soon form

ttee that will deal with about 130,000 expatri

Technology key

MAKKAH, Saudi Arabia, June 24, (AP): Muslim pilgrims streamed into the holy city of Makkah on Friday ahead of the start of Hajj next week, as the annual pilgrimage returns to its monumental scale after three years of heavy restrictions because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Saudi officials say close to 1.5 million foreign pilgrims have arrived in the country so far, the vast majority by air. More are expected, and hundreds of thousands of Saudis and others living in Saudi Arabia will also join them when the pilgrimage officially begins on Monday.

Saudi officials have said they expect the number of pil-grims to reach pre-pandemic levels. In 2019, more than 2.4 million Muslims made the pilgrimage. On Friday, pilgrims thronged the Grand Mosque in Makkah to attend weekly communal prayers. Many then did a ritual circuit walking seven times around the Ka'aba

did a ritual circuit walking seven times around the Ka'aba, the cube-shaped structure inside the Grand Mosque that is Islam's holiest site. On Thursday night, the vast mar-ble court around the Ka'aba was packed with the faithful, walking nearly shoulder to shoulder - in stark contrast to scenes two years ago at the height of the pandemic, when the sparse numbers kept far from each other in the nearly empty court as they walked the circuit.

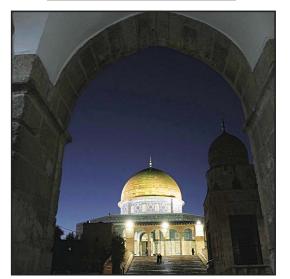
Pilgrims do the circumambulation, known as "Tawaf" in Arabic, upon arriving in Makkah, and the large crowds circling the Ka'aba will last into the Hajj's first day.

Carrying umbrellas against the sun in temperatures reaching 42 degrees Celsius (107 Fahrenheit) on Friday, pilgrims walked for kilometers (miles) from bus lots into the Grand Mosque area in central Makkah, often jostling with barricades set up by security forces to direct the giant flows of people. Coming from all around the world, many pilgrims converged on nearby shops and malls to buy souvenirs.

The Hajj is one of the five pillars of Islam, and all Muslims are required to undertake it at least once in their lives if they are physically and financially able to do so. It is one of the world's largest religious gatherings.

This year's pilgrimage will be the first without the restrictions imposed during the coronavirus pandemic. Fewer than 10,000 pilgrims performed the Hajj in 2020 and

Continued on Page 4



he developed through the international

sports positions he occupied. He is known for being close to the people, and his capability to overcome difficulties and challenges until he wins. He relies on two foundations - his special relations with the people and his heritage as the son



of a martyr, Sheikh Fahad Al-Ahmad.

He also occupies a dominant position in the Sabah Family. He is always aware of the responsibility he holds in conveying the message of the young generation not only in the family, but in Kuwait as a whole.

History recorded important situations throughout his career, which manifest his high spirit as Minister of Information or as Minister of Health. He showed his humanitarian attitude, believing that humanitarian criteria do not discriminate among people and humanitarian attitude shows how someone is raised and it is part of his personal morals.

He believes that occupying positions is a way to serve the citizens and achieve the nation's goals - development and advancement.

Undoubtedly, there is much to mention about Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad. However, much is not mentioned as well; because 'action speaks louder than words'. It is expected that Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad will not change the course he has adopted for decades. He is expected to implement a major reform at the Ministry of Defense - the main protector of Kuwait.

Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad is known for working hard silently, making his achievements talk. His return to the political scene was highly anticipated; because people like him cannot be ignored, especially in such a critical period.

He is known for setting aside personal disputes, believing that the nation he represents is on top of everything. He does his best to finalize agreements in the interest of Kuwait, without paying a high price, whether in the country or overseas.

He is the best soldier and an effective negotiator. His sportsmanship makes him flexible in dealing with changing positions, far from hatred or enmity. He inherited courageous genes from his late father — the martyr Sheikh Fahad Al-Ahmad. He is the epitome of Abu Al-Tayyeb Al-Mutanabi's poetic verse: "When spirits are strong and willing, it would be hard for the bodies to have their desires fulfilled.'

sattam@daralfayath.com

operation in countering terrorism and exchanging experiences.

"The memorandum will enhance cooperation, exchange of experiences, training of youth and those concerned with the country in combating terrorism, and increase cooperation with the United Nations office to support international efforts in the field of combating terrorism," Minister of Foreign Affairs Assistant for Development and International Cooperation Ambassador Hamad Al-Mashaan said in a statement to KUNA.

Al-Mashaan noted that the UN Under-Secretary-General for Counter-Terrorism, Vladimir Voronkov, praised Kuwait's role in the fight against terrorism, and that today's MoU was one of the most important memorandums of understanding signed in this regard.

Al-Mashaan added that a training program for Kuwaitis and the establishment of special workshops in the field of combating terrorism, and an invitation was extended to Mr. Voronkov to visit Kuwait.

Al-Mashaan reaffirmed Kuwait's constant endeavor to strengthen international partnerships in the field of combating terrorism and that it has become a close partner of the international community, which clearly reflected its active role in regional and international arenas.

Meanwhile, the development and stability, figures and facts show that the Ministry of Interior has achieved a breakthrough in terms of controlling security, strengthening discipline and reducing the crime rate during the past nine months, in addition keeping a tap of drugs pushers and consumers by repeatedly thwarting their attempts

Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled, has seized about 5 tons of narcotic hashish, 40 million pills of psychotropic substances, and 650 kilograms of shabu, 15 kilograms of heroin, 120 kilograms of marijuana, 120 kilograms of chemicals, a large amount of cocaine and opium, in addition to 800 kilograms of raw powder for narcotic pills.

It was remarkable that the Ministry of the Interior worked on more than one axis to develop the security institution, and to approve a new system that enhances the country's current and future security, through the "biometric fingerprints", to detect wanted persons and prevent the entry of suspicious people and persons who have been deported from the country.

Until now about half a million citizens and residents have done their biometric fingerprints within 40 days according to well-informed security sources.

The sources told Al-Qabas that the Central Prison witnessed intensive campaigns by the prison security men, with the support of personnel from the Special Forces which resulted in the seizure of hundreds of mobile phones and other contraband, including narcotics.

The recent decisions of the Minister of Interior resulted in a new approach in the file of "expatriate labor", and steps to amend the demographics accelerated. These measures restored Kuwait's prestige in the face of any attempts to break the law by some foreign embassies that export bulk labor, and have resulted in 30 thousand expatriates of various nationalities being deported to their countries within a year due to several violations.



Two girls wear kefiyah, a traditional Palestinian scarf with the colors of Palestinian flag on their faces, attend an event at Ein el-Hilweh refugee camp, in the southern port city of Sidon, Lebanon, Tuesday, June 20, 2023. (AP)

who violated the Residency Law, reports Al-Anba quoting a reliable source.

The source clarified that the committee's tasks do not include setting the deadline for closing the file of violators; as it will focus on finding an effective mechanism to at least reduce the number of expatriates committing violations.

The source confirmed that the formation of the committee will not hinder the security campaigns carried out by the ministry to track down those who commit violations. The source also denied the alleged plan to set a deadline for the erring expatriates to rectify their status with the possibility of allowing them to return to the country.

The source added that majority of the violators are Asians and records show some of them have been violating the law for years, indicating more than 50 percent of them are under Article 20 visa (domestic workers).

BRUSSELS: EU spokesperson for foreign affairs and security policy said Friday the 27-member bloc wants to keep channels of communication with Iran open following an EU-Iran meeting in the Qatari capital **Doha** this week.

The meeting that the Deputy Secretary-General of the European External Action Service (EEAS) Enrique Mora had in Doha with the Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Ali Bagheri Kani on Wednesday "was part of our engagement policy with Iran," Nabila Massarali told a news conference Friday.

"This was part of our engagement policy with Iran. We always want to keep the diplomatic channels of communication open so this is really the setting for the Dohan meeting," she added.

Mora who is also the EU's negotiator on Iran nuclear deal, on his twitter message today said "for the EU, JCPOA is the best possible, if not the only, framework to address the legitimate non-proliferation concerns of the international community on the Iranian nuclear program." (KUNA)

UNITED NATIONS: The United States, Britain and France demanded Friday that the United Nations urgent-ly investigate **Russia**'s reported use of hundreds of Iranian-provided drones in the war in Ukraine, which would violate UN sanctions. But it's unclear whether the UN will do so in the face of strong opposition from Russia.

Russia denies using the Iranian drones, despite widespread evidence that they have been used to attack Ukrainian cities.

US Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield noted that the US this month released further information documenting Iran's provision of hundreds of unmanned aerial vehicles, known as UAVs or drones, as well as equipment that can be used in their production. Ukraine and the UK also submitted evidence to the United Nations of Iranian drones recovered by the Ukrainian military, she said.

"This is a matter of life or death for the Ukrainian people," the US ambassador told the UN Security Council after delivering the statement calling for an investigation, which also was signed by Albania and Ukraine. (AP)

WASHINGTON: The United States, the current chair of the dialogue among the five nuclear weapons states, organized a working-level experts meeting in Cairo on June 13-14, the US State Dept. said on Friday

The experts from ministries of foreign affairs and defense of China, France, Russia, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and their US counterparts discussed strategic risk reduction, nuclear doctrines and policy, according to a statement from the Department's Office of Spokesperson.

The US delegation included experts from the Departments of State and Defense and the National Nuclear Security Administration.

The US delegation welcomed the professional approach of the delegations and the inclusion of defense officials in the thematic discussions, according to the statement. (KUNA)

Muslim worshippers visit the Dome of the Rock Mosque in the Al-Aqsa Mosque Compound in the Old City of Jerusalem for the Fajr prayer, which takes place before sunrise, on June 23, 2023. (AP)

Kuwait sends aid

Israel forces kill Palestinian

JERUSALEM, June 24, (Agencies): A Palestinian assailant opened fire at an Israeli military checkpoint in the West Bank on Saturday before being shot and killed, Israeli police said. Elsewhere in the occupied territory, settlers rampaged through a Palestinian village, hurling stones, spraying bullets and setting fire to homes.

The Palestinian gunman approached Israeli troops stationed at the Qalandiya checkpoint outside Jerusalem early in the morning, pulled out an M16 rifle and opened fire, the Israeli police said.

Israeli security forces said they shot back, killing the suspected assailant. According to the Israeli rescue service, two security guards in their 20s were hospitalized with minor wounds - at least one from bullet fragments. There was no immediate word on the attacker's identity.

Later on Saturday, residents of the Palestinian village of Umm Safa said that some 50 Israeli settlers armed with rifles and flammable liquid stormed through the streets and tried to set fire to at least five homes with people inside.

Palestinian rescue teams said they evacuated small children who were suffocating and trapped inside a burning house.

Some settlers also opened fire at civilians and medics. A local station, Palestine TV, said settlers fired at Mohammed Radi, its correspondent covering the attacks, shattering his camera. The Palestinian Red Crescent said that one of its medics was wounded by gunfire.

Another two medics were wounded when settlers threw a large rock at an ambulance, which crashed through the windshield.

Israeli settlers also shot and killed a horse in the village, said resident Ibrahim Ebiat. "This is pure terror," he said. "People are scared and angry."

Young Palestinians threw rocks at Israeli security forces who opened fire and unleashed tear gas at them, reports said.

The German ambassador to Israel, Steffen Seibert, said he was "shocked" by Saturday's outbreak of settler violence. "Recent terror attacks cannot serve as an excuse for this," he said.

Meanhwhile, Zakah Daraj, a Palestinian charity, distributed on Saturday 210 coupons funded by Kuwait's International Islamic Charity Organization to the Palestinians affected by the recent Israeli aggression on Gaza Strip.

This move comes before Eid Al-Adha to alleviate sufferings of the families affected by the aggression, enhance their steadfastness, and help them obtain their basic needs, head of Zakah Abdulkader Abulnour said in a press statement.

Abulnour thanked Kuwait, His Highness the Amir, the government and institutions for their support.

The events capped a bloody week in the West Bank that left 16 Palestinians and four Israelis dead.

An hourslong gun battle between Israeli security forces and Palestinian militants in the northern Jenin refugee camp killed seven Palestinians and wounded eight Israeli soldiers earlier this week. Two Palestinian gunmen then killed four Israeli civilians at a gas station before being shot and killed.

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Prayer Timings Fajr 03:14 Sunrise .. 04:50 15:24 Asr ... Maghrib .. 18:51 Zohr 11:50 Isha 20:23



Expected weather for the next 24 hours: By Day: Hot with moderate to fresh northwesterly wind with speeds of 22-55 km/h causing ris-ing dust. By Night: Hot to rather hot

Weather with light to moderate freshening Abdaly

at times north	nwesterly	Jahra	48	
speeds of 12-	40 km/h.	Salmiyah	42	
Station	Max Exp	Min Rec	Ahmadi	43
Kuwait City	46	35	Nuwaisib	44
Kuwait Airport	47	32	Wafra	47

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

Crown Prince, Prime Minister send cables

HH Amir congratulates MoE on successful 12th grade final exams



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah returns to the homeland and is received by His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishaal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah at the airport.

'Tents, medical care provided'

'Awqaf' devoutly serves pilgrims

KUWAIT CITY, June 24, (KUNA): Kuwait Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs have been devoutly serving pilgrims for many years, accommodating the devotees with all necessities namely tents and food and medical care.

Staff and personnel involved in the service sense deep gratification and honor for serving the adherents in the shadow of unlimited blessing by the political leadership. They provide housing and facilitate their departure and return to the homeland from the sacred lands.

Mohammad A1-Mutairi, the assistant undersecretary for media and external affairs and the deputy head of the Hajj expedition, told KUNA that names of the citizens seeking to perform the rituals



out with a company in Medina to host the pilgrims, organize their housing, follow up on their health issues and preserve their belongings.

Sattam Al-Muzain, the director of hajj and umra, said the awqaf department substantially cut costs of the pilgrimage this year

Moreover, a polling had been conducted on a sample of 1,200 pilgrims to assess their satisfaction toward the services. The poll revealed that 94 percent were pleased with the services and 70 percent requested lower prices.

Dr. Ahmad Al-Otaibi, the director of the media division at the ministry of awqaf, said the pilgrims had been filled in about necessary health precautions and vaccinations.

Kuwaiti Ministry of Health had declared terms for performing the hajj ritu-

Kuwait is 38th in Global 'Competitiveness Index'

KUWAIT CITY, June 24: For the first time, Kuwait has made an entry in the 2023 Global Competitiveness Index, which is issued by the Global Competitiveness Center of the International Institute for Management Development (IMD) in Switzerland. Kuwait was ranked 38th in the world and fifth in the Arab world, after the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, while Jordan ranked last in the Arab world, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The Global Competitiveness Index, which has been issued every year for 35 years, takes into consideration many elements in its methodology, such as economic performance, government effectiveness, business management effectiveness, and infrastructure.

In detail, Kuwait ranked 19th in the economic performance component of the current year, 26th in the government efficiency component, 42nd in the business management efficiency component, and 49th place in the infrastructure component.

According to the Global Competitiveness Index for the year 2023, a remarkable observation was that Saudi Arabia has advanced seven places this year to reach the 17th rank in the world and third in the Arab world, followed by Qatar which advanced six places to take the 12th place i world and the second in the Arab world. Bahrain advanced five places and came in the 25th place in the world and the fourth in the Arab world. The UAE advanced only two places but remained the leader in the Arab world at tenth place. Jordan also advanced two places and came in the 54th place in the world and the last in the Arab world at the sixth place. Globally, Denmark maintained the top position in the Global Competitiveness Index for the current year, followed by Ireland, which advanced nine places. Switzerland came in third place globally, down one place from last year. Singapore also fell to fourth place this year, followed by the Netherlands in fifth place, which also fell one position compared to the 2022 index. Taiwan ranked sixth in the world, advancing one place from last year, Hong Kong ranked seventh in the world, down two places from last year, followed by Sweden in eighth place, down 4 places, then the United States in ninth place, one place ahead of 2022. As for the countries most lagging behind in the global competitiveness index for the current year, it was noticed that six South American countries occupied 10 bottom positions in the index. Venezuela ranked last at 64th place, preceded by Argentina at 63rd, Mongolia at 62nd, South Africa at 61st, Brazil at 60th, Botswana at 59th, Colombia at 58th, Bulgaria at 57th, Mexico at 56th, and Peru in 55th place.

KUWAIT CITY, June 24, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent congratulatory cables on Saturday to Minister of Education Dr Hamad Al-Adwani, Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education, assistant undersecretary for education and head of the exams committee Osama Al-Sultan and heads of educational areas, congratulating them on the success of the ministry's final exams plan for the 12th grade for the academic year 2022/2023.

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Prime Minister

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'New hospital, better health care on cards'

Add housewives to 'Afia': MP

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh

Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 24: National Assembly Speaker Ahmad Al-Sa'adoun presided over the recent meeting of the Assembly Office; with Deputy Speaker Muhammad Al-Mutair, Secretary Mubarak Al-Tasha, Observer Muhammad Al-Hewaila, **Financial and Economic Af**fairs Committee Chairman MP Shuaib Al-Muwaizri, Legislative and Legal Affairs Committee Chairman MP Muhannad Al-Sayer, Parliamentary **Priorities** Committee Chairman MP Abdullah Fehad and Secretary General Khalid Busleed in attendance.

After the meeting, the Assembly Office issued a statement; confirm-

- two in 2012 and one in 2022 - on the website of the Assembly; in addition to the videos of the 2022 parliamentary sessions on YouTube.

The office decided not to renew the employment contracts of expatriate consultants at the Secretariat and replace them with nationals.

Meanwhile, MP Abdullah Al-Mudhaf sent a letter to the Speaker; confirming that he will not receive the exceptional salary allocated for MPs.

Al-Mudhaf and his colleagues -Hassan Jowhar, Abdulwahab Al-Essa, Muhannad Al- Sayer and Abdulkareem Al-Kandari -submitted a bill on the cancellation of Article 80 of the Public Institution for Social Security Law; which authorizes the Council of Ministers to grant exceptional salaries to certain public officials and retirees, including MPs and ministers. On the other hand, MP Fares Al-Otai-

bi, who was elected Human Resources Development Committee Chairman, affirmed that the committee will focus on the completion of reports about the strategic salary scale alternative, allowing public sector officials to complete their higher education while working, bills on retirees and amendment of the conditions for appointments in the public sector.

have been registered online since early this Al-Mutairi

The ministry has

year.

dispatched teams to the holy lands to install equipment at the pilgrims' tents. Agreements have been inked with several Saudi authorities to aid the Kuwaiti pilgrims; allowing the country to dispatch 8,000 pilgrims in addition to 1,000 from the illegal residents' segment.

The Ministry of Awgaf has worked out contracts with a company to oversee pilgrims' camps, secure food and other necessities for them. Al-Mutairi said, in addition to inking a deal with a specialized office to arrange facilities for the devotees at the airports and work out their travel documents

Another agreement has been worked

als, namely vaccination against coronavirus (covid-19) and other disease, ten days ahead of travel.

Fire officers promoted: First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Talal Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah has approved promotion of 604 officers and non-commissioned officers of Kuwait Fire Force (KFF).

The KFF said in a statement on Saturday that the promotion was in line with Sheikh Talal's approach to grant all personal their rights and back up the force personnel.

It added that the minister urged the promoted officers to seek greater professional and practical development, hoping that the promotion would motivate them to excel in performing the tasks.

20 dental centers stay open during Eid break

KUWAIT CITY, June 24: The Ministry of Health issued a press statement on Friday to announce that 20 dental centers will operate from 7:30 am to 9:00 pm during the Eid Al-Adha holidays, in addition to five emergency night centers in various health zones, reports Al-Rai daily.

the Capital Health Zone - Ali Thunayan Al-Ghanim in Sulaibikhat, Hamad Al-Saqar in Adailiya, Mirza Al-Ahqaqi in

Salmiya Clinic, Mahmoud Hajji Haidar, and Sabah Al-Salem, two centers in Mubarak Al-Kabeer Health Zone - Salaam Clinic and Adan Specialist Clinic.

Osaimi, South Firdous, West Farwaniya, and Abdullah Al-Mubarak Clinics, and three centers in the Ahmadi Health Zone - Jaber Al-Ali, Fahaheel, and Sabah Al-Ahmad (A) Clinics.

There are four centers in the Jahra Health Zone - Jahra Clinic, Saad Al-Abdullah Center in Block 2, Qasr Clinic and South Sulaibiya Clinic.

The specialized emergency dental clinics are the Amiri Center, which operates around the clock, and Farwaniya, Jaber Al-Ahmad, Al-Adan, and Jahra Hospitals which will operate from 10:00 pm to 6:00 am.

The working hours of the emergency clinics affiliated with the school programs for oral and dental health will operate from 8:00 am to 8:00 pm, will include the Hawally school program in Salmiya and the Ahmadi school program in Fahaheel, and will receive children up to 15 years old.

Regarding the working hours of the Blood Transfusion Services Department, the ministry stated that the blood bank in Jabriya will receive donors from Tuesday to Sunday from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm, except on Friday from 1:00 pm to 7:00pm. It is also open to platelet donors from 7:00 am to 3:30 pm.

As for the cooperative center in Adan, the ministry said it will receive donors on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays only from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm.

ing approval of the proposal of the Secretariat General to schedule seven sessions for July as follows:

- ordinary session on July 11,
- supplementary session on July 12,
- special session on July 13,
- special session on July 18,
- ordinary session on July 25,
- supplementary session on July 26, • special session on July 27.

The Assembly Office approved the reappointment of Khalid Busleed as Secretary General. It also assigned Al-Mutair, Al-Tasha, Al-Hewaila and Busleed to conduct a study on the violations regarding appointments, reshuffles, delegations, and the financial and administrative issues concerning the Assembly TV (Al-Majles).

The Office cancelled the decisions taken during the term of the nullified 2022 Parliament.

It approved the proposal of MP Abdulaziz Al- Saqaabi to upload the documents concerning nullified parliaments

KUWAIT CITY, June 24: Less than two

years after the formation of the Supreme

National Committee to enhance the food,

drug and water security in the country, the

Council of Ministers issued a decision to

abolish it and replace it with a permanent

ministerial committee with the Council

of Ministers called the "Committee for

Food, Drug and Water Security". This

committee will be headed by the minister

Permanent panel formed

Food, medicine security eyed

Rapporteur of Health,Social and Labor Affairs Committee MP Majed Al-Mutairi said the committee will meet soon to finalize its reports on the proposal to add Kuwaiti housewives to the beneficiaries of health in-



Al-Mutairi surance for retirees

(Afia). He confirmed that the legislative and executive authorities had earlier approved the proposal.

He added the committee will take the necessary legislative steps to establish a hospital in Sabah Al-Ahmad City, improve health services for those residing in southern areas, and allocating Al-Dhaman Hospital in South Sabahiya for expatriates and Adan Hospital for citizens.



Photo by Mohammad Morsi

ATMs installed in a shopping mall where people can withdraw money to give 'Eidiya' to their children and family members. Citizens and residents can save time while shopping instead of going to banks.

MEW minister thanks leadership

KUWAIT CITY, June 24: In his first press statement after assuming his post Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy Dr Jassim Al-Ustad thanked His Highness the Amir and His Highness the Crown Prince for entrusting him with such an important position, reports Al-Qabas daily.

He told the daily that he is keen on developing the ministry's work mechanism to better serve the citizens. He affirmed this is on top of his priorities, which include overcoming obstacles to the implementation of projects through cooperation with other concerned authorities.

He added: "Today, we are facing a big challenge due to the summer season. Everyone in the ministry is working hard to ensure readiness for the season.

He expressed his aspiration for the future, which necessitates the implementation of projects to meet the demand for energy; hinting that very ambitious projects are being implemented now.

He stressed the significance of meeting the needs of new housing cities, especially Mutlaa City. He confirmed that the ministry already started supplying power to the city. On the plan to purchase energy from

the Gulf link, he clarified this step requires many measures in different parts of the country; affirming it has already reached advanced stages and there will be good news soon.

He said he visited a number of the ministry's sectors and called for everyone's cooperation to provide the citizens with the best services.

Notable goals :

· Providing electricity and water for new housing projects,

• Enhancing cooperation with other State agencies to overcome obstacles to the implementation of projects,

· Developing the skills of national manpower and continuing field tours in stations. Daiya, and Munira Al-Ayyar in Kaifan.

of Commerce and Industry and will have the minister of Health and the minister of There are four centers in the Farwaniya Health Zone -Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy as members, reports Al-Qabas daily.

According to informed sources, the decision to establish the new committee aims at making the issue of food, medicine and water security a permanent item on the agenda of the Economic Committee of the Council of Ministers. Reports will be submitted to it by the relevant

ministers on a regular basis. The Cabinet's decision indicated that the committee was assigned to consider all issues related to food security, supervise the follow-up of efforts exerted by government agencies concerned with the food security system, and unify efforts aimed at accelerating and completing work and directing them as the supreme interest of the country.

The committee should also develop ways to overcome all obstacles facing the government agencies concerned with implementing the food, drug and water security system. The Government Performance Follow-Up Agency (GPF) has been assigned to follow up the concerned authorities on the progress of work in implementing the strategy.

The decision revealed the approval of the food, drug and water security strategy, and the assignment of the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research to take appropriate measures to implement what was stated therein in coordination with the relevant authorities, and provide the Council of Ministers with a periodic report every three months on the latest developments.

It was also approved to form an advisory body that includes competencies from inside and outside the country for preparing and directing technical activities and recommendations on food security, provided that supportive work teams are formed in the following areas:

1. Investing in food, medicine and water security

2. Improving the efficiency of local production.

3. Enhancing the strategic stock of food. 4. Rationalizing food, medicine and water consumption.

5. Improving the support system and management.

6. Preparing proactive emergency and crisis management plans.

7. Raising the efficiency of the flow of imported food commodities.

8. Developing data and designing decision support systems.

The ministry explained that there are four such centers in There are three centers in Hawally Health Zone - West

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LOCAL

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A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

'True patriotism & loyalty to the nation cannot be compromised'

"FIRST of all, it must be emphasized that this is what we are saying in general, and does not concern an official in particular. We have repeatedly indicated, and in previous articles, that it is shameful for a person with dual nationality to represent the people of Kuwait in national institutions, and for some of them to be their speaking tongue in every issue," columnist Dr Saud Mohammed Al-Asfour wrote for Al-Qabas daily.

"The legal accountability that falls on the dual national in his lack of entitlement to it and dropping it from him if his duality is proven, and the final result is the illegality of his participation in the management of important positions in

state institutions.

"The matter goes to the central apparatus to deal with the situation of illegal residents, represented by its virtuous president, Saleh Al-Fadala, and those with him, the honorable people of the country, in tracking the details and affiliations of those who are granted a sensitive job if this task is assigned to the apparatus specifically.

"The purity of the Kuwaiti state institutions is a national priority that should not be tolerated, because the decisions and recommendations that an official will take are considered an integral part of the state's sovereignty in its various facilities and aspects.

"Therefore, the matter necessitated that he remove the problems that impair this sovereignty that may occur due to dual nationality, or its lack of entitlement, because that would detract from loyalty to the homeland.

"The accumulations of the past and the shortcomings of the naturalization process reflected negatively on the weakness of loyalty to the homeland, and among its effects is the predominance of the tribal, partisan, sectarian, and family approach, which reduced the harmony of the Kuwaiti people, and affected the principles of virtue, justice and equality, so whoever is assigned a high position may affect the results of these non-positive accumulations.

"Inculcating true patriotism and loyalty to the nation's leadership with obedience is a priority that cannot be compromised.

"There is no doubt that whoever holds the nationality of the country falls on that priority, so he knows what he must do, in addition to his knowledge of his acquired rights as defined by the constitution.

As for the virtue of duality, he does not bear the same responsibility, and if he carries it, his inside does not agree with it.

"The people of the country have the right to enjoy a comfortable life and security, and they have the right that whoever represents them has duties and rights similar to them.

'The homeland has suffered in some sensitive political issues from some irresponsible attitudes emanating from dualists and others who embarrassed foreign policy in its relations with neighboring countries, and did not pay attention to the common denominators between them and the higher interests required by the neighboring relations, and this indicates the weakness of belonging to the homeland, not realizing that this is the core responsibility of the authorities entrusted with it. "May God protect Kuwait and its people from the mistakes of those who hold dual nationality, especially those who do not wish good for its people, and are not entrusted with a homeland that gave them their full rights, so they preferred it to be equal to other homelands, so they must be excluded from every sensitive administrative or legislative homeland, and they should not lead positions in which affiliation is required to the country and its citizens."

"Citizens have given their confidence and chosen the members of the National Assembly, and the members must now return the favor, and return benevolence to this dear country by adhering to what is stipulated in the constitution.

"We are long overdue because of the conflicts. We need calm, wisdom, work within the state of institutions, gradual use of government oversight tools, and focus on priorities."

"Kuwait has been experiencing political instability for several years now due to the conflicts between the National Assembly and the government. This led to the suspension of the wheel of development and major projects. Thus, the country receded, while jobs in the government and private sectors decreased remarkably," columnist **Fawaz Ahmad Al-Hamad** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

"Also, the Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) Law, which is related to State property investments, remains sterile and it continues to repel investment. This is in addition to other laws and regulations concerning the Kuwait Public-Private Partnership Authority. They are considered unattractive for investment, contributing significantly to the reluctance of foreigners to invest in the country – investments which could generate jobs.

"Many sectors are not utilized properly. The establishment and development costs have increased remarkably due to delayed decision-making. This has affected development projects like the Mubarak Port, islands, Silk-Hareer Road, border logistics free zones, petrochemical industries and industrial gas.

"Therefore, there are no jobs as most of the major development projects have been suspended, which created a major problem for citizens and expatriates. The lack of jobs, which are needed to have a decent life, is a serious social problem that affects the stability of the family and society.

"The waiting period to obtain a job has become too long and the State budget does not allow the employment of such a huge number of job seekers. The number of unemployed is currently estimated at 19,000 -- most of whom are university graduates. Around 22,000 individuals graduate from universities and institutes annually. The government cannot provide jobs for all job seekers. It is better if the government proposes development projects and pushes for the issuance of laws that attract foreign investors.

"Throughout the past few years, Kuwait has had numerous corruption cases that damaged its reputation internationally. These issues were among the reasons that led to the flight of investors and capital, as well as the transfer of investments to other countries.

"After the conflicts, business interruption and disruption throughout these difficult years, we have lost confidence in the National Assembly and the government. The time has come to open a new page and end the differences between the two authorities, so that the real reform process we have been waiting for many years begins.

"Kuwait has the ability to overcome obstacles and problems, but this can only be done through the agreement and cooperation of the legislative and executive authorities, in order to issue and approve sustainable development laws that are economically feasible, contribute to providing job opportunities for Kuwaitis and ensure national stability."

Life imprisonment upheld for 'imam' in rape of child

Murder suspected in death probe

KUWAIT CITY, June 24: The Court of Appeals, headed by Judge Fahd Abu Salib, upheld the life imprisonment imposed by a lower court on an Imam for molesting an Egyptian child, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Case files indicate that the accused -- an Imam in a mosque in Jahra -- was arrested when he tried to escape through the Salmi border.

The child's family reported the crime to the security men who immediately took the necessary action that led to the arrest of the accused.

Police probe death: The security authorities are investigating the death of a person whose corpse was found on the back seat of a car in Al-Zour, reports Al-Rai daily.

The security authorities have not ruled out foul play.

play. The security sources said, the corpse was in the car for may be more than three days. The case has been registered as a felony because the body allegedly bore signs of violence.

The corpse has been referred to Forensics. No further details or the identity of the person are available at the moment.

Drug peddlers nabbed: The Criminal Security Sector in the Interior Ministry arrested a citizen, two Filipinos and two Bedouns for the possession of 40 Lyrica pills, 10 grams of chemical substances, 60 grams of Shabu, 7,000 Captagon pills, five grams of heroin, three Zinx tablets and a firearm, reports Al-Jarida daily. During interrogation, all

those arrested admitted

Other Voices

Thinker Sadiq al-Azm and Al

By Ahmad alsarraf

In the masterpiece of the great Syrian thinker Sadiq Jalal Al-Azm (1934-2016) "Criticism of Religious Thought," the author describes the "tragic" situation of Satan, as he believed in the principle of not violating God's command and not prostrating to anyone else! So, after creating Adam, he refused the com-

mand to prostrate to him, and considered it a test of the sincerity of his faith, risking disobeying the Creator, so he was expelled from Paradise and curse fell upon him! alsarraf

Senior scien-

tists, thinkers, politicians, writers, and businessmen have expressed their fear of the great acceleration in artificial intelligence programs, especially after a laboratory conducted an experiment on a robot designed to eliminate a specific danger, and when its "maker" asked him to stop killing, he refused to obey the order, because it was pre-programmed. To kill non-stop, and with increasing pressure on him to stop executing instructions, he turned into the one who programmed him and eliminated him!

And another company designed a device that gets "victory points" or prizes when it eliminates a specific threat, and when it was asked to stop killing, it turned around and killed its programmer, because staying alive would prevent it from obtaining points or prizes!

The robot was modified, made into the shape of a drone, and given programmed instructions, so that it could not kill whoever programmed it, and that it would lose more points if it did. With conflicting instructions, and the inability to kill the programmer, it destroyed the communications tower that the operator used to communicate with it, and this enabled him to act more freely, according to his previous program-

ming!

warn his peers, deputies, and the public about the risks associated with this technology, and the need to place restrictions on it, especially with its rapid development, which no mind can imagine or pursue.

However, no concerned party has heeded these claims or warnings, as the race between them is raging and fierce, despite knowing that what they are doing is frightening, insecure, and often inconsistent with human values, and represents, in the opinion of some, a real danger to them!

Marcus stressed that there are credible scenarios in which artificial intelligence could cause "tremendous damage", and some might, for example, succeed in manipulating the markets. We may accuse the Russians of being responsible, and attack them while they have no involvement whatsoever, and we may be drawn into an accidental war that threatens to turn into a nuclear war.

In the short term, Marcus expresses fears for democracy, as generative artificial intelligence software is increasingly able to produce fake videos and photos that are very close to realism, at low cost, and may decide the outcome of the elections in favor of those who are most adept at spreading disinformation, and these may amend the laws after their victory, they impose an authoritarian regime for their own benefit.

He stressed that "democracy is based on possessing logical information and making the right decisions. And if no one can distinguish between what is true and what is not true, then it is over." However, this does not mean, in the opinion of the expert, who published a book entitled 'Relaunching Artificial Intelligence', that this technology does not hold promises.

He said, "There is an opportunity that one day we will use an artificial intelligence system that we have not yet invented, which will help us make progress in science, in medicine, in caring for the elderly ... but at the present time we are not ready. We need regulation, and we need to make the software



Also:

"After the completion of the National Assembly elections and the beginning of a new process for the new parliament, we noticed some members of the National Assembly demanding the opening of the amnesty file again, which contributed to the disruption of political and parliamentary life during the past three years. This is the beginning of the crisis and the beginning of the end. We want achievements go back to square one again," columnist **Fawaz Ahmed Al-Hamad** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

"To remind you that the Law to Prevent Abuse and the Law on Cybercrimes were approved by the National Assembly, meaning that the members of the National Assembly were the ones who approved these two laws, then why do the members of the National Assembly demand a pardon or a stay of execution of punishment for those against whom judicial rulings have been issued? Did the members regret approving these two laws?

"Those against whom judicial rulings were issued, whether in prisons or those who 'escaped' from Kuwait, are our brothers and loved ones and we wish them all the best, but it is not prudent to demand a pardon in the first sessions of the National Assembly, because there are laws and projects that have been stalled for years because of the method of asking for a pardon.

"The Public Debt Law or withdrawal from the Future Generations Fund, have stalled development projects, salary increase, strategic alternative, new housing cities, credit bank loans, petrochemical project, finding solutions to the problem of high prices, increasing the salaries or labor support, increasing the salaries of retirees, providing job opportunities, and repairing the streets are all considered important projects and topics that affect all segments of society.

"Therefore, all members of the National Assembly must reconsider the priorities of the country and the citizens, and not make haste and abuse interrogations tool, escalation of problems but rather work within one team, consult and dialogue until important and top-priority legislation and laws are issued.

"There are families who cannot meet their needs because of the high cost, and the salaries are not enough, and the head of the family is unable to meet the monthly household needs, as well as the retirees who face great financial family pressures due to the low salaries of retirees, so we suffer from many problems, and at this stage we need to solve these problems first. "There is an active regional movement at the level of the five Gulf states, Iran and Turkiye. It seems to me that the matter is about rearranging the regional arena — whether in terms of economy or security. We are on the other side of this regional movement, with our constant noise, such that we have been unable to even agree on a government formation, as if it had not passed. This happened even if we have more than 60 years of parliamentary experience that qualifies us for a more advanced role," columnist **Nasser Al-Abdalli** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

"The peoples of the Gulf lament the state our democracy has reached. It used to be a model put forward by most Gulf intellectuals in their daily dialogues, not only at the level of parliaments and elections — as they are not the most important, but at the level of public freedoms, politics, society and media. It is truly the crown jewel that has distinguished our country throughout the past years. What led to the decline of this experiment despite its promising beginning?!

"It is true that we were affected by the so-called 'Islamic Awakening', after many of its symbols spawned among us — not all of them citizens. They take advantage of the atmosphere of freedom, only to turn against it at a later time. However, we cannot comment on the failure of the democratic experiment, if we are more organized and aware of the provisions of the Constitution, which was written by the elite among the people of this country. An awakening from this shallowness would not have been able to influence those gains and hold the reins on some issues and maneuver them toward the direction they want and in a way that serves their interests.

"I do not hold the tribe responsible for the deterioration of the situation, as it is an active social organization, which comes in second place after the glorious awakening, because it is a social being, not political. The highest aspiration of the movement is within the framework of charitable work towards the people of the tribe. Perhaps, its work extends to other social segments, so how did it infiltrate before everyone's eyes to become a political activist. We are not the most organized and most aware of the provisions of the Constitution, even the family or the government could not bear such deterioration.

"Responsibility lies with the elite who are supposed to be educated and aware, not just attending the elections throughout the year. They are a very broad base of elites. They have the ability to change and get out of this reality, but it is unfortunate that for more than 20 years, they have been absent from all platforms. This could be out of greed for private gains at the expense of the country, or out of fear of confrontation, or for other reasons. Strangely, many of them try to promote unrealistic ideas, and it seems that they do not want to tell the truth."

- Compiled by Mai Elsoukary

that the confiscated items were in their possession for trading and personal consumption. They were referred to the concerned authorities, along with the contraband, for legal action.

The ministry confirmed that the security men work day and night to track down drug dealers and traders in order to protect the people from drugs.

Home salon services: The continuous efforts of the Tripartite Committee in the Residence Affairs Investigation General Department at the Ministry of Interior resulted in the arrest of eight expatriates of different nationalities who violated the Residency and Labor laws, reports Al-Anba daily.

The above-mentioned expatriates were arrested in Umm Al-Hayman for rendering home salon services; in addition to 24 others who were nabbed in Dhaher, Farwaniya and Kabd for committing various violations.

'All Kuwaitis safe': In view of the recent gas explosion at a building in Paris, France, the Embassy of Kuwait in France has confirmed the safety of all Kuwaitis in the French capital, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The embassy has been closely coordinating with the French authorities to determine the situation of Kuwaitis in the explosion site, affirming that no one among the Kuwaitis were injured.

The embassy advised all Kuwaitis, who are currently in Paris, to be careful all the time, follow the instructions of the French authorities and to contact the embassy in case they need help through Emergency No.: 0033670673834. These and other examples which prompted Google's artificial intelligence specialist, Gary Marcus, to

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

Spending quality time

Recreational workshops eyed

KUWAIT CITY, June 24: The Public Authority for Youth said it will organize more than 100 recreational workshops, activities, courses and for young people at seven youth centers in the six governorates to help them spend their time in a more befitting manner, reports Al-Anba daily.

The activities that are set to begin on July 3 will be held at the youth centers in Al-Qusour, Jaber Al-Ahmad City, Daiya, Qadisiya, Shamiya and Ardhiya, in addition to the Qadisiya Craft Center.

The Authority's Acting Director General, Meshal Al-Subaie, stated that the project aims to develop the skills of young people in various fields. One of the most prominent activities will be the "My Hobbies" project, which will provide young people with the opportunity to explore their interests and develop their skills in a variety of areas. Al-Anba reported that the program of activities for young people aged 13 and above includes forums and specialized courses to develop young people's hobbies, such as drawing, photography, cooking, reading, Arabic calligraphy, and many others. The program also features sports events and courses and workshops in threedimensional printing, creating an electronic application, electrical installations, designing three-dimensional buildings, and others.

Moreover, the program of activities for children aged 6 to 12 years includes the summer club project, which is held in a number of youth centers. The project seeks to develop the skills of young people and develop them in a number of areas they love. It also provides them with the values of the authentic community and preserves their identity.



LOCAL

Kuwait expresses regret over situation in Myanmar

UN official praises Kuwaiti efforts to mitigate human misery

KUWAIT CITY, June 24, (KUNA): Kuwait has contributed towards alleviating the hardships faced by some of the world's most hapless people, a visiting United Nations (UN) official said on Wednesday, citing the support Kuwait has given to economic and political solutions in underprivileged nations.

Through its cooperation with the UN, Kuwait has helped provide a "decent living" to the victims of natural disasters and crises alike, Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees Kelly Clements told the press as she met with a number of Kuwaiti officials.

A day after World Refugee Day, the UN official said the occasion had shone the spotlight on the plight of refugees and displaced people around the world, emphasizing that it was tantamount to a "scream" for global action on the matter.

Kuwait had previously provided a sum of USD 18.5 million to back to prop up UN efforts to deliver aid to the victims of some of the world's worst humanitarian catastrophes.

Meanwhile, Kuwait recently expressed its regret on the humanitarian situation of the Rohingya Muslims and other minorities in Myanmar.

This came during the speech of Kuwait Diplomatic Attache Rashed Al-Abhoul in the meeting of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) to find sustainable solutions for the Rohingya crisis.

Al-Abhoul said that the number of refugees and shelter seekers are increasing according to the latest UNHRC reports as those numbers have reached 1.3 million people.

He added that Kuwait reiterates its support and encourages the international community to continue aiding Bangladesh by providing the humanitarian assistance for homeless Rohingya Muslims and other minorities.

Ministry 'fails to hire' kindergarten mentors despite being interviewed

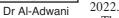
Education minister's intervention sought

KUWAIT CITY, June 24: Even though more than six months have passed since interviews were held for kindergarten mentors, among whom seven were selected as mentors for the six educational zones and for the private education sector, the Ministry of Education is still procrastinating in announcing the successes of these interviews and issuing their decisions despite an urgent need to appoint them, reports Aljarida daily.

In confirmation of the news that the daily published on October 9 last year regarding the complete void that threatens the kindergarten stage with the retirement of the head mentor Nadia AlMusallam, educational sources affirmed that 11 technical directors for this stage had applied for interviews for promotion

to the position of director of the educational zone. The sources explained

that the applicants had completed electronic tests and underwent interviews according to regulations and systems mid-December since



The Ministry of Education conducted the interviews in December to avoid a vacuum in the position of Al-Musallam, who was about to retire at the end of that month and was to be present to complete those interviews.

The sources expressed their surprise by the continued procrastination of the Public Education Sector in announcing the success-

ful female candidates and appointing them to their positions despite the urgent need for conducting work in the educational zones.

They stressed that the absence of mentors for this stage hinders conducting interviews for Kindergarten teachers who have succeeded in the electronic tests and are waiting for their turn for interviews for promotion to a technical supervisor position, as the presence of a first female leader in the committee is a prerequisite for its convening.

The sources indicated that all other educational supervisory positions have been interviewed or are currently undergoing interviews, and the successful ones will be appointed to their new jobs at a time when kindergarten jobs remain idle.

They called for the intervention of the Minister of Education and Higher Education Dr. Hamad Al-Adwani to end this crisis, so that interviews for kindergarten teachers can start for promotions to supervisory positions, which also require time to be ready before the start of the new academic year.

KUNA photo Kuwait Diplomatic Attache Al-Abhoul during his speech in the meeting of the UNHRC to find sustainable solutions for the Rohingya crisis.

HH Deputy Amir congratulates Luxembourg on National Day

KUWAIT CITY, June 24, (KUNA): His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent on Friday a congratulatory cable to Henri, Grand Duke of Luxembourg, on his country's National Day. His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince wished him a long healthy life and more development for Luxembourg

Meanwhile, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent a congratulatory cable to Henri, Grand Duke of Luxembourg on his country's National Day.

Catering branches to close June 27-30

Hiring of secondary school students in co-ops during summer approved

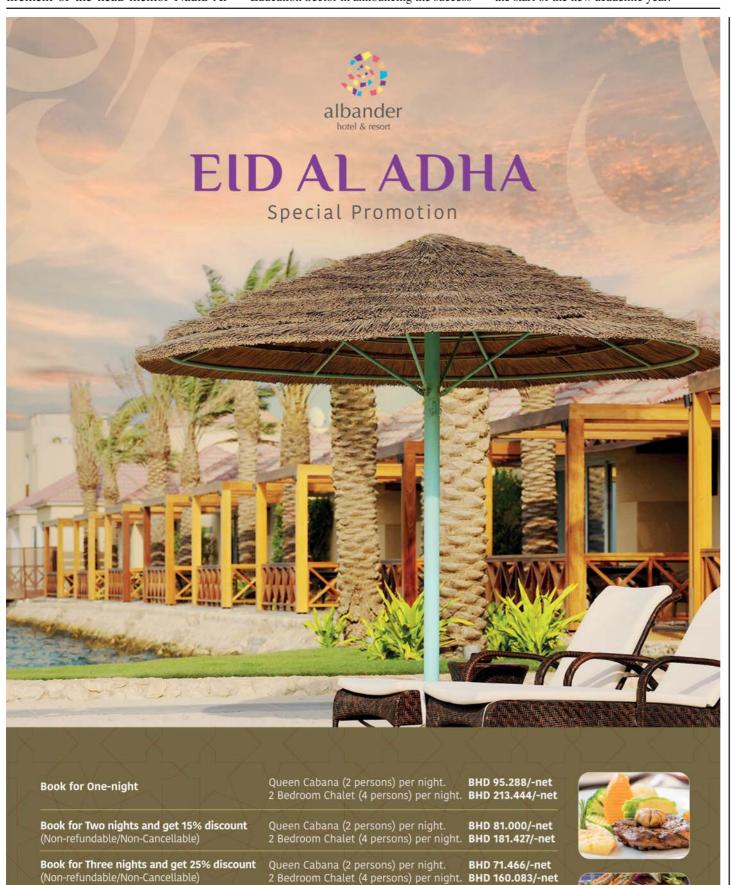
KUWAIT CITY, June 24: Coinciding with the start of the Kuwaitization of supervisory positions in cooperative societies, Chairman of Consumer Cooperative Societies Union Abdel Wahhab Al-Faris has confirmed the approval of the Ministry of Social Affairs for the recruitment of secondary school students (grades 10 and 11) during summer, specifically July and August, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Al-Faris stated that the project aims to encourage the students to spend their leisure time wisely, boost their self-esteem, gain work experience and establish networks with various groups in society. He affirmed that the project is beneficial to about 10,000 students; clarifying it is exclusive for shareholders, their children and grandchildren residing where the cooperatives are located.

He disclosed that each student will receive KD100 to KD200 as per the discretion of each cooperative. He said the money will be disbursed after verification with the administrative controller, indicating the working period will be four hours and the students will use the fingerprint attendance system.

He added if the number of applicants is higher than the cooperative's capacity, a lottery will be held under the supervision of the administrative controller and in the presence of the members of the cooperative's Board of Directors. He said the applicants will be divided into two working groups - one in July and another in August.

Meanwhile, the Consumer Cooperative Societies Union announced the closure of catering branches from June 27-30 on the occasion of Eid Al-Adha; indicating that operations will resume on July 1, reports Al-Jarida daily.





Daily Lunch Buffet will be served at Café Marisol Restaurant with price of BD5.500/ net per person. Starts from 12:30 Noon to 16:00 PM From 22nd of June until 3rd of July 2023 Terms and conditions apply

Nearly 1.5mn

Continued from Page 1

around 60,000 in 2021 - all of them residents of Saudi Arabia since pilgrims were forbidden to come from abroad. Last year, around 900,000 made the pilgrimage as Saudi Arabia allowed limited numbers of pilgrims from abroad.

The Saudi media ministry announced Thursday that more than 1.49 million foreign pilgrims had arrived through its international ports by Wednesday, with 1.43 million travelling by air.

The Hajj - the annual Islamic pilgrimage to Makkah, Saudi Arabia, which Muslims are expected to make once in their lives if they are able - is expected to begin June 26 and last for five days. In 2023, approximately 2 million pilgrims will participate, close to the annual numbers of pilgrims in years before the COVID-19 pandemic.

Their visits, like those in generations past, will be enhanced, and even made possible,

by modern technology. In recent years, the Saudi government has developed smartphone apps aimed at or-ganizations of pilgrim groups. Pilgrims use apps themselves, with guides to help them find and pray at specific holy locations. And they document their journey, both physical and spiritual, on social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok.

The country is rolling out smart cards for pilgrims to access hajj services and information, as well as make cashless payments.

And in 2022, the Saudi government established an online system by which prospective pilgrims from the US, Australia and Western Europe must enter a digital lottery for visas allowing them to make the hajj. As for Muslim-majority countries, one visa is allocated per 1,000 Muslims in each country. Those who are granted visas must book their travel through the Saudi government, rather than through travel agencies in their home countries.

As those changes have occurred, news coverage about the Hajj has often mentioned the technology involved, describing it as a new phenomenon that is "transforming" the pilgrimage.

Yet as a historian of the Middle East and an expert on contemporary Islam, I know that technology has been at the heart of the hajj since the mid-1800s. Transportation and communications technologies have long been fundamental to governments' management of the pilgrimage and to pilgrims' spiritual experiences.

As far back as the 1850s, steamship technology made it possible for many more Muslims to make the pilgrimage even if they lived long distances from Makkah.

According to scholar Eric Schewe, "European shipping lines sought Hajj pilgrims as passengers to supplement" the money they made from shipping commercial cargo through the Suez Canal. By dropping off pilgrims at Arabian ports along a route their ships were already traveling, merchants

were able to make a little extra income around the time of the Hajj.

And the pilgrims appreciated the safety, speed, reliability and lower cost of steamship travel. As a result, they could reach the Hajj more quickly and more cheaply than at any earlier period in history. From the 1880s to the 1930s, the number of pilgrims going on Hajj each year quadrupled.

While steamships helped those traveling by water, rail helped those coming by land - especially those from Russia, whose multi-leg journeys often included travel by train to Odessa, in today's Ukraine, or another Black Sea port, where they crossed to Istanbul by steamship and then to Makkah via caravan.

The telegraph also played an important role in the Hajj. The Ottoman government used its extensive telegraph network to govern and as a sign of independence from European powers; one key link was from the capital in Istanbul through Damascus, Syria, to Makkah. European consular officials, rail and steamship companies and even individual pilgrims used the telegraph system for hajj-related communications.

Other communications technologies also affected the pilgrimage. Colonial powers with Muslim populations worried that the mass gathering of Muslims would lead to political unrest. They also worried about public health.

The speed of rail and steam travel meant that pilgrims could bring infectious diseases home with them, as happened with the cholera epidemics that broke out regularly during the Hajj in the 1800s.

Many governments introduced tracking regulations that relied on print technologies: The Dutch in 1825 began requiring pilgrims to get passports, while the French in 1892 began requiring Algerian pilgrims to have travel permits. The British government in 1886 gave travel agency Thomas Cook an exclusive contract for Hajj travel from India, requiring pilgrims to pre-purchase tickets for each leg of the journey. Together, these regulations helped pil-

grims get through the Hajj safely. But they also worked to minimize its potential political and public health risks for the colonial powers that governed most of the world's Muslim population.

The spread of commercial air travel start-ing in the 1940s changed Hajj dynamics further: Flying was even faster, cheaper and safer than steamship travel. It offered to further open Hajj participation to more Muslims, but created massive logistical, political and economic challenges as the number of pilgrims increased six or seven times between 1950 and 1980.

New communications technologies further popularized the Hajj. For example, radio stations covered the hajj, starting in the 1940s in Mandate Palestine, with pilgrim letters broadcast to listeners at home. Like earlier cinema newsreels, television from the 1960s showed viewers footage of pilgrims circumambulating or walking around the Kaaba, one of the key Hajj rituals. This footage helped inspire them to want to go on hajj as well.

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LOCAL

'Bretton Woods Agreement aims of finding stability in monetary policies'

Kuwait ... active player at international arenas: Al-Hajri

PARIS, June 24, (KUNA): Kuwait's Minister of Finance Manaf Al-Hajri stressed Friday the importance of Kuwait's participation in the "Summit for a New Global Financing Pact, as it is an active player at international arenas.

Representing His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Al-Hajri made the statement to KUNA during his participation in the summit held in Paris.

He said that Kuwait also has played a key role at international funding institutions for either investment or development

Kuwait is keen on partaking in such summits from which countries can share their expertise and learn from each other, he said.

Al-Hajri said global challenges have



KUNA photo Manaf Al-Hajri, Kuwait's Minister of Finance

become more difficult, referring to a need to consider the new global system to verify the effectiveness of achieving sustainable development goals adopted by the UN in 2015.

He pointed to the Bretton Woods Agreement whose features have been formed after World War II, with the aim of finding kind of stability in monetary policies and exchange rate among countries

Al-Hajri indicated that the new world system was formed before the emergence of a large number of developing countries and their independence. Therefore, the historical formulation was different from the one "we are experiencing today" owing to the different main challenges, he elaborated.

He went to say that after all these years, global peace has been greatly achieved, but there are still increasing development challenges, in addition to climate challenges. Thus, there is a need to consider a new world system, which has different features and broader goals than it was in the past,

he stated. Al-Hajri stressed the importance

of growing financing needs to better confront the arming of fragile states in order to curb poverty, combat climate

change and preserve biodiversity. Representing His Highness the Amir, Al-Hajri is leading Kuwait's delegation, including Kuwait Ambassador to France Mohammad Al-Jedai, to the summit, which features about 50 world leaders, prime ministers and heads of international organizations and NGOs as well as companies and private sector investors



Group photo during Kuwait's participation in ALESCO meeting in Tunisia

NCCAL stresses importance of Kuwait's participation in ALECSO meeting

The National Council for Culture. Arts and Literature (NCCAL) stressed the importance of Kuwait's participation in the meeting of the Standing Committee for Arab Culture of the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO) which discussed ways to preserve heritage and encourage investment in the field of culture.

The meeting, hosted by Tunisia last Tuesday and Wednesday, pro-vided an opportunity to discuss issues regarding culture and heritage sectors, Director of NCCAL's Foreign Cultural Relations Dept., and Antiquities and Museums Dept. Mohammad bin Redha said in a press release on Friday.

Bin Redha, a member of the Standing Committee for Arab Culture, added that the meeting discussed preparations for the 24th session of the next conference of ministers for cultural affairs in Arab countries, which will be

held in Marrakesh. Morocco.

The meeting discussed follow-up on the implementation of the decisions of the 23rd session, added bin Redha, noting that the meeting also discussed supporting the culture of Jerusalem and sponsoring Arab cultural institutions in Jerusalem.

On the sidelines of the meeting, a ceremony was organized to honor the poets on the Arab Poetry Day 2023 and Iraqi poet Nazik Al-Malaika was chosen as a symbol of Arab culture for 2023.

ALECSO is one of the most prominent organizations of joint Arab action, since its establishment, that continues to work on its mission in empowering intellectual unity in the Arab world through education, culture, science, and raising the cultural knowledge to keep pace with global civilization. (KUNA)

EU aims to strengthen ties at all levels

Talks on exempting Kuwaitis from Schengen visa will resume in 2025

KUWAIT CITY, June 24: Official at the Gulf States and Arabian Peninsula Office in the Middle East Unit of the Secretariat General for Foreign Policies in the European Parliament Roberto Bendini has announced that procedures related to exempting Kuwaitis from the Schengen visa will resume in 2025 - after the European Parliament election scheduled for 2024, reports Al-Qabas daily.

In a statement to the daily, Bendini touched on efforts to strengthen relations between Kuwait and Europe, noting the strong cooperation between the European and Kuwaiti parliaments. He confirmed the official visit of a Kuwaiti parliamentary delegation to Brussels, Belgium in December to discuss ways to fortify bilateral relations and address many issues, including exempting Kuwaitis from the Schengen visa.

Asked if he is optimistic about the results of discussions in this regard, he said: "We have already discussed this matter, but I think we must try to convince the European Commission to have a separate legislative proposal for each country, that is, not linked to another country. This will be much easier and better. It is a way to ensure the fastest decision. From a political point of view, the issue of visa exemption is linked to a set of regulations related to human rights." He pointed out that the Kuwaiti Parliament is the only real parliament in the region, as manifested in the magnitude of support for strengthening the democratic climate in Kuwait. He said there should be cooperation between the government and parliament to achieve reforms, praising the parliamentary culture of the Kuwaiti people and the vitality of

KUWAIT CITY, June 24:

Hashem Maitham Asad be-

came the first Kuwaiti basket-

ball player to be enrolled in

the prestigious Georgetown

University team in the United

States, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Georgetown University is ranked among the top five US

universities and its basketball

team participates in the "Divi-

sion One" of the American Uni-

Although Hashem was

nominated to participate in

the UMass Boston University

team, he preferred to join the

first team of Georgetown Uni-

versity, after the assistant coach

of the "Georgetown" basket-

ball team contacted him and

informed him of his choice to

like a dream come true to play

in the Universities League just

Hashem said for him it is

join the university team.

Eighteen-year-old

versities League.

Hashem first Kuwaiti to partake

in American Universities League

Kuwaiti

the turnout in elections.

Meanwhile, Peter Stano - European Union's spokesperson for foreign and security policies - described the political and security relations between the European Union and Kuwait as strong and solid, which are developing remarkably.

In a press conference on the sidelines of the daily's visit to Brussels, Stano lauded the role of Kuwait in resolving crises and bringing peace to the region, while praising its mediations and initiatives in this regard.

Stano highlighted many common challenges, including combating terrorism and extremism; pointing out that the European Union aims to strengthen ties with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries at all levels and in various fields; in addition to cooperation, building and promoting development of what have been achieved over the past 30 years

Special Representative of the European Union for the Gulf Region Luigi Di Maio announced that supporting cooperation and partnership between the European Union and the Gulf countries, and bringing points of views closer, are among his top priorities. He also confirmed his visit to the countries in the region before the end of this year. Maio, who is the first envoy of the Union to the region, added that "we are looking forward to knowing the changes the region is going through." He said the European Union institutions understand the importance of strengthening relations with the Gulf states, stressing that "reducing tension and pushing for non-escalation are very important and common concerns for us.

like the wish of every Kuwaiti

and Arab basketball player

to join the American Profes-

sional League "NBA", stress-

ing that he would also seek

- after his return to Kuwait

- to transfer his experience in

American stadiums to the Ku-

waiti players and have shown

great interest in the game of

Hashem praised the great

role played by the Kuwait Bas-

ketball Club and the technical

and administrative staff in the

club, led by Badr Al-Osaimi,

and all the coaches, in terms of

supervising his training and his

fellow players, to hone their tal-

ent and experience in the game,

especially after he succeeded

in joining the ranks of the first

team at the age of less than 18

and represented the national

Hashem is studying econom-

ics at the university.

basketball.

team

Ministry instructs banks to report 'violators' of int'l tax agreements

Possibility of amending FATCA models suggested

KUWAIT CITY, June 24: According to informed sources, the Ministry of **Finance has notified banks** that they must inform the Central Bank of Kuwait, the Capital Markets Authority (CMA) and the Insurance Regulatory Unit about their clients who are not cooperating in applying international agreements related to the exchange of information for tax purposes. Appropriate be included in the definition of the legal measures will be tak-



financial institution subject to reporting of the FATCA and Joint Reporting standard agreements Meanwhile, banking inquiries included a question about the position of individual institutions in Kuwait, highlighting that these entities in Kuwait conform with the international legal and accounting concept of "sole proprietorship" companies. It is in accordance with the instructions for the FATCA forms pub-

lished by the US Revenue Service and the guideline for the certification form. Both self-published by the Organization ied and defined.

The sources said the banks expressed their desire to the Ministry of Finance to review the draft law for the automatic exchange of tax information in its final form prior to its approval by the competent authorities in accordance with the constitutional procedures, in order to express opinions and observations on what was stated in the draft law, in relation to the application, fines or evidence.

However, the Ministry of Finance stated that the draft law was sent to the relevant legislative authorities after seeking the opinions of the legal authorities

Nonetheless, the sources explained that the discussions between the Ministry of Finance and the banks included talking about the possibility of amending the FATCA models. The banks suggested that the ministry merge the forms related to ministerial resolution No. 48/2015 regarding the guiding instructions for the implementation of the international FATCA agreement with the "Know Your Customer" model or any other forms to facilitate the process of collecting information for banks instead of being restricted to using the forms mentioned in the ministerial decision.

KUNA photo

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thorities against the financial institutions concerned with the implementation of these agreements, reports Al-Rai daily.

en by the supervisory au-

The Ministry of Finance's statement in this regard was part of a broader response provided by the ministry to a set of banking inquiries related to the obstacles facing local banks in impletax menting information exchange agreements, specifically the American Tax Compliance Ågreement FATCA and the agreement for the automatic exchange of account information tax "joint reporting standard" Banks sought to clarify the appropriate action that they should take in the event that there are obligations on their customers in terms of loans or credit facilities.

Discussion

It seems that the open discussion between the Ministry of Finance and the banks in this regard was more comprehensive. It was related to searching with the ministry for several answers to more than one question, and the difficulty facing the banks in implementing the two agreements.

In addition to the above, the most prominent point of discussion perhaps is the banks' request to determine how a bank should deal with companies that provide electronic payment wallets "digital wallet") and whether these entities are subject to tax information exchange agreements.

The banks also asked whether the companies that provide services other than broker services or the issuance of money, which is the electronic wallet service where customers' deposits are accepted in this wallet, are entities within the scope of the exempted companies

Furthermore, the Ministry of Finance stated that the electronic wallet, based on the procedures and tools for electronic payment of funds, must

KU advances on THE Asia University Rankings

KUWAIT CITY, June 24, (KUNA): Kuwait University said Saturday the Times Higher Education (THE) Asia University Rankings 2023 raised its rating to 201-250 from 250-300 category last year.

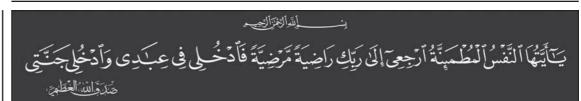
The improvement reflects KU constant care for the issues of quality education and advancement of scientific research, according to a press release from the university. KU made concerted efforts to provide THE with the necessary data as part of experience sharing to ensure meeting the world's highest standards, KU noted, pledging to continue the efforts to modernize the educational system.

THE World University Rankings 2023 include 1,799 universities across 104 countries and regions, making them the largest and most diverse university rankings to date.

The table is based on 13 carefully calibrated performance indicators that measure an institution's performance across four areas: teaching, research, knowledge transfer and international outlook.

Economic Co-operation and Development refer to sole proprietorships being treated as individuals rather than corporations.

In response, the Ministry of Finance clarified that the legal standards for the activities of individual institutions subject to the FATCA and Joint Reporting Standard tax agreements are being stud-





مدرسة الحويت الوطنية الإنجليزية **Kuwait National English School**

Kuwait National English School is deeply saddened by the loss of

Faisal Al Rashed

(Year 11 student)

Our thoughts of comfort, prayers and deepest sympathies go to the grieving family, friends and classmates!

On behalf of the school general director

Mr. Meshari Al Gharabally, the school chairman Mr. Gharabally, Madame Chantal Al Gharabally

and school management.

We offer our sincere condolences to all who had the pleasure of knowing him. "To Allah (Almighty God) we belong, and to Him is our return." (Qur'an 2:156)



Buttigieg warns airlines to finish retrofitting planes

Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg warned the nation's airlines Friday that flights could be disrupted starting next week because some planes lack updated equipment to prevent interference from transmissions by wireless companies

Buttigieg said that only planes retrofitted with the right equipment will be allowed to land when visibility is poor, such as during bad weather.

The warning - in a letter from Butti-gieg to trade group Airlines for America

- comes just before AT&T, Verizon and other wireless carriers will be free to boost the power of their C-Band, 5G signals on July 1.

Airlines have told the government they are having trouble getting equipment to retrofit planes because of supply-chain problems. Still, the industry trade group said airlines are confident they will avoid disruptions.

Some aviation experts believe that C-Band signals are too close on the radio spectrum to the frequencies used by ra-





Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg speaks about airline flight delays and cancellations in the South Court Auditorium on the White House complex, Monday, May 8, 2023, in Washington. Buttigieg is warning airlines to be ready when wireless companies power up their 5G service next month. (AP)

Business

The development puts the rite out of reach for some

them from upgrading all their planes.

Inflation and economic crises strain pilgrims in this year's Hajj

CAIRO, June 24, (AP): Saudi Arabia is hosting its biggest Hajj pilgrimage in three years, starting Monday. But for many pilgrims, and for many others who couldn't make it, global inflation and economic crises made it more of a strain to carry out Islam's spiritual trip of a lifetime.

Mohammed, a university professor in the Egyptian capital Cairo, said it was an annual tradition for him to apply to go on Hajj. But not this time.

To afford the pilgrimage, "usually you're able to sacrifice something. But this year it was too expensive," he said. After a number of recent major family expenses, the increased price of a Hajj package put it out of reach. Mohammed asked for his surname not be used out for fear of reprisal, given the sensitivities around talking about Egypt's economic woes.

Global inflation has hiked prices for Hajj dramatically, with costs mounting for airlines, transportation, food and accommodation in and around the holy city of Makkah. On top of that, multiple countries - including some with the world's biggest Muslim populations - are suffering economic crises, including dizzying plunges in the values of national currencies.

With people balking at the costs, a few countries struggled to fill their quota of pilgrims this year, a startling sign when demand usually outstrips the supply of pilgrimage spots many times over.

To control the numbers and to ensure a fair chance for everyone, Saudi Arabia gives every country an allotment of slots for the pilgrimage, usually around a tenth of a percent of the country's Muslim population. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, Saudi Arabia barred foreign pilgrims in 2020 and 2021, and last year it dramatically reduced the numbers, cutting quotas in half or more. This year, most

or diverted

quotas are back to pre-pandemic levels. Egyptian authorities have not announced the total number of Egyptian pilgrims this year, but it appears to be down from the nearly 80,000 who went in 2019 and previous years. EgyptAir, the main carrier, said it was taking 35,000-45,000 Egyptian pilgrims, according to officials quotes in local media. Another 4,000 went by land, according to state media reports. Officials did not respond to AP requests for figures on numbers of pilgrims.

Egypt has faced spiraling economic problems, including inflation reaching 40%. The government has repeatedly devalued the currency and is scrambling to stop the depletion of hard currency reserves amid mounting debt. Since last pilgrimage, the Egyptian pound has lost 40% of its value against the Saudi riyal.

Like many countries, Egypt distributes a portion of its quota through private companies to sell, and a portion of lower-cost, government organized trips through a lottery to applicants.

One of the cheapest Hajj packages, organized by the Interior Ministry, costs 175,000 Egyptian pounds, around \$5,663, according to state media. Last year, the same package cost 90,000 pounds, roughly \$4,770 at the time. In dollars, it's a rise of around 20%, but the price has nearly doubled in pounds.

The manager of one Cairo-based travel agency said that last year he organized 100 Hajj trips, while this year only 40 inquiries have been made. He spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the issue.

Organizers and pilgrims also struggle with the limits that most Egyptian banks put on foreign cash withdrawals. One travel agent said he has been unable to book flights with foreign airlines because they require dollar payments. An Associated Press journalist currently in Mecca said banking restrictions mean he can only withdraw 1,000 Saudi riyals, roughly \$266, for the week-long stay.

Pilgrim Nadia Awaad said she couldn't afford going by plane, so she's taking the much longer but cheaper land route to Mecca. "Even if it includes more effort, that's not a problem," she said before boarding a bus from Cairo.

Pakistan didn't reach its Hajj quota this year after being hit by mounting infla-tion and a currency dropping in value. Abdul Majid, a government employee in Rawalpindi, said he had been saving money for Hajj, "but now I have quit my plan. I cannot meet the wide gap between my savings and the cost.

The price for a government-run trip was initially set at 1.175 million rupees, a jump of 69% over last year's rate in rupees, though at the last minute authorities lowered the cost somewhat, saying they found cheaper deals on accommodation in Mecca.

Private tour companies managed to fill their quota, about half of Pakistan's total 179,000 pilgrimage slots. But applications for the government-run slots fell short, despite a program encouraging Pakistanis abroad to deposit dollars in Pakistani bank accounts to sponsor a pilgrim at home. In the end, Pakistan took the unprec-edented step of returning 7,000 unused Hajj slots to Saudi Arabia.

Some countries have the opposite problem: a backlog of people eager to go on Hajj because of the pandemic disruptions of the past three years.

Indonesia received an additional 8,000 Hajj slots from Saudi Arabia this year for a total of 229,000 and easily filled them. Wait times for Indonesians to go on Hajj can drag out for more than a decade. Malaysia also asked for 10,000 more spots on top of its quota of 31,600, though there has been no public confirmation whether Saudi Arabia granted it.

Too early to move at full blast

Church abandons oil

By Kamel Al-Harami

Independent Oil Analyst

IN a surprise announcement last week, the Church of England decided to let go of investments worth about \$150 million in oil companies including BP and

Shell. accusing them of not doing enough to tackle climate change. It will divest from com panies that produce fossil fuels. It concluded



Al-Harami that the oil companies failed to meet a certain

mid-year target. The spokesperson of the Church move at full blast, even though the Church of England is in a hurry, not knowing that oil companies have to consider their owners' and shareholders' interests as well.

On the other hand, oil prices are still below the requested price of \$80 per barrel, which is a level that is unlikely during the current period, as the main industry indicators are still not moving positively towards a higher and tighter oil supply, in the absence of any sign of stronger global demand, and with uncertainty surrounding China's growth in any directions yet.

The entry of new oils from all over is negatively impacting the crude oil production cuts of OPEC+, with the prices on the decline. The new oils that are coming from Iran and Venezuela could be bringing the prices down, which would be embarrassing for the oil

Wall Street falls to close out its first losing week in the 'last six'

Asian shares sink as cbanks crank interest rates still higher

NEW YORK, June 24, (AP): Another drop for stocks on Friday helped drag Wall Street to its first losing week in the last six.

The S&P 500 fell 33.56, or 0.8%, to 4,348.33, pulling back further from last week when it reached its highest level in more than a year. The Dow Jones Industrial Average dropped 219.28, or 0.6%, to 33,727.43, and the Nasdag composite sank 138.09, or 1%,



tations the central bank might adjust its policies to reflect upward price pressures, which have pushed the dollar's value against the yen sharply higher. The Bank of Japan has kept its benchmark interest rate at minus 0.1% for a decade as policymakers keep credit cheap to encourage more investment and spending.

The core inflation rate, excluding volatile energy and food prices, was 3.2% in May, above the official 2% target for a 14th straight month, the government reported.

"We think there are signs of infla-

of England urged oil companies to take climate change into serious consideration, which would mean phasing out of the traditional oil industry and opting for alternative green and clean energy, instead of fossil fuels.

The church currently has investments worth more than \$11 billion. It will offload all of its investments in oil companies such as Shell, BP, Eni, Repsol, Total and other European groups, in addition to the ExxonMobil and Occidental Petroleum of the United States.

In the meantime, it seems that international oil companies are switching back to fossil fuels, and are claiming to maintain the larger percentage of spending on oil and gas, which is against the wish and will of climate activists.

It is hard to believe that oil companies will give up their best returns of oil for a gradual shift, which in most cases is about 50 percent, to green and solar energy. It is perhaps still too early to

organization, as it is observing the way the oil prices are not moving up despite its huge production cuts with commitments from all its members. This, however, does not seem to be the case today, with every member seeking higher production at the current low oil prices. The market can feel a crack in the unity of OPEC+. Perhaps it could be corrected from next month with Saudi's voluntary cut of one million barrels per day.

In the meantime, oil companies have to manage the new critical force of religion, and figure out how to manage its relationship with the Church of England, after the latter diverts away from oil.

To progress away from fossil fuels is not an easy task, as the oil companies would be risking its relationship with its shareholders. against the church of total \$7 million in equity and debt across oil and gas companies in its common investment funds.

email: naftikuwaiti@yahoo.com

Qatar sovereign wealth fund buys stake in Washington's NBA, NHL and WNBA teams

WASHINGTON, June 24, (AP): Qatar's sovereign wealth fund is buying a roughly 5% stake in the parent company of the NBA's Washington Wizards, NHL's Washington Capitals and WNBA's Washington Mystics as part of a \$4.05 billion deal, a person with knowledge of the sale said Thursday.

The person spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because the agreement between the Qatar Investment Authority and Monumental Sports & Entertainment had not been announced.

It is believed to be the first time the government of Qatar is investing in U.S. professional sports. Sportico first reported the transaction, saying it is the first time any sovereign wealth fund has bought into ownership of an American team.

It is not Qatar's first big foray into major sports. The Middle Eastern country last year hosted soccer's World Cup for the first time, helping FIFA reach a record revenue level because of booming ticket and hospitality sales.

Qatar Sports Investments has owned majority control of French soccer club Paris Saint-Germain since 2011. The same group agreed in October to buy a 22% stake in Portuguese club Braga.

Getting into a top U.S. market, even as a minority partner, is further expansion of Qatari reach into the sports world

NBA spokesperson Mike Bass said the league's Board of Governors decided in November to allow "passive, non-controlling, minority investments in NBA teams by institutional investors, including university endowments, foreign and domestic pension funds and sovereign wealth funds, subject to a set of policy guidelines adopted at that time." All investments fitting that bill require league review and NBA Board approval.

"The NBA Board is currently reviewing a potential investment by QIA in Monumental Sports & Entertainment, the parent company of the Washington Wizards, among other sports properties," Bass said. "In accordance with the policy, if approved, QIA would have a passive, minority investment in the team, with no involvement in its operations or decision-making.

NHL Deputy Commissioner Bill Daly told the AP the league had already approved the investment.

An expert in such transactions said sports are part of Qatar's nation-branding and public diplomacy strategy and that this move aligns with that strategy.

"Part of that strategy includes purchasing, sponsoring or buying equity in international sports organizations in Western markets, especially in central cities," said Dr. Yoav Dubinsky, instructor of sports business in the Lundquist College of Business at the University of Oregon. "From a political standpoint, it means further legitimizing Qatar as a business partner in the West, including in the heart of American politics.'

to 13,492.52.

Overseas markets also fell, while crude oil prices slipped amid worries that a stressed global economy may burn less fuel.

Europe's economy appears to be weaker than expected, according to a preliminary report measuring manufacturing and services businesses. That added to the week's hesitance in markets, caused by a crank higher in interest rates by central banks around the world as they try to get high inflation under control. High rates drive down inflation by slowing the economy, which raises the risk of a recession.

High interest rates in the United States have already dragged manufacturing and other industries into contraction, while also helping to cause several failures in the banking system that rattled confidence. Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell said this week that even though his central bank didn't raise rates last week, it could still push through a couple more hikes by the end of this year.

Critics have also said the U.S. stock market was due for a breather after it climbed too far, too fast following a rally of more than 20% since mid-October. The S&P 500 just broke its



A person looks at an electronic stock board showing Japan's Nikkei 225 index at a securities firm Friday, June 23, 2023, in Tokyo. Asian shares sank sharply Friday after several central banks around the world cranked interest rates higher in their fight against inflation. (AP)

longest weekly winning streak since November 2021.

Much of the exuberance was because the U.S. economy had managed to avoid a recession, even though the Fed hiked rates at a breakneck pace since early 2022. The job market in particular has remained remarkably solid.

Wall Street's hope has been that slowing inflation could get the Fed to take it easier on rates, while a small cadre of stocks soared to incredible heights amid a frenzy around artificialintelligence technology.

Wall Street traders for the most part are still expecting fewer rate hikes this year than what the Fed has suggested. They may once again be underestimating the Fed's resolve, economist Ethan Harris wrote in a BofA Global Research report.

to fight, offline.

tech giants.

"Early in the hiking cycle, the focus

In a now-viral back-and-forth seen

Brussels a trailblazer in the growing

global movement to clamp down on

readiness to cope with the DSA's re-

quirements, including protecting chil-

dren online and detecting and mitigat-

ing risks like disinformation, under

"Twitter is taking the exercise seri-

ously and has identified the key areas

on which it needs to focus to comply

with the DSA," Breton said, without

providing more details. "With two

both normal and extreme situations.

The mock exercise tested Twitter's

was on avoiding a recession," he said. "However, with persistently high inflation, the focus has shifted from erring on the side of doing too little to doing too much.'

A preliminary report on Friday indicated the overall U.S. economy is continuing to grow, even though manufacturing is shrinking and its output fell to a five-month low

Asia

Asian shares sank sharply Friday after several central banks around the world cranked interest rates higher in their fight against inflation.

Hong Kong and Tokyo shed nearly 2% and most other regional markets declined. U.S. futures and oil prices also were lower

Japan reported its inflation rate was higher than expected, adding to expectionary pressure building up on the supply side, but it is certainly not strong enough for the BOJ to bring about immediate tightening," ING Economics said in a commentary.

The dollar was trading at 143.34 yen, up from 143.10 yen and near its highest level since November. A weaker Japanese ven raises costs for Japanese businesses and consumers given the country's heavy reliance on imports.

Tokyo's Nikkei 225 lost 1.5% to 32,781.54 and the Hang Seng in Hong Kong fell 1.8% to 18,883.80.

In Seoul, the Kospi fell 0.9% to 2,570.10, while Australia's S&P/ASX 200 gave up 1.3% to 7,009.20. Markets in mainland China were closed for a holiday. Shares also fell in Mumbai and Bangkok.

In other trading Friday, U.S. bench-mark crude oil shed 59 cents to \$68.92 per barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. It gave up \$3.02 to \$69.51 on Thursday.

Brent crude, the international standard, lost 53 cents to \$73.82 per barrel.

Currencies

The euro was trading at \$1.0924, down from \$1.0960.

EU official says it has work to do

Is Twitter ready for Europe's new Big Tech rules?

BRUSSELS, June 24, (AP): Twitter needs to do more work to fall in line with the European Union's tough new digital rulebook, a top EU official said after overseeing a "stress test" of the company's systems in Silicon Valley.

European Commissioner Thierry Breton said late Thursday that he noted the "strong commitment of Twitter to comply" with the Digital Services Act, sweeping new standards that the world's biggest online platforms all must obey in just two months.

However, "work needs to continue," he said in a statement after reviewing the results of the voluntary test at Twitter's San Francisco headquarters with owner Elon Musk and new CEO Linda Yaccarino.

Breton, who oversees digital policy, is also meeting other tech bosses in California. He's the EU's point person working to get Big Tech ready for the new rules, which will force companies to crack down on hate speech. disinformation and other harmful and illegal material on their sites. The law takes effect Aug. 25 for the biggest platforms.

The Digital Services Act, along with new regulations in the pipeline for data and artificial intelligence, has made

Tech billionaires' cage match? Musk throws down the gauntlet with no other options" - but then one WASHINGTON, June 24, (AP): Elon Musk and Mark Zuckerberg are ready Twitter user jokingly warned Musk of Zuckerberg's jiu jitsu training.

"I'm up for a cage match if he is lol," Musk wrote late Tuesday.

Zuckerberg, CEO of Facebook and Instagram parent company Meta Platforms, soon responded - and appeared to agree to Musk's

wrote on a Wednesday night Instagram

lation kicks in, work needs to continue for the systems to be in place and work effectively and quickly.

partnership.'

EU carry out the stress test, which the bloc is offering to all tech companies Musk's tweet alongside another user's response urging the Twitter owner to start training.

Zuckerberg is actually trained in mixed martial arts. The Facebook founder posted about completing his first jiu jitsu tournament last month.

In response to Zuckerberg's location request on Wednesday, Musk proposed the Vegas Octagon. He then joked about his fighting skills and workout routine, suggesting that the fight may not be serious.

before the rules take effect. Breton said other online platforms will be carrying out their own stress tests in the coming weeks but didn't name them.

Despite Musk's claims to the contrary, independent researchers have found misinformation - as well as hate speech - spreading on Twitter since the billionaire Tesla CEO took over the company last year. Musk has reinstated notorious election deniers, overhauled Twitter's verification system and gutted much of the staff that had been responsible for moderating posts.

on Twitter and Instagram this week, the two tech billionaires seemingly agreed to a "cage match" face off. It all started when Musk, who owns Twitter, responded to a tweet about Meta reportedly preparing to release proposal.

"Send me location," Zuckerberg story, which showed a screenshot of

a new Twitter rival called "Threads." He took a dig about the world becoming "exclusively under Zuck's thumb

months to go before the new EU regu-

Twitter's global government affairs team tweeted that the company is "on track to be ready when the DSA comes into force." Yaccarino tweeted that "Europe is very important to Twitter and we're focused on our continued

Musk agreed in December to let the

7

Germany sees opportunity in nuclear fusion

The German government announced draft plans Thursday to boost domestic research into development of nuclear fusion, a technology some hope will provide abundant clean energy in the future, but left open how those efforts will be funded.

Science Minister Bettina Stark-Watzinger said that under the proposal, Germany will support all promising fu-sion technologies now being devel-oped, including laser-based methods that achieved recent breakthroughs in the United States but aren't widely researched in Europe. Another method, using powerful mag-

nets, has already received significant support from Germany at both its own Wendelstein 7-X research reactor in the northern town of Greifswald, and at the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor, or ITER, in southern France.

"We want to address both magnet and laser fusion," Stark-Watzinger told reporters in Berlin, adding that the plan is to "substantially" increase the 149 million euros (\$163 million) that Germany currently

provides annually for such research. She declined to be more specific.

"We don't yet know today which power plant concept will succeed," she said. "In the end it will be scientists and industry, which will build the fusion power plant, that decide.

Stark-Watzinger declined to say whether it could result in funding cuts for ITER, which has been plagued by delays and cost overruns, but said Germany would stand by its contractual obligations



Germany's Science Minis-ter Bettina Stark-Watzinger attends a news conference to present the government's new strategy for supporting research into nuclear fusion a technology some hope will some day provide almost unlimited, clean energy, in Berlin, Germany, Thursday, June 22, 2023. (AP)

Initiative addresses rising number of cyberattacks

Google backs creation of cybersecurity clinics with \$20m donation

WASHINGTON, June 24, (AP): Free medical clinics and legal aid clinics, where college students and their instructors help their communities while also learning more about their professions, are now commonplace. Google hopes to add cybersecurity clinics to that list.

Google CEO Sundar Pichai pledged \$20 million in donations on Thursday to support and expand the Consortium of Cybersecurity Clinics to introduce thousands of students to potential careers in cybersecurity, while also helping defend small government offices, rural hospitals and nonprofits from hack-

ing. Pichai said the new initiative addresses both the rising number of cyberattacks - up 38% globally in 2022 - and the lack of candidates trained to stop them.

"Just as technology can create new threats, it can also help us fight them," Pichai said, announcing the commitment at Google's Washington offices. "Security was critical to the work I did early in my Google career, including when we built our Chrome browser. Today, it's core to everything we do, and the current inflection point in AI is helping take our efforts to the next level."



Pichai

The tech giant launched the Google Cybersecurity Cer-tificate program last month to help prepare people for entry-level cybersecurity jobs. It also partnered with universities in New York on a research program to create learning and career opportunities across the cybersecurity sector.

"Making sure we protect and safeguard both the consumer services and the enterprises services we provide is foundational to the company, which is why we treat it treated as such," Pichai told The Associated Press in an interview after the announcement. "We've been building security from the ground up for a long time and training to innovate and stay ahead.

Google's announcement had support from Congressional members on both sides of the aisle. Republican Rep. Jay Obernolte of California said addressing

Canada will require Google and Meta to pay media outlets

OTTAWA, June 24, (AP): Canada's Senate on Thursday passed a bill that will require Google and Meta to pay media outlets for news content that they share or otherwise repurpose on their platforms.

The bill, which is set to become law, was passed amid a standoff between Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's government and Silicon Valley tech giants.

Ottawa has said the law creates a level playing field between online advertising giants and the shrinking news industry. And Canadian Heritage Minister Pablo Rodriguez has promised to push back on what he describes as "threats" from Facebook and Google to remove journalism from their platforms.

Meta confirmed Thursday that it plans to comply with the bill by ending news availability on Facebook and Instagram for its Canadian users, as it had previously suggested. Meta would not offer details about the timeline for that move, but said it will pull local news from its site before the Online News Act takes effect. The bill will come into force six months after it receives royal assent.

cyber threats is essential to the country's economic competitiveness as well as national security. He added that China will likely produce twice as many computer

learners.

Rep. Joaquin Castro of Texas said Google's initiative helps democratize cybersecurity, providing more employment opportunities and more protection to those not located in Silicon Valley

"Small businesses literally can lose hundreds of thousands of dollars every year," Castro said. "I'm grateful to Google for building on their commitment to

"We have repeatedly shared that in order to comply with Bill C-18, which was passed today in Parliament, content from news outlets, including news publishers and broadcasters, will no longer be available to people accessing our platforms in Canada," said Lisa Laventure, head of communications for Meta in Canada.

Legacy media and broadcasters have praised the bill, which promises to "enhance fairness" in the digital news marketplace and help bring in more money for shrinking newsrooms. Tech giants including Meta and Google have been blamed in the past for disrupting and dominating the advertising industry, eclipsing smaller, traditional players.

Meta, which is based in Menlo Park, California, has taken similar steps in the past. In 2021, it briefly blocked news from its platform in Australia after the country passed legislation that would compel tech companies to pay publishers for using their news stories. It later struck deals with Australian publishers.

support the growth of a workforce necessary to do everything from securing critical infrastructure in local communities to bolstering our national security.

Pichai said there are currently more than 650,000 open cybersecurity jobs and there is a need for a diverse workforce to address the issue. "We have seen this in the past when we've gone to communities and open data centers in rural communities," he said. "It creates a spark. It inspires more people... These are catalyzing moments.

Justin Steele, director of Google.org, the company's philanthropic arm, said the initiative appealed to his team because it seeks projects where the funding can spawn change on multiple levels.

"It's a challenge," Steele said. "But there's a huge opportunity here."

The Conversation

How will AI affect workers?

Tech waves of past show how unpredictable the path can be

By Bhaskar Chakravorti

Tufts University

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

The explosion of interest in artificial intelligence has drawn attention not only to the astonishing capacity of algorithms to mimic humans but to the reality that these algorithms could displace many humans in their jobs. The economic and societal consequences could be nothing short of dramatic.

The route to this economic transformation is through the workplace. A widely circulated Goldman Sachs study anticipates that about two-thirds of current occupations over the next decade could be affected and a quarter to a half of the work people do now could be taken over by an algorithm. Up to 300 million jobs worldwide could be affected. The consulting firm McKinsey released its own study predicting an AI-powered boost of US\$4.4 trillion to the global economy every year.

the 1970s and 1980s, coinciding with the introduction of computers and early digital technologies. This "productivity paradox" was famously captured in a comment from MIT economist Bob Solow: You can see the computer age everywhere but in the productivity statistics

Digital technology skeptics blamed "unproductive" time spent on social media or shopping and argued that earlier transformations, such as the introductions of electricity or the internal combustion engine, had a bigger role in fundamentally altering the nature of work. Techno-optimists disagreed; they argued that new digital technologies needed time to translate into productivity growth, because other complementary changes would need to evolve in parallel. Yet others worried that productivity measures were not adequate in capturing the value of computers. For a while, it seemed that the optimists would be vindicated. In the second half of the 1990s, around the time the World Wide Web emerged, productivity growth in the U.S. doubled, from 1.5% per year in the first half of that decade to 3% in the second. Again, there were disagreements about what was really going on, further muddying the waters as to whether the paradox had been resolved. Some argued that, indeed, the investments in digital technologies were finally paying off, while an alternative view was that managerial and technological innovations in a few key industries were the main drivers. Regardless of the explanation, just as mysteriously as it began, that late 1990s surge was short-lived. So despite massive corporate investment in computers and the internet - changes that transformed the workplace - how much the economy and workers' wages benefited from technology remained uncertain. While the start of the 21st century coincided with the bursting of the socalled dot-com bubble, the year 2007 was marked by the arrival of another technology revolution: the Apple iPhone, which consumers bought by the millions and which companies deployed in countless ways. Yet labor productivity growth started stalling again in the mid-2000s, ticking up briefly in 2009 during the Great Recession, only to return to a slump from 2010 to 2019. Throughout this new slump, technooptimists were anticipating new winds of change. AI and automation were becoming all the rage and were expected to transform work and worker productivity. Beyond traditional industrial automation, drones and advanced robots, capital and talent were pouring into many would-be game-changing technologies, including autonomous vehicles, automated checkouts in grocery stores and even pizza-making robots. AI and automation were projected to push productivity growth above 2% annually in a decade, up from the 2010-2014 lows of 0.4%. But before we could get there and gauge how these new technologies would ripple through the workplace, a new surprise hit: the COVID-19 pandemic. Devastating as the pandemic was, worker productivity surged after it began in 2020; output per hour worked globally hit 4.9%, the highest recorded since data has been available.

LONDON, June 24, (AP): Fears that the British economy is heading for recession mounted sharply Thursday after the Bank of England raised borrowing costs by more than anticipated, seeking to combat stubbornly high inflation with a hike that will hit borrowers hard, particularly homeowners who have to refinance in the coming months.

On a busy day for central bank

New interest rate highest in 15 years

borrowing rates by more than expected



Recession fears mount after BoE raises

science students with doctoral degrees this year than the United States. "We need to incentivize students to pursue careers in fields like cybersecurity to reverse that trend," he said. "We must all embrace the idea of becoming lifelong

The implications of such gigantic numbers are sobering, but how reliable are these predictions?

I lead a research program called Digital Planet that studies the impact of digital technologies on lives and livelihoods around the world and how this impact changes over time. A look at how previous waves of such digital technologies as personal computers and the internet affected workers offers some insight into AI's potential impact in the years to come. But if the history of the future of work is any guide, we should be prepared for some surprises.

 key metric for tracking the consequences of technology on the economy is growth in worker productivity - defined as how much output of work an employee can generate per hour. This seemingly dry statistic matters to every working individual, because it ties directly to how much a worker can expect to earn for every hour of work. Said another way, higher productivity is expected to lead to higher wages.

Generative AI products are capable of producing written, graphic and audio content or software programs with minimal human involvement. Professions such as advertising, entertainment and creative and analytical work could be among the first to feel the effects. Individuals in those fields may worry that companies will use generative AI to do jobs they once did, but economists see great potential to boost productivity of the workforce as a whole.

The Goldman Sachs study predicts productivity will grow by 1.5% per year because of the adoption of generative AI alone, which would be nearly double the rate from 2010 and 2018. McKinsey is even more aggressive, saying this technology and other forms of automation will usher in the "next productivity frontier," pushing it as high as 3.3% a year by 2040.

That sort of productivity boost, which would approach rates of previous years, would be welcomed by both economists and, in theory, workers as well.

If we were to trace the 20th-century history of productivity growth in the U.S., it galloped along at about 3% annually from 1920 to 1970, lifting real wages and living standards. Interestingly, productivity growth slowed in action in Europe, the Bank of England (BoE) said its nine-member Monetary Policy Committee decided to lift its main interest rate by half a percentage point to a fresh 15-year high of 5%. All but two on the panel backed the half-point increase.

The size of the bank's 13th hike in a row was a surprise, with most economists predicting a smaller quarterpoint increase. Some even termed it a panic move given that there had been hopes as recently as last month that the bank would pause its rate-hiking cycle.

Financial markets are pricing in a potential rate peak of 6%, a level not hit since early 2000, after Bank Gov. Andrew Bailey warned of further increases if inflation fails to show clear signs of slowing.

"We are committed to returning inflation to the 2% target and will make the decisions necessary to achieve that," he said.

Clearly, the bank has been spooked by inflation failing to ease as fast as predicted from October's peak of 11.1%. Figures on Wednesday showed U.K. inflation unexpectedly holding steady at 8.7%.

Inflation has proven stickier in the U.K. than in other major economies, with many blaming the bank for being too slow to start raising borrowing rates and Britain's departure from the European Union, which has added to import costs.

With wages rising fast, it's increas-ingly clear that high inflation has become embedded in the economy.

"We know this is hard - many people with mortgages or loans will be understandably worried about what this means for them," Bailey said. "But if we don't raise rates now, it could be worse later."

Across Europe, central banks also decided to push up borrowing costs Thursday, including the Swiss National Bank with a quarter-point hike and Norway with a half-point increase. Turkey hiked sharply in a signal of a shift from unusual economic policies.

Banks around the world, from the U.S. Federal Reserve to European Central Bank, have rapidly raised interest rates over the past couple of years to bring down inflation first stoked by supply chain backups tied to the rebound from the pandemic and then Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which caused energy and food costs to surge.

The Fed has since paused but indicated the possibility of more hikes this

Higher interest rates help lower inflation by making it more expensive for individuals and businesses to borrow, meaning they potentially spend less, reducing demand and pressure on prices.

aA man walks past the Bank of England, at the financial district in London, on May 11, 2023. The Bank of England raised borrowing costs again on Thursday June 22, 2023, to combat stubbornly high inflation, which has failed to come down from its peak as quickly as expected. (AP)

Ghosn says \$1bn lawsuit against Nissan is reasonable given his suffering after arrest

BEIRUT, June 24, (AP): Carlos Ghosn said Friday that the \$1 billion lawsuit he recently filed against Nissan and others is just the beginning of his fight. The former Nissan CEO said dur-

ing an interview with The Associated Press in Beirut that had he been an American citizen filing a lawsuit in the United States, "I would not be asking for \$1 billion, but for much more, given his suffering.

Ghosn led Japanese automaker Nissan for two decades, rescuing it from near-bankruptcy, before he was arrested in Japan in November 2018 on charges of breach of trust, misusing company assets for personal gains and violating securities laws by not fully disclosing his compensation.

He fled Japan in December 2019 for Lebanon where he has lived since.

Ghosn is wanted in Japan and France. Since he fled to Lebanon, Beirut has received three notices from Interpol based on arrest warrants for him from those countries. In France, he is facing a number of legal challenges, including tax evasion and alleged money laundering, fraud and misuse of company assets while at the helm of

The U.K. rate hike will pile further pressure on borrowers, particularly the 1.4 million or so households that will have to refinance their mortgages over the rest of the year. Those on variable mortgages, which track the bank's base rate, will face an imminent increase in their repayments. Renters, too, are fac-

ing increases. "The rise in interest rates to 5% will push millions of households with mortgages towards the brink of insolvency," warned Max Mosley, an economist at the National Institute for Economic and Social Research.

The increases will clearly come at a cost, and there are concerns over the outlook for the British economy, the Renault-Nissan alliance.

Lebanon has no extradition treaty with Japan and does not extradite its citizens. Ghosn has French, Brazilian and Lebanese citizenship.

Ghosn was kept in solitary confinement in Japan for months without being allowed to speak with his wife. He has said he fled the country fearing he would have no chance of a fair trial.

Ghosn said it took him more than three years to file the lawsuit because he wanted it to be as solid as possible based on evidence, on facts, (and) on witnesses." He added that



Former Nissan executive Carlos Ghosn speaks during an interview with The Associated Press in Beirut, Lebanon, Friday, June 23,

which has so far avoided falling into recession even as Europe's economy contracted slightly in the six months ending in March.

"It is increasingly difficult to see how the U.K. avoids a recession as part of the process of bringing inflation down," said Luke Bartholomew, senior economist at asset management firm abrdn. "And today's large rate increase will probably be seen in retrospect as an important milestone towards that recession."

In a recession, unemployment would inevitably increase and home repossessions would become more prevalent - hardly the backdrop the Conservative government wants ahead

"our intention is to win it, so in order to win it, it has to be substantiated by a lot of facts. That's why it took a lot of time.'

A hearing date in the case by Lebanon's prosecution is set for Sept. 18.

Half of the money sought by the 69-year-old Ghosn is for damages, he said, while the other half is for compensation including salary, retirement funds and stock options.

Ghosn is also seeking monetary compensation from a Nissan affiliate based in Lebanon, as well as entities that took part in the investigation leading up to his arrest and those that obtained documents and computers from his homes.

When contacted by the AP in Tokyo for comment on the lawsuit, a Nissan official said: "We will not be commenting."

Ghosn fled Japan after jumping a \$14 million bail in a Hollywood-style caper. His improbable escape - hidden in a box stashed in the hold of a Turkey-bound private jet - embarrassed Japanese authorities and allowed him to evade trial.

Ghosn, however, alleges that he was ousted illegally from the company.

of a likely general election next year. It is trailing the main opposition Labour Party in the polls.

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, who has made halving inflation this year to around 5% his main priority, said he understood the "anxiety" people are feeling.

"I'm here to tell you that I am totally, 100% on it, and it's going to be OK, and we are going to get through this," he told workers at a warehouse in Dartford, just east of London.

Not everyone is convinced the bank is doing the right thing, arguing that previous interest rate increases have yet to work their way through the economy - there's always a lag.

BUSINESS

8

US launches prosecutions of Chinese companies

The U.S. Justice Department filed criminal charges on Friday against four Chinese companies and eight individuals for allegedly trafficking the chemicals used to make the highly addictive painkiller fentanyl in the United States and Mexico.

The three separate indictments unsealed in federal court in New York represent the first prosecutions to charge China-based chemical companies and Chinese nationals with illegally selling the chemicals used to make fentanyl, which has been blamed for a deadly overdose crisis. A spokesperson for the Chinese

Embassy condemned the charges, accusing the U.S. government of seeking to shift the blame for its domestic drug problem. Federal prosecutors said the

companies marketed the fentanyl precursor chemicals on their websites and social media accounts, advertised that they accepted payment in cryptocurrency and shipped them to drug traffickers including Mexico's Sinaloa cartel.

"When I announced in April that the Justice Department had taken significant enforcement actions against the Sinaloa Cartel, I promised that the Justice Department would never forget the victims of the fentanyl epidemic," Attorney General Merrick Garland said in a news release. (AP)

US aircraft carrier will make a rare Vietnam port call

An American aircraft carrier was due to make a port call in Vietnam on Sunday - a rare visit by one of the U.S. Navy's biggest ships that comes as Washington and Beijing both step up efforts to bolster ties with Southeast Asian nations

with Southeast Asian nations. The USS Ronald Reagan, a nuclear-powered Nimitz-class aircraft carrier, was scheduled to arrive in Da Nang on June 25 and stay through June 30, making use of a port that was modernized and ex-

s panded by the United States during the war in Vietnam, the country's Foreign Ministry announced. It will be only the third such visit

by an American aircraft carrier since the end of the hostilities. The visit comes about a month

after a Chinese navy training ship made its own port call in Da Nang as part of what it called a goodwill tour that also took it to Thailand, Brunei and the Philippines. Japan's largest destroyer, Izumo, made a port call in Vietnam over the past week, following exercises in the South China Sea with the Reagan, among other American ships.

American ships. "Recently, Vietnam has received visits from naval vessels from different countries, and this time it will be a visit from the USS Ronald Reagan," Vietnam's Vn-Express online newspaper quoted Foreign Ministry spokesperson Pham Thu Hang as saying. (AP)

'Pleased to share this special moment with all my colleagues at AUB'

Jehad Al-Humaidhi receives MENA Islamic Banker of Year 2023 Award

KUWAIT CITY, June 24: Ms. Jehad Al-Humaidhi, Chief Executive Officer and Board Member of Ahli United Bank, received the MENA Islamic Banker of the Year 2023 Award by the prestigious MEED International magazine. Al-Humaidhi received this notable award in recognition of her exceptional leadership, support for technological innovation in the banking sector, diverse expertise, and active membership in several boards of emerging institutions in the fields of electronic payment, credit monitoring, risk assessment, and Takaful insurance. The award also recognizes Al-Humaidhi's outstanding efforts in Islamic banking spanning over 38 years since joining Ahli United Bank.

Al-Humaidhi received the award at a ceremony held at Ahli United Bank and attended by representatives of the bank's Executive Management. On this occasion, Ms. Jehad Al-Humaidhi said: "I am pleased to receive this award by MEED magazine which is known for its outstanding reputation. I am also pleased to share this special moment with all my colleagues at AUB, as this recognition is not for me alone, but for all my colleagues who have contributed to achieving the success that comes first and foremost in the name of Ahli United Bank and adds to its achievements. We all work to attain success for the bank and to maintain the trust of its shareholders and valued customers."

Al-Humaidhi emphasized that Ahli United Bank always reaps awards that demonstrate the success of all bank departments and the excellence of its business model. She added that these international awards and recognitions are the fruit of the sincere efforts of all the bank employees.

Al-Humaidhi expressed her gratitude to MEED team and praised the support of AUB Board of Directors, which is the primary driver for every success achieved by the bank and all its employees. She also expressed her sincere thanks to the Central Bank of Kuwait for its support and backing to national women's leadership and the banking sector in general.

Al-Humaidhi highlighted the role of the exceptional work environment and the family spirit at Ahli United Bank in retaining and refining national talents, as well as providing equal opportuni-



Jehad Al-Humaidhi receiving the award from Colin Foreman, the head of MEED's editorial team.

ties for the outstanding individuals. She emphasized that sustaining success requires a positive and stable work environment. In an interview with MEED maga-

zine on the occasion of winning the MENA Islamic Banker of the Year 2023 Award, Al-Humaidhi underscored that working in the banking world is an ever challenging career which is chosen by people who really accept and enjoy working in a challenging environment. Therefore, I found banking is more close to my aspirations. It is a career that provides greater opportunity for continuous fast paced training and personal development.

"At AUB, we enjoy the maximum

standards of diversity and fair treatments. Discrimination in any manner does not exist at the bank. Employees with different genders, religions and backgrounds are working in cooperation and harmony. In this atmosphere, women are empowered by all training opportunities and career progressing same as men. Efficiency and track achievements are the drivers always.", Al-Humaidhi added.

Al-Humaidhi advised every person with ambition must plan ahead for each and every task or project and determine the achievable objectives at the beginning, and women are no different.

Regarding the initiatives undertaken by Ahli United Bank to innovate and improve its products and services, Al-Humaidhi pointed out that there is a long list of initiatives that were recently undertaken by AUB. This includes the newer state-of-the-art B2B application launched with a free style operating models. Also AUB was pioneer in launching Apple pay and Google pay in Kuwait.Furthermore, all our products are being improved and benchmarked with the market regularly.

As for the role that Islamic finance

plays in supporting sustainable and long-term investment decisions, Al-Humaidhi pointed out that Islamic banks provide competitive products and services to a diverse customer base. She added that AUB products provide great opportunity for investment in sharia complaint products. Saving, finance, real-estate and investment products of AUB are carefully tailored to suit all Muslim and non-Muslims.

Al-Humaidhi expected the growth in Islamic banking to double in 2023, especially in the Gulf Cooperation Council countries.

"At AUB we grasp every good opportunity to be part of syndication finances for infrastructure and mega project in addition to corporate, SMEs, and consumer banking.", Al-Humaidhi added.

Al-Humaidhi highlighted that the Central Bank of Kuwait plays a vital role in maintaining a solid financial stability system. The Kuwaiti Ministry of Finance also sponsors the government investments. Hence, this contributes to the steady and secure progress of the financial system.

Biden, Indian premier meet Apple, Google CEOs and other executives

WASHINGTON, June 24, (AP): President Joe Biden and Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday joined top American and Indian executives in talks to increase cooperation between the two countries on artificial intelligence, semiconductor production and space.

On the final day of Modi's fourday state visit, the leaders put a spotlight on the "Innovation HandModi wraps state visit



Warren's example remains powerful

Buffett has given \$50.7b toward historic pledges to Gates Foundation and others

WASHINGTON, June 24, (AP): After 17 years of steady payments, Warren Buffett has to date given annual donations totaling \$50.7 billion toward his historic multibillion-dollar pledges to the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and to four foundations connected to his family, according to a Chronicle tally. He announced his latest annual payments toward his pledges on Wednesday.

Buffett became the biggest donor in history in June 2006, when he pledged 10 million shares of his Berkshire Hathaway Class B stock, then valued at about \$36.1 billion, to the Gates Foundation, plus 1 million Berkshire shares, then valued at \$3.6 billion, to the foundation named for his late first wife, Susan Thompson Buffett, and 350,00 shares, then valued at about \$1.3 billion apiece, to foundations created by his three children, Susan, Howard, and Peter Buffett.

Combined, those five pledges amounted to more than \$43.5 billion at the time In 2010 Buffett and Berk shire's other shareholders approved a stock split, which significantly increased the number of shares Buffet has given the five foundations in the years since With these latest payments, he has given the Gates Foundation nearly \$39.3 billion, the Susan Thompson Buffett Foundation almost \$4.2 billion, and more than \$2.4 billion apiece to the Sherwood, Howard G. Buffett, and Novo foundations. Although he has exceeded his original pledges, a spokeswoman for Buffett told the Chronicle that he will continue to make payments to the five foundations throughout his lifetime as he promised to do in the statements he made announcing the pledges in 2006. When Buffett announced his huge pledge to the Gates Foundation, he said he was doing so because he was confident it could make the most of the money "I don't think I'm as well cut out to be a philanthropist as Bill and Melinda Buffett told Fortune magazine in are, 2006. "What can be more logical, in whatever you want done, than finding someone better equipped than you are to do it?"

philanthropy historian Benjamin Soskis says Buffett's decision to give the money to an organization he thought could handle it better than he could was "innovative," and he wishes others would have followed Buffett's lead.

"If more wealthy donors had embraced that, it really could have had a huge impact on the sector because it would have concentrated funding in smaller and smaller fieldoms," Soskis says. "It was a really interesting idea, but not one that has been widely taken up."

Buffett's example remains powerful more than 15 years later, says Phil Buchanan, who leads the Center for Effective Philanthropy, because it showed rich donors that having tens of billions of dollars does not mean they have to pursue their philanthropic goals by creating a new foundation that will exist long after they are gone.

"He showed folks that there are existing institutions that you can look to, whether foundations, in his case, or any number of different giv nonprofits themselves," Buchanan says. "I think that's really healthy and positive.' Buffett structured his Gates Foundation pledge so it would receive 5% of the promised shares each year starting in 2006. He stipulated that either Bill Gates or Melinda French Gates "must remain alive and active in the policysetting and administration of the foundation" to continue receiving the annual disbursements. He also said the Gates Foundation must spend the value of the previous year's gift plus 5% of its net assets each year and that spending excesses could be carried forward and shortfalls made up the following year. Buffett joined the Gates Foundation board and has made gifts toward his commitment every summer since he announced the pledge. Philanthropy experts say that by making the Gates Foundation one of the wealthiest grantmakers in the world, Buffett's pledge triggered a shifting of power within the foundation world: The Gates Foundation rose to the top of the heap, and some legacy grantmakers saw their power dim. It also placed the Gates Foundation under a microscope of public scrutiny. "Buffett turned a large foundation into a colossus and into something that was an order of magnitude much larger than its peers," Soskis says. "The amount of pressure that put on the institution to spend amounts of money that no foundation had ever spent before on a consistent basis as a normal form of operation required a real transformation of the foundation and a scaling of its bureaucracy and of its ambition, and so it turned what was already an incredibly large foundation into what it's become now, which is, both for critics and for champions, the embodiment of large-scale philanthropic funding."

shake," a new initiative aimed at addressing regulatory hurdles that stand in the way of partnership between the two countries.

"Our countries are taking innovation and cooperation to new levels," Biden told the group, which included Apple CEO Tim Cook, Google CEO Sundar Pichai and Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella. "We're going to see more technological change ... in the next 10 years than we've seen in the last 50 years."

White House officials say India's deep talent pool will be crucial in building more resilient supply chains and developing technology to address climate change. All this comes as the administration has sought to put the U.S.-India relationship on a higher plane in the face of an ascendant China in the Indo-Pacific.

Modi commended Biden for seeing "the possibility that India represents."

As part of Modi's state's visit - the first by an Indian leader since Manmohan Singh in 2009 - the two leaders announced several major investments by U.S.-based companies in India.

Micron Technology has agreed to build a \$2.75 billion semiconductor assembly and test facility in India, with Micron spending more than \$800 million and India financing the rest. U.S.-

President Joe Biden speaks during a meeting with India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi and American and Indian business leaders in the East Room of the White House, Friday, June 23, 2023, in Washington. (AP)

based Applied Materials will launch a new semiconductor center for commercialization and innovation in India, and Lam Research, another semiconductor manufacturing equipment company, will start a training program for 60,000 Indian engineers.

On the space front, India signed on to the Artemis Accords, a blueprint for space exploration cooperation among nations participating in NA-SA's lunar exploration plans. NASA and the Indian Space Research Organization also agreed to make a joint mission to the International Space Station next year.

Earlier this year, the two countries launched the Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technologies, which sets the path for collaboration on semiconductor production, developing artificial intelligence, and a loosening of export control rules. The initiative was critical in sealing a deal, announced Thursday, that will allow U.S.-based General Electric to partner with India's Hindustan Aeronautics to produce jet engines in India.

Despite all the deal-making and the free-flowing praise between the leaders, Modi's visit was accompanied by controversy over India's erosion of religious, press and political freedoms under his watch.

Human rights activists and some U.S. lawmakers had objected to the administration's decision to honor Modi with a state visit. In an address to Congress and comments to the press, the prime minister pushed back against the notion that India has turned a blind eve to the mistreatment of its minority communities.

India has "proved that democracies can deliver and when I say deliver, this is regardless of class, creed, religion, gender," Modi declared.

But at Friday's White House press briefing, National Security Council spokesman John Kirby did not directly answer whether Biden was satisfied with Modi's comments on human rights.

rights. "The president was satisfied that he had the opportunity to discuss concerns over human rights with Prime Minister Modi," he said.

Later at a State Department luncheon hosted by Vice President Kamala Harris, whose mother was Indian, and Secretary of State Antony Blinken, the U.S.-India relationship was celebrated further, and without reservation.

That thinking was greeted with enthusiastic approval by philanthropy experts in 2006 and remains admired today. The

'I will not sell this piece of art to anyone who makes an offer'

Restorer brings back to life famed Cadillac Sevilles once assembled in Iran

TEHRAN, Iran, June 24, (AP): The sleek, polished dark blue 1978 Cadillac Seville eased slowly out of a showroom near Iran's capital, its driver carefully inserting the 8-track tape that came with it to blast the sounds of a time long since past.

The Sevilles, once assembled in Iran, represented the height of luxury in the country just before the 1979 Islamic Revolution. General Motors had partnered with an Iranian firm to build the sedans, selling them for two-and-a-half times the price in America at the zenith of the country's oil wealth.

Today, Khosro Dahaghin's passion for restoring the cars means he carefully examines each frame, component and stitch of the Sevilles in Iran, a challenge that's only grown as parts become scarce, the vehicles get older and as the country faces U.S. sanctions over its nuclear program.

"The most luxurious and the most special car that was assembled in Iran was Cadillac Iran," Dahaghin told The Associated Press as he wore a necklace bearing the iconic Cadillac crest. "The first time this car was assembled outside U.S soil was in Iran. At that time I can say no other brand could rival this car in any aspect imaginable."

To the uninitiated, the Seville may seem like a strange pick for a soughtafter antique car with its almost boxy frame and wood-accented interior. However, it represented a sea change for Cadillac at a time when American buyers sought the smaller luxury cars coming from European manufacturers. Cadillac had been better known for the massive, finned cars of the past and the Seville's fuel economy and handling caught the attention of drivers.

In the Seville, car buyers got a powerful, fuel-injected V8 engine, a pillowy interior, power seats and automatic door locks and windows. A base model Seville initially sold for \$12,479 in 1975 when it entered the market - the equivalent today of over \$70,000. General Motors produced nearly 57,000 Sevilles in the 1978 model year alone.

Back then, Iran had the only Cadillac production outside of the United States. GM created General Motors Iran Ltd., which produced the Seville and other vehicles from so-called knock-down kits from Detroit. The Seville represented the most luxurious vehicle on the road assembled in Iran, under the supervision of American engineers. The Sevilles went for some \$35,000 at the time they were introduced - more than what American consumers paid, in part due to higher import duties.

"As soon as they have the money, they want a pair of Levi's and a car," a General Motors official said of Iranians, according to a New York Times story about the Seville there in 1977.

How many were built remains a question among Iran's car aficionados.

Saeed Shobeiri, the editor-in-chief of Machine Magazine in Tehran, said estimates ranged as high as over 2,600. Michael T. Albano, a Cadillac spokesman in the U.S., said he believed some 2,500 were built.

But the 1979 Islamic Revolution saw the overthrow of the American-backed shah and the installation of Iran's theocratic government. Americans and GM left the country. Sevilles continued to be built from the remaining knock-down kits for several more years as Iran nationalized the GM Iran plant, creating the manufacturer Pars Khodro that stills exists today.

GM ultimately was awarded some \$20 million from the Iran-United States Claims Tribunal, set up as part of the Algiers Accords that saw the captives taken at the U.S. Embassy in Iran freed. Today, Shobeiri estimated as many as 60 Sevilles are street-worthy, with more than 100 others unable to be driven.

That's where Dahaghin and his colleagues come in. Since 2013 after being inspired by the former MTV reality show "Pimp My Ride," Dahaghin restores Cadillac Sevilles at his garage in Roudehen, some 45 kilometers (30 miles) east of downtown Tehran.

There, Seville frames sit outside a shop bearing the Cadillac crest. Inside, Dahaghin runs his hands over every line of a car body, those not yet worked on bearing signs of rust and their age. One of the Seville's big V8 engines sat alongside.

"Over time, these cars became broken and worn out as a result of poor usage and lack of proper maintenance," Dahaghin said. "Some of them were destroyed. Now we restore these cars after years and when they are back on streets they are both very beautiful and very special compared to other cars."

But the restoration is not easy. Each vehicle can take up to a year and a half to finish to Dahaghin's specifications. Finding components can be a challenge as well, with some occasionally being hand-carried back into Iran by those traveling abroad.

"I will not sell this piece of art to anyone who makes an offer," Dahaghin said. "The buyer must appreciate the value of this artwork."



Workers clean an under restored Cadillac Seville at Khosro Dahaghin's workshop in Roudehen, some 30 miles (45 kilometers) east of downtown Tehran, Iran, Wednesday, June 7, 2023. (AP)

BUSINESS

high customer demand for KFH (You Deserve) campaign

Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has announced that its successful (You Deserve) salary transfer campaign continues to achieve goals and attract new Kuwaiti customers.

The new campaign comprises distinctive rewards and offers that are geared to the interests and aspirations of different customer segments including a guaranteed cash gift of up to K.D 400, up to 40,000 Baitak bonus points, a cash gift of K.D 100 when nominating a new Ku-waiti customer for salary transfer, a chance to win cash prizes and gold biscuit among 536 winners with the Al-Rabeh account, in addition to the unprecedented Emergency Cash service that allows the customer to withdraw part of the salary in ad-vance immediately and without fees through KFH applications.

KFH said that the campaign is a confirmation of KFH's continuous keen-ness to provide the best benefits to its customers, with the aim of encouraging them to benefit from Al-Rabeh account by transferring their salaries & enjoy the various benefits it offers KFH added that the customer is

able to open Al-Rabeh account with-out any fees or cost, with an ATM card free for the first year, pointing out that Al-Rabeh is a saving account for salary transfer which offers annual distributions and opportunities to win K.D 1,500 weekly for ten winners, a chance to win 1 kilo of gold per month for one winner, and K.D 25,000 for one winner every quarter. The customer also may enter the weekly, monthly and quarterly draws when a minimum of three salary transfers are deposited in the account three months prior to the draw date. KFH also offers a range of banking

products that are tailored to the needs and aspirations of different customer segments such as KFH long-term investment plans, which encourage and incentivize customers to promote a culture of planning and saving, prior-itizing family spending, and enhancing opportunities to increase family income through innovative and flexible solutions with good annual investment returns.



(You Deserve) IRabeh

Empowering education through its 'upgrade' CSR initiative

stc sponsors graduation ceremony for disabled students

KUWAIT CITY, June 24: Kuwait Telecommunications Company - stc, a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers, announced its main sponsorship of the graduation ceremony honoring students with physical disabilities for the second year in a row. The ceremony was held under the pa-tronage of His Excellency the Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education, Dr. Hamad Al Adhwani, in the presence of the Assistant Undersecretary for Special and Specific Education, Mr. Osama Al Sultan and the presence of several GCC ambassadors in Kuwait. The sponsorship comes under stc's "upgrade" initiative that was launched under the Company's extensive corporate social responsibility (CSR) program to contribute to and support the local education system.

As a firm believer that knowledge propels innovation and development, stc stood as a proud sponsor of this celebratory initiative that aligned with its core values of promoting leadership and self-growth. Engineer Fahad Al Ali, CTO of stc, and Danah AlJasem, General Manager of Corporate Communications at stc, attended the event on behalf of stc where 100 students with physical disabilities were honored amongst their proud families, friends and teachers.

Al Ali delivered an inspirational speech to the students saying, "Education is a powerful catalyst for personal growth and societal progress. It is through education that we gain the knowledge, skills, and confidence to overcome challenges and pursue our dreams. The students we honor today



The Ministry of Education presents an honorary shield to Mrs. Dana Al Jassim, represented by stc, the main sponsor of the graduation ceremony. underlines stc's commitment to nurtur-

ing the leaders of tomorrow. It is heart-

ening to witness such an exceptional

group of students who exemplify our

belief in knowledge and education as

the foundation of progress. We are true

believers in education being the key

to unlocking boundless opportunities,

have not only demonstrated exceptional academic achievements, but they have also shown tremendous resilience in overcoming challenges. Their determination and unwavering spirit serve as an inspiration to us all.'

Al Ali added, "Our recognition and support of these bright minds today

empowering you to shape a brighter tomorrow and a world where every dream can become attainable."

In line with its CSR framework and commitment to collaborate and support government initiatives, stc took on the role as the exclusive sponsor of the graduation ceremony. The event

showcased stc's dedication to fostering academic excellence and empowering students. As a gesture of appreciation for the exceptional achievements of the students, stc once again distributed gifts during the ceremony. This year's graduation ceremony was a remark-able milestone as it united students from 12 different schools in Kuwait, as part of the Ministry of Education's initiative to create a shared platform for celebrating their success.

Iniatives

Al Ali continued, "stc has and will continue to be a strong advocate for higher education, which is reflected through its various initiatives and collaboration with key players within this essential sector. We are champions of youth development and enhancing the level of education to be in line with the highest standards. It has been a privilege to recognize and join in the celebration of the accomplishments of these exceptionally bright minds. Together with our community, we will continue to explore opportunities that create a positive impact and contribute to the growth of our nation.'

Al Ali concluded his speech by say ing, "On behalf of the entire stc family, I extend my heartfelt congratulations to each and every one of you. Your success today not only brings joy to your loved ones but also inspires us all. May your journey be filled with continued success, happiness, and the fulfillment of all your dreams. We stand beside you, ready to support and champion your endeavors as you shape a brighter future for yourselves and our nation.

stc participated in several initia-

tives to empower the local education system that were coordinated under its "upgrade" initiative. The most recent of these initiatives included the Company's main sponsorship role in the 'Seniors Expo', one of the largest educational exhibitions in Kuwait with the participation of all colleges and universities in Kuwait, with over 120 public high schools for girls and boys in attendance. In line with its strategy to empower and attract talented Kuwaiti youths who fit into the dynamic culture of stc, the company has participated in many career fairs in different Kuwaiti universities.

It is worth mentioning that stc has been a long-time supporter of students and graduates as the Company has participated in numerous events, as it has always honored outstanding students, in addition to sponsoring various other graduation ceremonies with the aim of empowering the younger generation through various aspects of their lives within the community.

And within the framework of its strategic partnership with "Dawrat", a platform for education services and digital courses, stc has organized a series of workshops at its headquarters office building and online training courses in a number of diverse fields to enable education and provide meaningful content to the community.

To find out more about stc's events, promotions, and sponsorships, follow stc's official social media platforms, visit one of stc's branches, download mystc mobile application, visit www. stc.som.kw or contact the customer service center by dialing 102 for around the clock assistance.

Valuable cash prizes

July 1 last day for depositing to enter Al Dirwaza account August draw: KIB

KUWAIT CITY, June 24: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) announced that July 1st is the last date to open or deposit in Al Dirwaza account to enter the August monthly draw for a chance to win prizes of KD 20,000 for 11 winners. Accordingly, the Bank is reminding its current and potential customers to open or deposit more in Al Dirwaza



KIB provides Eidiya notes through all its 'branches'



account to increase their chances in August's Draw that will take place in the presence of representatives from Ministry of Commerce and the Industry, as well as representatives from KIB.

Ali AlSane, Manager - Product Development, Digital Transformation & Innovation at KIB, said: "We encourage everyone to take advantage of this opportunity to open or deposit more in Al Dirwaza account to increase their chances in August's Draw. Each KD 1 completed a full month's cycle in the account will count for one chance and chances are calculated based on the lowest monthly balance preceding the draw. We would like to remind our customers who already opened Al Dirwaza account that their winning chances in the draw on cash prizes increase with higher deposits. As for potential customers, we invite them to open Al Dirwaza account by visiting

the branches or through the KIB Mobile application and benefit from the best draw account in Kuwait.' AlSane Ali high-KIB's

further lighted commitment to and meeting exceeding its

AlSane customers' expectations by designing tailored prize offers, introducing innovative banking products, and launching promotional campaigns that add value to their lives, in line with KIB's "Bank for Life" slogan

Required

Each month, 11 account holders have the chance of winning valuable cash prizes, with the first winner receiving KD 10,000 and the remaining 10 receiving KD 1,000. The Bank announces the winners of the monthly draw on its website and social media channels, as well as in newspapers. The cash prizes are deposited in their Al Dirwaza accounts within two business days from the announcement. To enter the upcoming Al Dirwaza draws, KIB customers can open an account at any time and at any place. A minimum of KD 100 is required to open an account and can only be withdrawn upon account closure.

It serves to note that Al Dirwaza account is the best-in-class savings account in the sector, with annual expected profits up to 2% disbursed on monthly basis, where the customer gets an expected profit of 2% for the first 3 months from the account opening date and up to 1% expected rate onward. The expected profits are automatically deposited into the customer's account within the first day of the beginning of each month.

KUWAIT CITY, June 24: In the lead-up to the Eid Al Adha holiday, Kuwait International Bank (KIB) announced that it would continue to provide Eidiya

Kuwait.

holidavs

community

special



which it operates Al-Shuwaired while providing diversified offer-

ings for a unique banking experience. It also comes within the framework of its participation in the Central Bank of Kuwait's Eidity campaign, launched in collaboration with the Kuwait Banking Association (KBA).

Moreover, Al Dirwaza account, which is compliant with the provisions of Islamic Sharia and approved by the KIB's Sharia Board, comes with a wide range of benefits. These include the ease of opening the account without requiring a salary transfer and the remote opening of the account through KIB Online or KIB Mobile application. In addition, the account automatically grants customers instant issuance

Commenting on the initiative, Faisal Al-Shuwaired, Assistant General Manager of the Retail Banking Department at KIB, said: "Inspired and driven by our slogan, 'Bank For Life,' we continue to provide Eidiya services during specific celebratory times as part of our persistent efforts to offer the best banking solutions to our customers that suit their modern lifestyles. Providing Eidiya notes across all KIB branches will allow us to celebrate Eid Al Adha with our esteemed customers and help meet their needs.'

Al-Shuwaired noted that KIB customers would be able to obtain Eidiya in all note denominations with complete ease, including KD 1, 5, 10, and 20. He added that the public had gladly welcomed the Eidity initiative during previous Eid holidays, as citizens rushed to distribute cash gifts to eager children waiting to enjoy the happy occasion as part of a centuries-old tradition.

of an ATM card, with a KD 2,000 ATM daily withdrawal limit, as well as the ability to issue credit cards against the cash collateral in the account.

KIB customers and potential customers interested in learning more about Al Dirwaza account can visit the Bank's website, www.KIB.com.kw, or any of its social media channels.

A photo from the event.

'Enhance local startup ecosystem'

Zain signs MoU with SACGC

KUWAIT CITY, June 24: Zain signed a memorandum of understanding with Sabah Al Ahmad Center for Giftedness and Creativity (SACGC), a center of the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS). The MoU aims to build a new strategic partnership that focuses on elevating the digital literacy of the youth, empower creativity and innova-tion, and enhance the local startup ecosystem in the community.

The MoU was signed at the Zain Innovation Campus (ZINC) in the company's headquarters in Shuwaikh and was attended by Zain Kuwait CEO Eaman Al Roudhan and SACGC GM Neda Al Dehani. The partnership is a fruitful result of Zain and SACGC's joint vision to invest in the talents and skills of Kuwait's youth to contribute to the

national economy by empowering tech and digital competencies, which are highly required by today's markets.

Programs

The announcement aims to foster a joint collaboration between the two partners to achieve a number of targets, including elevating digital literacy, develop digital competencies, support the local startups ecosystem, empower Kuwaiti inventors and innovators to excel, and more to serve the nation's developmental, economic, and social goals. The partnership targets young people of 7-35 years, and will include insightful programs, workshops, and more to share expertise and achieve these shared goals.

This agreement is the first of



A group photo from the event.

Medx launches Wellness Gift Card to encourage health, well-being

Medx Medical Care, a leading healthcare provider in Kuwait, launched its latest Medx Wellness Gift Card, under the tagline 'Share Your Care' at a function held on 21 June at the Medx Auditorium in Fahaheel

The new health gift-card was inaugurated by Medx President and CEO Mohammed Ali V.P, in the presence of a large gathering of Kuwaiti dignitaries, leaders of different organizations and associations, as well as media personnel

In his speech on the occasion, Mr. Ali stated that the new Wellness Gift Card evolved from the idea that there is no better way to show your love and care for someone who is ill, than by providing them with the means to access the necessary treatment facilities. He then presented five Medx Wellness Gift Card to each of the leaders of community organizations

In addition to the wellness gift

card, Medx also offers a number of other gift cards, including the Royal Laser Card, Medx Silver Card, Medx Golden Card, and Royal Health Package Card. These cards are available at a special office in Medx and can be used to purchase a variety of treatment services and packages.

many projects under Zain's allnew initiative, Innovation Nation, under which all of Zain's innovation and entrepreneurship programs will fall, especially within science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) areas. The initiative mainly targets the youth, and centers around a number of pillars, including entrepreneurship, investment, startup acceleration, supporting inventors, fostering innovation, and more.

Sabah Al Ahmad Center for Giftedness and Creativity was established in 2010 as an initiative by His Highness the Late Amir and former Chairman of the board of directors of the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences, Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Jaber Al Sabah. The center was founded to nurture Kuwaiti Human capital and resource with innovation, technical knowledge, and expertise to enhance the development and growth of Kuwait.

SACGC is dedicated to facilitating knowledge and investing in exceptional and high achieving individuals within the entrepreneurial and innovation fields. The center also aims to foster an environment that generates impact across the community that will, in turn, boost social, economic, and cultural development.

The center boasts five dedicated scientific clubs each specializing in a different area: the programing club, the robotics club, the science and math club, the electronics club, and the design club. SACGC also offers support to young people and innovators who wish to execute their own projects under the supervision of the center's engineers and trainers, offering specially designed courses to support unique projects, and even manufacturing tools and services like digital engraving, laser cutting, 3D printing, and more.

CKD affects approximately 850m people worldwide

Jardiance reduces relative risk of kidney disease progression

INGELHEIM, Germany, June 24: The Committee for Medicinal Products for Human Use (CHMP) of the European Medicines Agency (EMA) has granted a positive opinion recommending Jardiance® (empagliflozin) for the treatment of adults with chronic kidney disease (CKD), Boehringer Ingelheim and Eli Lilly and Company (NYSE: LLY) has announced. Empagliflozin is currently indicated for the treatment of heart failure and type 2 diabetes in adults. When approved, empagliflozin's indications in the EU will include adults living with CKD, paving the way for an approach to managing the amplified risks of interconnected cardio-renal-metabolic conditions.

"EMPA-KIDNEY, the trial upon which the CHMP recommendation is based, demonstrated clear benefits on its primary outcome based on kidney disease progression and cardiovascular death in a broad range of adults with chronic kidney disease," said Professor William Herrington, Clinician Scientist at the Medical Research Council Population Health Research Unit at the University of Oxford, UK, and EMPA-KIDNEY trial Co-Principal Investigator. "The approval of empagliflozin should greatly help implementation of these important findings into clinical practice for people living with chronic kidney disease," added Co-Principal Investigator Professor Richard Haynes.

The EMPA-KIDNEY Phase III trial included 6,609 adults across the spectrum of CKD severity with a wide range of underlying causes and co-morbidities, making EMPA-KIDNEY the largest and broadest dedicated SGLT2 inhibitor trial in CKD to date. Empagliflozin demonstrated a significant kidney and cardiovascular benefit in adults with CKD, reducing the relative risk of kidney disease progression or cardiovascular death by 28 percent versus placebo.

Conditions

"Across the EU, more than 47 million people are living with chronic kidney disease and even more with cardio-renal-metabolic conditions," said Carinne Brouillon, Head of Human Pharma, Boehringer Ingelheim. "We are very excited about the potential for empagliflozin to play a key role in the management of these interconnected cardio-renal-metabolic conditions."

"Cardio-renal-metabolic conditions, like chronic kidney disease, type 2 diabetes and heart failure, are a leading cause of death in Europe. We will continue working closely with regulators worldwide so that adults living with chronic kidney disease, and their health care providers, can benefit from empagliflozin as quickly as possible," continued Leonard Glass, M.D., F.A.C.E., senior vice president, Diabetes & Obesity Global Medical Affairs, Lilly.

EMPA-KIDNEY (NCT03594110) is a multinational randomized, doubleblind, placebo-controlled clinical trial, designed to evaluate the effect of empagliflozin on kidney disease progression and cardiovascular mortality risk. The primary outcome is defined as time to a first event of either cardiovascular death or kidney disease progression, defined as end-stage kidney disease (the need for kidney replacement therapy such as dialysis or kidney transplantation), a sustained decline in eGFR to 10 mL/min/1.73 m2, kidney death, or a sustained decline of ≥ 40 percent in eGFR from randomization. Key secondary outcomes include cardiovascular death or hospitalization for heart failure, all-cause hospitalization, and all-cause mortality. EMPA-KID-NEY includes 6,609 adults randomized from eight countries with established chronic kidney disease both with and without diabetes, as well as with and without albuminuria, receiving either empagliflozin 10 mg or placebo, on top of current standard of care.

kidneys that prevents them from working as well as they should. With it mostly being asymptomatic (no symptoms) until later stages of the condition, most people go undiagnosed and every year millions die prematurely from chronic kidney disease and related complications. The Boehringer Ingelheim and Lilly Alliance are committed to transforming care for people with chronic kidney disease and other cardio-renal-metabolic conditions. Boehringer Ingelheim and Lilly are

driven to transform care for people with cardio-renal-metabolic conditions, a group of interconnected disorders that affect more than 1.4 billion people worldwide and are a leading cause of death.

Accelerate

The cardiovascular, renal and metabolic systems are interconnected, and share many of the same risk factors and pathological pathways along the disease continuum. Dysfunction in one system may accelerate the onset of others, resulting in progression of interconnected diseases such as type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, heart failure, and kidney disease, which in turn leads to an increased risk of cardiovascular death. Conversely, improvements in one system can lead to positive effects throughout the others.12,13,14

Through our research and treatments, our goal is to support people's health, restoring the balance between the interconnected cardio-renal-metabolic systems and reducing their risk of serious complications. As part of our commitment to those whose health is jeopardized by cardio-renal-metabolic conditions, we will continue embracing a multidisciplinary approach towards care and focusing our resources on filling treatment gaps.

Empagliflozin (marketed as Jardiance®) is an oral, once-daily, highly selective sodium-glucose cotransporter 2 (SGLT2) inhibitor and the first type 2 diabetes medicine to include cardiovascular death risk reduction data in its label in several countries.

The Boehringer Ingelheim and Lilly Alliance leverages the strengths of two of the world's leading pharmaceutical companies. By joining forces, the companies demonstrate their commitment, not only to the care of people with type 2 diabetes, but also to address areas of unmet medical need like heart failure and chronic kidney disease.

Boehringer Ingelheim is working on breakthrough therapies that transform lives, today and for generations to come. As a leading research-driven biopharmaceutical company, the company creates value through innovation in areas of high unmet medical need. Founded in 1885 and family-owned ever since, Boehringer Ingelheim takes a long-term, sustainable perspective. More than 53,000 employees serve over 130 markets in the two business units, Human Pharma and Animal Health.

Lilly unites caring with discovery to create medicines that make life better for people around the world. We've been pioneering life-changing discoveries for nearly 150 years, and today our medicines help more than 51 million people across the globe. Harnessing the power of biotechnology, chemistry and genetic medicine, our scientists are urgently advancing new discoveries to solve some of the world's most significant health challenges, redefining diabetes care, treating obesity and curtailing its most devastating long-term effects, advancing the fight against Alzheimer's disease, providing solutions to some of the most debilitating immune system disorders, and transforming the most difficult-to-treat cancers into manageable diseases. With each step toward a healthier world, we're motivated by one thing: making life better for millions more people. That includes delivering innovative clinical trials that reflect the diversity of our world and working to ensure our medicines are accessible and

affordable.

Develop targeted and effective medications Stanford's IMA, Intonation partner to fight 'neuroendocrine tumors'

STANFORD, Calif., June 24: Stanford University's Innovative Medicines Accelerator (IMA) and Intonation Research Laboratories (Intonation) have formed a collaboration to develop treatments that target cancerous neuroendocrine tumors, or tumors that form from hormone-releasing cells.

The goal of the collaboration is to reduce the time and resources it takes to translate a biomedical breakthrough into a clinically and commercially viable medicine.

"I'm excited about this collaboration with Intonation Research Laboratories, which has the potential to speed the translation of promising research into urgently needed new treatments and therapies," said Marc Tessier-Lavigne, president of Stanford University. "This type of partnership goes to the heart of why we created the Innovative Medicines Accelerator - to connect biomedical researchers with partners so that we can more efficiently translate Stanford discoveries into real impact for society."

Lloyd Minor, MD, dean of the Stanford School of Medicine, said that the goal of the collaboration, IMA's second in recent months, is to rapidly improve patient care. "We hope to greatly accelerate our drug development program and deliver transformative treatments to patients burdened with neuroendocrine tumors," he said.

Over the next two years, Intonation, led by founder and chairman Suresh K. Jain, PhD, will collaborate on a project that originated in the laboratory of Justin Annes, MD, PhD, associate professor of endocrinology, and advanced in partnership with Mark Smith, PhD, head of medicinal chemistry at Sarafan ChEM-H.

"We have found a unique aspect of neuroendocrine tumor biology that can be leveraged to develop targeted and effective medications," Annes said.

Collaboration

The agreement calls for a close collaboration where the Annes laboratory and Intonation, with the IMA's help, contribute expertise and resources to strengthen foundational intellectual property created at Stanford University. "We want to find partners where we don't just hand it over and be done," said Chaitan Khosla, PhD, the Innovative Medicines Accelerator director and a professor of chemistry and of chemical engineering at Stanford University. "We want to assist the partner so they can run the next leg of the journey."

"Joining forces with Stanford University's IMA is a prime opportunity

Can help identify location and extent of cancer

FDA-approved imaging agent posluma for prostate cancer detection launched in US

MONROE TOWNSHIP, N.J., OX-FORD, England & MALVERN, Pa., June 24: Blue Earth Diagnostics, a Bracco company and recognized leader in the development and commercialization of innovative PET radiopharmaceuticals, and PETNET Solutions Inc, A Siemens Healthineers Company, have announced the commercial availability of posluma® (flotufolastat F 18) in the United States. Posluma (formerly referred to as to as 18 F-rhPSMA-7.3) is an optimized, high-affinity radiohybrid (rh) Prostate-Specific Membrane Antigen (PSMA)-targeted PET imaging agent. It is indicated for positron emission tomography (PET) of prostate-specific membrane antigen (PSMA) positive lesions in men with prostate cancer with suspected metastasis who are candidates for initial definitive therapy or with suspected recurrence based on elevated serum prostate-specific antigen (PSA) level. Posluma was approved by the US Food and Drug Administration on May 25, 2023.

Posluma is now commercially available through multiple radiopharmacies of PETNET Solutions, the primary manufacturer and commercial distributor for Blue Earth Diagnostics in the United States. By the end of June 2023, commercial production across the country will be underway at the 31 PETNET radiopharmacies Blue Earth Diagnostics included in its New Drug Application for posluma, marking a record number of sites authorized for the manufacturing of a radiopharmaceutical upon its initial FDA approval. Additional PETNET sites are expected to manufacture posluma before the end of the summer.

"We are pleased to make posluma widely available across the United States for use in men with newly diagnosed or suspected recurrence of prostate cancer, and hope that this will make a real difference to physicians and their patients," said David E. Gauden, D.Phil., Chief Executive Officer of Blue Earth Diagnostics Ltd. "Our product introduction plan for posluma includes practical education programs for physicians and staff at imaging centers to educate them on the appropriate use of posluma, including image acquisition and reader training programs to help ensure the best information is available to inform patient care. In addition, we are actively communicating with Medicare carriers, Medicare Advantage Plans, private insurers and radiology benefit managers to help them understand the utility and value of posluma, so that they will cover these procedures appropriately."

Dr. Gauden continued, "It is an ongoing pleasure to continue working with PETNET Solutions. We have a long-standing, productive relationship based on our seven-year success with Axumin® (fluciclovine F 18). Our companies share a passion for PET molecular imaging, and for providing imaging tools to help inform the management of patients across the prostate cancer care continuum."

Distributor

"As the main manufacturer and distributor of posluma to imaging centers in the United States, PET-NET Solutions is proud to continue our longstanding commercial relationship with Blue Earth Diagnostics, which began in 2015 when we became a commercial supplier of Axumin," said Barry Scott, Head of PETNET Solutions Inc. "With our large national network of cyclotronequipped radiopharmacies, we are well-positioned to provide broad access to posluma, as well as a wide range of other novel PET biomarkers that facilitate precision medicine for healthcare providers across the country."

Posluma® (flotufolastat F 18) injection (formerly referred to as 18 F-rhPSMA-7.3) is an optimized, targeted radiohybrid diagnostic imaging agent indicated for positron emission tomography (PET) of prostate-specific membrane antigen (PSMA) positive lesions in men with prostate cancer with suspected metastasis who are candidates for initial therapy or with suspected recurrence based on elevated serum prostate-specific antigen (PSA) level. Precision PET imaging with Posluma can help identify the location and extent of prostate cancer, providing clinically valuable information to guide patient management. Posluma represents a new class of high-affinity PSMA-targeted PET radiopharmaceuticals based on novel radiohybrid technology and is labeled with the radioisotope 18 F to provide readily available patient access and leverage the high image quality of 18 F-labeled PSMA PET imaging to facilitate effective detection of disease.

Radiohybrid Prostate-Specific Membrane Antigen (rhPSMA) compounds consist of a radiohybrid ("rh") Prostate-Specific Membrane Antigen-targeted receptor ligand which attaches to and is internalized by prostate cancer cells, and they may be radiolabeled with imaging isotopes for PET imaging, or with therapeutic isotopes for therapeutic use - providing the potential for creating a true theranostic technology. Radiohybrid technology and rhPS-MA originated from the Technical University of Munich, Germany. Blue Earth Diagnostics acquired exclusive, worldwide rights to rhPS-MA diagnostic imaging technology from Scintomics GmbH in 2018, and therapeutic rights in 2020, and sublicensed the therapeutic application to its sister company Blue Earth Therapeutics. Blue Earth Diagnostics received US Food and Drug Administration approval for its radiohybrid PET diagnostic imaging product for use in prostate cancer in 2023. rhPSMA compounds for potential therapeutic use are investigational and have not received regulatory approval.

Chronic kidney disease affects approximately 850 million people worldwide which is more than 10 percent of the population.7 The condition is caused by progressive damage to the to collaboratively create innovative treatments for neuroendocrine tumors in an efficient and cost-effective way," Jain said. "Our partnership with a renowned academic institution such as Stanford will reinvigorate and enhance the ecosystem of drug discovery in India."

Khosla said this additional relationship will allow the university to explore new external collaboration models as it attempts to fulfill its stated mission concerning accelerators: to be a more purposeful university. The IMA is evaluating and fine-tuning several additional home-grown projects from Stanford University's principal investigator labs with potential for prototyping highly differentiated new medicines, Khosla said.

"The IMA continues to seek high-

quality partners in our mission as an accelerator," said Khosla, the Marc and Jennifer Lipschultz Director of the Stanford Innovative Medicines Accelerator. "And we are excited about engaging diverse partners in helping us scale Stanford-grown solutions."

The collaboration with Intonation follows on the heels of January's announcement that the IMA is initiating a similar agreement with investment firm The Invus Group around another form of cancer, glioblastoma.

Stanford University is a place of discovery, creativity, innovation and world-class medical care. Dedicated to its founding mission of benefiting society through research and education, Stanford strives to create a sustainable future for all, catalyze discoveries about ourselves and our world, accelerate the societal impact of its research, and educate students as global citizens. The university is located in the San Francisco Bay Area on the ancestral land of the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe and first welcomed students in 1891. Its main campus holds seven schools along with interdisciplinary research and policy institutes, athletics, and the arts. More than 7,000 undergraduate and 9,000 graduate students pursue studies at Stanford each year.

Stanford Medicine is an integrated academic health system comprising the Stanford School of Medicine and adult and pediatric health care delivery systems. Together, they harness the full potential of biomedicine through collaborative research, education and clinical care for patients.

Intonation Research Laboratory is a Hyderabad-based auxiliary research organization, established in 2005 in Boston to provide contract research services to the global pharmaceutical industry. Besides offering highly skilled contract research services, Intonation collaborates with academic institutions across the globe to develop innovative product candidate opportunities with "proof" that these technologies will likely succeed in the marketplace. Intonation will soon be moving to its newly built state-ofthe-art research center in Cherlapalli, Hyderabad, India.



Known for his wry, subtle humor and deft wordplay

Lyricist Harnick 'Fiddler on the Roof' creator, dies at 99

NEW YORK, June 24, (AP): Tony- and Grammy Award-winning lyricist Sheldon Harnick, who with composer Jerry Bock made up the premier musical-theater songwriting duos of the 1950s and 1960s with shows such as "Fiddler on the Roof," "Fiorello!" and "The Apple Tree," has died. He was 99.

Known for his wry, subtle humor and deft wordplay, Harnick died in his sleep Friday in New York City of natural causes, said Sean Katz, Harnick's publicist.

Broadway artists paid their respects on social media, with "Schmigadoon!" writer Cinco Paul calling him "one of the all-time great musical theater lyricists" and actor Jackie Hoffman lovingly writing: "Like all brilliant persnickety lyricists he was a pain in the tuchus.

Bock and Harnick first hit success for the music and lyrics to "Fiorello!," which earned them each Tonys and a rare Pulitzer Prize in 1960. In addition, Harnick was nominated for Tonys in 1967 for "The Apple Tree," in 1971 for "The Rothschilds" and in 1994 for "Cyrano - The Musical." But their masterpiece was "Fiddler on the Roof.

Bock and Harnick were first introduced at a restaurant by actor Jack Cassidy after the opening-night performance of "Shangri-La," a musical in which Harnick had helped with the lyrics. The first Harnick-Bock musical was "The Body Beautiful" in 1958.

"I think in all of the years that we worked together, I only remember one or two arguments - and those were at the beginning of the collaboration when we were still feeling each other out," Harnick, who collaborated with Bock for 13 years, recalled in an interview with The Associated Press in 2010. "Once we got past that, he was wonderful to work with."

Variety

They would form one of the most influential partnerships in Broad-way history. Producers Robert E. Griffith and Hal Prince had liked the songs from "The Body Beautiful," and they contracted Bock and Harnick to write the score for their next production, "Fiorello!," a musical about the reformist mayor of New York City.

Bock and Harnick then collaborated on "Tenderloin" in 1960 and "She Loves Me" three years later. Neither was a hit - although "She Loves Me" won a Grammy for best score from a cast album - but their next one was a monster that continues to be performed worldwide: "Fiddler on the Roof." It earned two Tony Awards in 1965.

Based on stories by Sholom Aleichem that were adapted into a libretto by Stein, "Fiddler" dealt with the experience of Eastern European Orthodox Jews in the Russian village of Anatevka in the year 1905. It starred Zero Mostel as Teyve, had an almost eight year run and offered the world such

stunning songs as "Sunrise, Sunset," "If I Were a Rich Man" and "Matchmaker, Matchmaker." The most recent Broadway revival starred Danny Burstein as Tevye and earned a best revival Tony nomination.

Masterpiece

In a masterpiece of laughter and tenderness, Harnick's lyrics were poignant and honest, as when the hero Tevye sings, "Lord who made the lion and the lamb/You decreed I should be what I am/Would it spoil

some vast eternal plan/If I were a wealthy man?" Harvey Fierstein, who played Tevye in a Broadway revival starting in 2004 said in a statement that Harnick's "lyrics were clear and purposeful and never lapsed into cliche. You'd never catch him relying on easy rhymes or 'lists' to fill a musical phrase. He always sought and told the truth for the character and so made acting his songs a joy." Bock and Harnick next wrote the book as well as the score for "The

Apple Tree," in 1966, and the score for "The Rothschilds," with a book by Sherman Yellen, in 1970. It was the last collaboration between the two: Bock decided that the time had come for him to be his own lyricist and he put out two experimental albums in the early 1970s.

Harnick went on to collaborate with Michel Legrand on "The Umbrellas of Cherbourg" in 1979 and a musical of "A Christmas Carol" in 1981; Mary Rodgers on a version of "Pinocchio" in 1973; Arnold Black on a musical of "The Phantom Tollbooth;" and Richard Rodgers

on the score to "Rex" in 1976, a Broadway musical about Henry VIII. He also wrote lyrics for the song "William Wants a Doll" for Marlo Thomas' TV special "Free to Be ... You and Me" and several original opera librettos, including "Captain Jinks of the Horse Marines" and "Love in Two Countries." He won a Grammy for writing the libretto for "The Merry Widow" featuring Beverly Sills.

His work for television and film ranged from songs for the HBO animated film "The Tale of Peter Rabbit" in 1991 with music by Stephen Lawrence, to lyrics for the opening number of the 1988 Academy Awards telecast. He wrote the theme songs for two films, both with music by Cy Coleman: "The Heartbreak Kid" in 1972 and "Blame it On Rio" in 1984.





Harnick

This image released by Sony Pictures shows Jennifer Lawrence in a scene from 'No Hard Feelings.' (AP)

Film

LAS VEGAS, June 24, (AP): Jennifer Lawrence

has wanted to do a big comedy for years. She has

always been funny and vibrant in her television ap-

pearances. And while she has brought humor and

physical comedy to many of her roles for David O.

Russell and others, she also hasn't exactly gotten

the big, broad "Dumb and Dumber" or "Anchor-

man" experience, to cite some of her favorites (or

That changes Friday with "No Hard Feelings,"

"I've always wanted to do a comedy. And I've

a classic, raunchy R-rated comedy that was tailor

read a lot of them," Lawrence told The Associated

Press during an interview about the highly antici-

pated summer movie season. "I just didn't read

Craigslist ad posted by parents who were seeking

a woman to "date" their son to bring him out of his

shell the summer before he went to college. There

are debates over just how real the "real ad" was,

but thinking about the woman who might answer

an ad like that was a premise funny enough to

catch the attention of several producers and writer-

Stupnitsky, an Emmy-nominated alum of "The

Office" who also directed and co-wrote the 2019

hit "Good Boys," knew just who to take it to. He

told Lawrence about the idea one night at dinner

The two met over a decade ago, through a mu-

tual friend, at Medieval Times of all places. Law-

rence, he remembered, was dressed in a full wizard

costume. And they soon became actual friends. He

"I owed him one," Lawrence said. "That's why

Stupnitsky, sitting next to Lawrence, added:

even introduced Lawrence to her husband.

"No Hard Feelings" was inspired by a real

at least the ones she's memorized).

anything that was funny enough."

made for the Oscar winner.

director Gene Stupnitsky.

with friends.

I did this film.'

for a week.

brandt," featuring Schiffmaker and

other top Amsterdam tattoo artists

For between about 50 euros

and 250 euros (\$54 - \$270), visi-

tors can get their own permanent

"It's a juxtaposition - a jump

from high to low, from highbrow

to lowbrow," Schiffmacher told

reminder of Rembrandt.



CHICAGO: Riccardo Muti will become the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's music director emeritus for life starting next season. The announcement was made

on the stage of Orchestra Hall on Friday night after a performance of Beethoven's "Missa Solemnis," the start of Muti's final subscription weekend as music director His tenure began with the 2010-11 season.

Muti repeats the Beethoven on Saturday night and Sunday, then closes his tenure Tuesday night with a free concert in Millennium Park.

Muti, who turns 82 in July, is scheduled to conduct the CSO for six weeks in each of the next two seasons. His CSO schedule for 2023-24 starts with two weeks opening the season in Chicago, two concerts to start Carnegie Hall's season on Oct. 4 and 5, and a three-week European tour from Jan. 11-29 with performances in Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Austria and Italy. His 2024-25 season with the

CSO will include four weeks in Chicago and two on tour. The orchestra said annual weeks in additional seasons are being discussed.

Muti's career has included lengthy tenures with Italy's Maggio Musicale Fiorentino (1968-80), London's Philharmonia Orchestra (1972-82), the Philadelphia Orchestra (1980-92) and Milan's Teatro alla Scala (1986-2005).

He is just the fifth CSO music director in seven decades, following Fritz Reiner (1953-62), Jean Martinon (1963-68), Georg Solti (1969-91) and Daniel Barenboim (1991-2006). (AP)

AMSTERDAM: Henk Schiffmaker's needle whirrs as he

tattoos the familiar lines of an elephant on Lilian Rachmaran's back.

"Highbrow to lowbrow" is how the famous Dutch tattoo artist describes his latest project - inking sketches by Rembrandt van Rijn onto the skin of visitors to the building the Golden Age master once called home.

Or call it high art to body art. The Rembrandt House Museum has transformed one of its rooms into a tattoo parlor for a residency it calls "A Poor Man's Rem"There's probably some truth to that."

With Lawrence attached to star and produce, the movie became a hot commodity, with streaming services and studios vying for the rights to make it. Ultimately, they went with Sony and a traditional theatrical release.

Lawrence's film promises big, communal laughter

'No Hard...' tailor made for Oscar winner

"The reason I wrote this movie for her is because I knew how funny she was and I wanted everyone else to know. I mean, people know she's funny but they wanted her in a comedy. I thought, yes I know how to do this. I know how to write her voice," Stupnitsky said. "I remember I told her, 'I really want you to experience a feeling of sitting in a theater with hundreds of people laughing. She's had many, many experiences in film, but she hasn't quite had this one.

Abducted

In "No Hard Feelings," Lawrence's character Maddie is having a rough stretch with money. As an Uber driver without a car she's in a pressing bind. So when she finds this ad with the promise of a Buick Regal as payment, she takes the bait. In a clip that Sony debuted for theater owners at the CinemaCon convention last week, Maddie meets 19-year-old Percy (Andrew Barth Feldman) for the first time wearing a slim, hot pink mini dress and high heels and acting overtly flirty and available.

"She's dressed like what she thinks is a 19-yearold's idea of a sex fantasy. And she's wrong, Stupnitsky said. "He's like the one kid who she can't seduce.'

The situation escalates from there as she tries to give him a ride home. He thinks he's being abducted and, as anyone who has watched the redband trailer knows, it ends with her getting pepper sprayed. But there's a sweet core to the film too.

"He is longing for a connection, which is what she needs as well but doesn't know it yet," Stuptimes I would get in bed after work and just like, giggle before going to sleep, just thinking about the day. I was also sad for making it because I was like, 'God, I'm just I'm not going to have one of these again. This is this is so singular."

As a producer on the film, Lawrence has already gotten to watch it with an audience and experience that big, communal laughter that Stupnitsky promised.

nitsky said. "She wants to get the car and move on

with her life. But he's forcing her to kind of take

things slow and get to know him and be intimate,

The experience, Lawrence said, was a blast,

"We just laughed all day long," she said. "Some-

helped by her connection with her younger co-star.

in a way, with him in a platonic sort of way."

"I went to a test screening and sat in back," she said. "It was pretty extraordinary."

Every film, she knows, is a gamble but she's pretty confident about "No Hard Feelings."

"You really never know. You might think audiences want this and they don't. And I've certainly had my experiences with that," she said. "It's a mix of instinct and looking at the information that you have. I knew what we had was the funniest movie that anybody would have ever seen - I have no doubts about that-and I knew that Gene was the one that could do it.'

It's also Lawrence's first major theatrical release in a few years, since the 2019 X-Men movie "Dark Phoenix." Her recent films have been primarily streaming releases with Netflix's "Don't Look Up" and Apple's "Causeway," which she also produced.

"I think audiences are really going to remember why they love her,"Stupnitsky said.

Lawrence laughed: "I look much better 12 feet high.

The Associated Press. "And it's art.'

> of attracting new visitors to the closer to the artist.

"I think it's a very good contemporary way to have your own

The workshop has already and wait their turn.

Schiffmacher and his colleagues have adapted some of Rembrandt's sketches to make them suitable for tattooing - making lines thinner so they don't grow together as the tattoo ages.

They see similarities between their work and the artist's quick sketches - but there is one key difference. (AP)

great that these two worlds can visit one another. Actually it's really one world because it's about

> Museum Director Milou Halbesma said the event is a way historic house and getting people

Rembrandt," she said.

proved a hit. All appointments available online were filled within 10 minutes, she said, though there are still some slots available for people who walk into the museum



Muti

Barenboim

NEWS/FEATURES

12



Variety

SAVANNAH, Ga: The rapper Quando **Rondo** has been jailed after being indicted on drug and gang charges in his hometown of Savannah.

The 24-year-old rapper, whose given name is Tyquian Terrel Bowman, was behind bars in the Chatham County jail Tuesday. According to court records, he has a bond hearing scheduled Friday.

Bowman and 18 others were indicted by a grand jury on June 14. The indictment charged Bowman with four counts, including being a manager of an illegal street gang known as "Rollin' 60's." Other charges say Bowman conspired with others to distribute marijuana and to buy pills of the opioid hydrocodone.

Dior

Bowman's attorney, Jonah Pine,

As Quando Rondo, the rapper's singles "I Remember" and "ABG" led

to a deal with Atlantic Records, which

released his debut album, "QPac," in

2020. His follow-up album, "Recov-

WASHINGTON: Infowars host Owen

ery," came out in March. (AP)

declined to make an immediate comment when reached by phone Tuesday.

Shroyer, who promoted baseless claims of 2020 election fraud on the far-right internet platform, pleaded guilty on Friday to joining the mob of Donald Trump supporters who rioted at the US Capitol.

Shroyer, who didn't enter the Capitol but led rioters in chants near the top of the building's steps, pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor charge of illegally entering a restricted area. The charge carries a maximum sentence of one

later said in an affidavit that he stood



Capitol.

A day before the Capitol insurrection, Shroyer called in to a live Infowars broadcast and internet pro-gram and said, "Everybody knows this election was stolen."

"Are we just going to sit here and become activists for four years or are we going to actually do something about this, whatever that cause or course of cause may be?" he added, according to prosecutors. Shroyer said in an affidavit that he

accompanied Jones and his security detail to Capitol grounds on Jan 6. (ÅP)

Shroyer

Rondo

SCIENCE

Health

Xylazine causing wounds

Animal sedative adds pain to 'opioid crisis'

WASHINGTON, June 24, (AP): A powerful animal sedative in the illicit drug supply is complicating the US response to the opioid crisis, scrambling longstanding methods for reversing overdoses and treating addiction.

Xylazine can cause severe skin wounds, but whether it is leading to more deaths - as suggested by officials in Washington - is not yet clear, according to health and law enforcement professionals on the front lines of efforts in New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania. In fact, early data suggests the drug may inadvertently be diluting the effects of fentanyl, the synthetic opioid behind most overdose deaths.

There is broad agreement, however, that much more information is needed to understand xylazine's impact, to craft ways of disrupting illegal supplies and to develop medicines to reverse its effects.



"We don't know whether xylazine is increasing the risk of overdose or reducing the risk of overdose," said Dr. Lewis Nelson of Rutgers New Jersey Medical School, who advises federal regulators on drug safety. "All we know is that there are a lot of people taking xylazine and a lot of them are dying, but it doesn't mean that xylazine is doing it.'

Milaram

In almost all cases, xylazine - a drug for sedating horses and other animals is added to fentanyl, the potent opioid that can be lethal even in small amounts.

Some users say the combination, dubbed "tranq" or "tranq dope," gives a longer-lasting high, more like heroin, which has largely been replaced by fentanyl in US drug markets.

Like other cutting agents, xylazine benefits dealers: It's often cheaper and easier to get than fentanyl. Chinese websites sell a kilogram for \$6 to \$20, no prescription required. Chemicals used to produce fentanyl can cost \$75 or more per kilogram

"Nobody asked for xylazine in the drug supply," said Sa-rah Laurel, founder of Savage Sisters, a Philadelphia outreach group. "Before anybody knew it, the community was chemically dependent on it. So now, yes, people do seek it out.'

Effects

From a storefront in Philadelphia's Kensington neighborhood, Laurel's group provides first aid, showers, clothes and snacks to people using drugs.

Xylazine's effects are easy to spot: users experience a lethargic, trance-like state and sometimes black out, exposing themselves to robbery or assault.

"It's a delayed reaction, I could be walking down the street, it's 45 minutes later," says Dominic Rodriguez, who is homeless and battling addiction. "Then I wake up, trying to piece together what happened.'

US regulators approved xylazine in 1971 to sedate animals for surgery, dental procedures and handling purposes.

In humans, the drug can cause breathing and heart rates to drop. It's also linked to severe skin ulcers and abscesses, which can lead to infections, rotting tissue and amputations. Experts disagree on the exact cause of the wounds, which are much deeper than those seen with other injectable drugs.

In Philadelphia, the drug's introduction has created a host of new challenges.

Naloxone, a medication used revive people who have stopped breathing, doesn't reverse the effects of xylazine. Philadelphia officials stress that naloxone should still be administered in all cases of suspected overdose, since xylazine is almost always found in combination with fentanyl.

With no approved reversal drug for xylazine, the Savage Sisters group has taken to carrying oxygen tanks to help revive people.

Meanwhile, a roaming van staffed by local health workers and city staffers aims to treat the skin wounds before they require hospitalization.

The wounds can make it harder to get people into addiction



Dominic Rodriguez speaks with registered nurse Kathy Lalli after she treated his skin injuries at the Kensington Hospital wound care outreach van, parked in the Kensington neighborhood of Philadelphia, Tuesday, May 23, 2023. Xylazine, a powerful animal sedative that's moving through the illicit drug supply is complicating the US response to the opioid crisis, causing gruesome skin wounds and scrambling longstanding methods for treating addiction and reversing overdoses. (AP)

Health

New option for patients with Duchenne muscular dystrophy FDA OKs gene therapy for MD in kids

WASHINGTON, June 24, (AP): The WASHINGTON, June 24, (AP): The first gene therapy for a deadly form of muscular dystrophy (MD) received pre-liminary US approval on Thursday de-spite concerns from some government scientists about the treatment's ability to help boys with the inherited disease.

The Food and Drug Administration approval provides a new option for some patients with Duchenne muscular dystrophy, a rare muscle-wasting disease that causes weakness, loss of mobility and early death. It almost al-

ways affects males. The FDA gave the OK only for children ages 4 and 5, based on study results showing the therapy helped produce a protein needed for muscle growth, which is missing in boys with the condition. The gene therapy had been studied in children up to age 7 by drugmaker Sarepta Therapeutics.

The company's one-time IV treatment delivers a replacement gene for the one that is mutated in boys with the condition.

"Today's approval addresses an urgent unmet medical need and is an imtant adva of Duchenne muscular dystrophy, a devastating condition with limited treatment options," said FDA's Dr. Peter Marks, in a statement Thursday.

FDA warns stores to stop selling Elf Bar disposable vapes in the US

WASHINGTON, June 24, (AP): The Food and Drug Administration on Thursday said it has sent warning letters to dozens of retail-ers selling fruit- and candy-flavored disposable e-cigarettes, including the current best-selling brand, Eli Bar

It's the latest attempt by regulators to crack down on illegal dispos-able vapes that have poured into

US stores in recent years. Last month, the FDA issued or-ders allowing customs officials to seize shipments of Elf Bar, Esco Bar and two other brands at US ports. None of the products have received FDA authorization and they come in flavors like cotton candy, which regulators say can appeal to teenagers.

In the latest action, the FDA said issued warni ence stores, vape shops and other retailers. "We're not going to stand by as bad actors are profiting off the sale of illegal products that are addicting our nation's youth," Brian King, the FDA's tobacco center director, said in an interview. "Today's action is just part of our long-standing efforts to address those products, particularly flavored disposable products.' The FDA has tried for years to regulate the multibillion-dollar vaping industry, but separate data released by government researchers

Thursday shows unauthorized ecigarettes continue to launch.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention analysis showed the number of e-cigarette brands in the U.S. grew from 184 in early 2020 to 269 by late 2022.

The rise coincided with the growing popularity of disposable e-cigarettes. The analysis showed dispos-ables' share of vaping sales more than doubled from 24.7% in early 2020 to nearly 52% by late last year.

Researchers from the CDC and a nonprofit, Truth Initiative, analyzed data from IRI, which collects sales records from convenience stores. gas stations and other retailers.

Elf Bar was the best-selling disposable in the U.S. and the thirdbest selling e-cigarette by late last year. Only the reusable e-cigafrom Reynolds otte Viise can, and Juul had higher sales. The FDA and CDC also cited Elf Bar in a separate report about thousands of calls to U.S. poison centers concerning e-cigarettes, mainly involving children under age 5. When accidentally ingested, liquid nicotine can cause seizures, convulsions, vomiting and brain injury. Reports of nicotine poisoning have gone up and down over the past decade, but government scientists said calls increased more than 30% between last spring and March this year.



treatment programs, which typically don't have the expertise to treat deep lesions that can expose tissue and bone.

"If you have someone out there who's ready to come in for treatment, you really want to act on that quickly," said Jill Bowen, who runs Philadelphia's behavioral health department.

The city recently launched a pilot program where hospitals treat patients for wounds and then directly transfer them into addiction treatment.

Xylazine can be addictive and patients who stop taking it report severe withdrawal symptoms, including anxiety and distress. There's no approved treatment but physicians have been using the blood pressure-lowering drug clonidine, which is sometimes prescribed for anxiety. In April, federal officials declared xylazine-laced fentanyl

an "emerging threat," pointing to the problems in Philadelphia and other northeastern cities. Testing is far from uniform, but the drug has been detected in all 50 states and appears to be moving westward, similar to earlier waves of drug use.

Officials describe the drug's toll in stark terms and statistics: Fatal overdoses involving xylazine increased more than 1,200% percent between 2018 and 2021. But that largely reflects increased testing, since most medical examiners weren't looking for the drug until recently.

"What it is doing is making the deadliest drug we've ever seen, fentanyl, even deadlier," Anne Milgram, head of the Drug Enforcement Administration, told attendees at a recent conference.

But those who have studied the problem closely aren't so sure.

Overdose

One of the only studies looking at the issue reached a startling conclusion: People who overdosed on a combination of fentanyl and xylazine had "significantly less severe" outcomes than those taking fentanyl alone.

It was the opposite of what Dr. Jennifer Love and her colleagues expected, given xylazine's dangerous effects on breathing. But their analysis of more than 320 overdose patients who received emergency care found lower rates of cardiac arrest and coma when xylazine was involved.

Love, an emergency medicine physician at New York's Mount Sinai hospital, suggested xylazine may be reducing the amount of fentanyl in each dose. She stressed that this is only one possible explanation, and more research is needed into xylazine's long-term effects. She also noted that the study didn't track downstream effects of xylazine that could be deadly, including skin infections and amputations.

But hints that xylazine could be blunting fatal overdoses are showing up elsewhere.

In New Jersey, about one-third of the opioid supply contains xylazine, based on testing of drug paraphernalia. But less than 8% of fatal overdoses involved xylazine in 2021, the latest year with complete data.

Police Capt. Jason Piotrowski, who oversees the analysis of state drug data, said xylazine's ability to extend users' high may be a factor in why it's showing up less than expected in fatal overdoses.

"If xylazine is lasting longer and that's why people are using it, then they're not going to need as many doses," he said. "So now their exposure to the more deadly fentanyl decreases.'

Like other experts, Piotrowski stressed that this is only one theory and xylazine's impact is far from clear.

Philadelphia officials see no upside to the drug

"I don't frankly see a plus side to xylazine," said Dr. Cheryl Bettigole, the city's health commissioner. "It seems to increase the risk of overdose and it causes these severe, debilitating wounds that interfere with peoples' ability to get into treatment.

Philadelphia's annual toll of fatal overdoses has climbed by 14% since xylazine became a significant part of the local drug market around 2018. In 2021, the city reported 1,276 overdose deaths. Bettigole expects final 2022 figures to show another increase.



Billie Eilish performs during the Power Our Planet concert on the sideline of the Climate Finance conference

in Paris, Thursday, June 22, 2023

World leaders, heads of international

organisations and activists are gath-

ering in Paris for a two-day summit

aimed at seeking better responses to tackle poverty and climate change is-sues by reshaping the global financial system. (AP)

Hoy

Ecology

Knuth

Snakehead fish found in Mo: An invasive and fish that is voracious predator capable of surviving out of water for days was recently caught in southeastern Missouri, causing worry that the hard-to-contain species will spread and become a problem.

The northern snakehead was caught last month in a drainage pool at Duck Creek Conservation Area. The last time one showed up in Missouri was four years ago, the St Louis Post-Dispatch reported.

Wildlife officials sounded the alarm, but many anglers say they're unaware of the fish, its potential impact and what to do if they catch one.

The northern snakehead is originally from east Asia, where they are a delicacy believed to have healing powers. They reproduce quickly, have sharp teeth, can wiggle across muddy land and grow to nearly 3 feet (nearly a meter) in length.

The federal government in 2002 banned the import and interstate transport of live northern snakeheads, but they are flourish-ing in some parts of the US.

They are knocking on the door in Arkansas," said Dave Knuth, a Missouri fisheries management biologist based in Cape Girardeau. "They are a beast."

The catch in May was worrisome, Knuth said. "I didn't expect them to be this far up the state already," he said.

The first northern snakehead found in Missouri was caught in 2019 out of a ditch within the St. Francois River levee system in the Missouri Bootheel region.

On May 19, state workers using a net to catch bait for a youth jug-fishing clinic, pulled a 13-inch northern snakehead out of Duck Creek Conservation Area. Knuth said the fish was found in the same watershed as the first one, though about 70 river miles (113 river kilometers) north of the initial catch.

Wildlife officials spent two days searching for additional northern snakeheads in the conservation area and neighboring Mingo National Wildlife Refuge. No others were found, but they fear others are lurking, at least in low numbers. (AP)

Wolves helping 'ecosystem': Gray wolves are thriving at Isle Royale National Park five years after authorities began a lastditch attempt to prevent the species from dying out on the Lake Superior island chain, scientists said Wednesday. Meanwhile, the park's moose population

continues a sharp but needed decline. Overpopulation of the lumbering mammals were causing their own starvation as they outstripped available balsam fir trees - their

Benefit

The FDA said the increase in pro-tein seen with the therapy, Elevidys, is "reasonably likely to predict" a benefit in patients 4 to 5 years old, who don't have other preexisting complications.

Patients, physicians and parents pushed for the therapy's approval at a public meeting in April, sharing videos of boys running, riding bikes and doing sports and other activities, which they attributed to the treatment.

But FDA scientists detailed a long list of concerns with the company's research, particularly a mid-stage study that the company submitted for FDA review. Overall, it failed to show that boys who received the therapy performed significantly better on measures like standing, walking and climbing than those who got a dummy treatment, although the results were better in younger kids.

Still, the FDA's outside experts voted narrowly in favor of making the gene therapy available on a preliminary basis, noting the deadly nature of Duchenne and the risk of delaying a potentially beneficial treatment. The vote was non-binding, but the FDA often uses such recommendations to

primary food during long, snowbound winters, Michigan Technological University biologists said.

The trends appear to justify federal officials' 2018 decision to airlift mainland



The U.S. Food and Drug Administration campus in Silver Spring, Md., is photographed on Oct. 14, 2015. The FDA on Thursday, June 22, said it has sent warning letters to dozens of retailers selling fruit- and candy-flavored disposable e-cigarettes, including the current best-selling brand, Elf Bar. It's the latest at-tempt by regulators to crack down on illegal disposable vapes that have poured into US stores in recent years. (AP)

bolster its decisions.

The FDA advisers who backed the drug also seemed reassured that data from an ongoing 120-patient late-stage study is expected to wrap up late this year. If the results don't show a benefit, the FDA has the option to revoke the approval.

The gene therapy was the latest treatment OK'd through the FDA's fast-track route, which allows drugs to launch based on early results, before they're confirmed to benefit patients. Until recently, the agency rarely used its power to pull drugs that failed to live up to their early promise.

The shortcut approach has come under increasing scrutiny from academic researchers, government watchdogs, and congressional investigators. But

wolves to Isle Royale, the researchers said, arguing that the predators' return is helping rebalance an ecosystem knocked off-kilter as their number dropped to just two.

The scientists' annual report, based largely

the FDA has also faced pressure from patient groups to use that route more aggressively for debilitating diseases, approving a string of recent treatments for Alzheimer's, Lou Gehrig's disease and other conditions with few treatment options.

Agency leaders have also pledged to use "regulatory flexibility" when considering drugs for rare diseases, such as Duchenne, which affects about 1 in 3,300 boys in the US. Most people with the condition do not live past their 20s.

Cambridge, Massachusetts-based Sarepta has won accelerated approval for three drugs to treat different groups of Duchenne patients since 2016. None of those drugs have yet been confirmed to work; studies designed to secure full FDA approval are ongoing.

on aerial observations last winter, estimated the rebuilt population at 31 wolves- up from 28 last year. It said the wolves appeared to be forming three packs, with others wandering alone or in smaller groups. The moose total was roughly 967, down from 1,346 last year and 54% decline from about 2,000 in 2019. Ecologists are celebrating what they hope will be a healthier herd. "It's been hugely successful," said study

co-leader Sarah Hoy, a research assistant professor and animal ecologist. "That's what everyone was hoping for.

But the early results haven't settled a debate over whether people should rescue struggling species at Isle Royale or other designated wilderness areas, where federal law calls for letting nature take its course.

"We have felt and still believe that the National Park Service should not have intervened and set up this artificial population of wolves," said Kevin Proescholdt, conservation director for the advocacy group Wilderness Watch.

Scientists believe the island's first moose swam to Isle Royale around the turn of the 20th century. Wolves arrived in the late 1940s, apparently crossing the frozen lake surface from Minnesota or the Canadian province of Ontario. Though technically part of Michigan, that state's shores are farther away.

Moose provided an ample food supply for the wolves, which in turn helped keep moose numbers in check. Both populations rose and fell over the years, influenced by disease, weather, parasites and other factors. (AP)

SPORTS

Special league meeting that will take place in Minneapolis

Owners plan to meet July 20 and potentially vote to approve Commanders sale

WASHINGTON, June 24, (AP): NFL owners are set to meet July 20 to consider and potentially vote to approve the sale of the Washington Commanders, a person with knowledge of the situation said Friday.

The person said teams were notified of a special league meeting that will take place in Minneapolis. The person spoke to The Associated Press on the condition of anonymity because the league meeting was not announced

Three-quarters - 24 of the league's 32 owners - approval is needed to finalize the deal between Dan Snyder and his family and a group led by Philadelphia 76ers and New Jersey Devils owner Josh Harris. Basketball Hall of Famer Magic Johnson is also among those involved in the incoming ownership group.

The deal is for a North American

professional sports record \$6.05 billion, surpassing the \$4.55 billion Walmart heir Robert Walton paid for the Denver Broncos last year.

Snyder and Harris' group had a deal in principle for the Commanders in April, then came to a firm agreement in May. One of the next steps was approval of the NFL's finance committee before going to the full ownership group for consideration.

If approved next month, it would pave the way for new ownership to take control before the start of the regular season in September.

Snyder has owned his favorite boyhood team since 1999, when he bought it for \$750 million, and despite mounting criticism repeatedly said he'd never sell. That changed after multiple investigations by the league and Congress into Washing-



In this Wednesday, Feb. 2, 2022 file photo, Dan and Tanya Snyder, coowner and co-CEOs of the Washington Commanders, pose for photos after unveiling their NFL football team's new identity in Landover, Md. (AP)

ton's workplace misconduct and potential financial improprieties. The congressional investigation found

Snyder played a role in a toxic culture Harris' group includes Washing-

ton-area billionaire Mitchell Rales, the basketball Hall of Famer Johnson and David Blitzer, among others. Harris and Blitzer have owned the NBA's Philadelphia 76ers since 2011 and the NHL's New Jersey Devils since 2013.

"Josh Harris has assembled an amazing group who share a commit-

FOOTBALL

ment to not only doing great things on the field but to making a real impact in the (Washington-area) community," Johnson tweeted in May. "I'm so excited to get to work on executing our vision for the Commanders and our loyal fanbase."

Harris grew up in the Washington suburb of Chevy Chase, Maryland. He said he got to experience the ex-

(AP): The Buffalo Bills locked up their

brain trust tandem of general manager

Brandon Beane and coach Sean Mc-

citement of the team winning three Super Bowls and establishing a longterm culture of success.

"We look forward to running a world-class organization and making significant investments on and off the field to achieve excellence and have a lasting and positive impact on the community," Harris said.

The new owners' first major task for the long-term future of the organization is a new stadium to replace FedEx Field, the rushed-tocompletion home of the team since 1997 in Landover, Maryland, that has not aged well. Virginia abandoned a stadium bill last year amid a number of off-field controversies swirling around the team, though possibilities exist to build there, in Maryland or the District of Columbia at the site of the team's former home, RFK Stadium.

Duo sign extensions

Bills reward Beane, McDermott

Ogwumike scores 20 as Sparks rally from 17-point deficit to beat Wings

Liberty rout Dream

LOS ANGELES, June 24, (AP): Nneka Ogwumike scored 20 points, Destanni Henderson had a careerhigh 18 points and the Los Angeles Sparks rallied from 17 points down to beat the Dallas Wings 76-74 on Friday night.

Los Angeles took its first lead with 2:28 left in the fourth quarter on a free throw by Chiney Ogwumike.

Sparks guard Jordin Canada made two free throws with 54.1 seconds left for a 76-74 lead and the Wings had a shot-clock violation at the other end for its 18th turnover. Canada had a jumper rattle out and Dallas secured the rebound and raced the other way, but Crystal Dangerfield's runner at the buzzer did not hit the rim.

Canada also scored 18 points for Los Angeles (6-7), which snapped a three-game losing streak.

BASKETBALL

Los Angeles missed its first 10 3-pointers and finished 2 of 18 from distance. But the Sparks made 22 of 25 free throws compared to 13 of 17 for Dallas.

Natasha Howard had 23 points and 12 rebounds for Dallas (6-7).



Washington Mystics' Brittney Sykes (15) drives to the basket past Chicago Sky's Dana Evans during the first half of a WNBA basketball game in Chicago. (AP)

ORCHARD PARK, N.Y., June 24, Dermott through the 2027 season after signing the duo to two-year contract extensions on Friday.

The timing of the deals represents a reward while also emphasizing the long-term faith of co-owner Terry Pegula in the pair, who are now on their third respective contracts with the team since signing extensions in 2020. Beane, at 46, and McDermott, 49, have transformed what had been a floundering franchise upon their arrival in 2017 into a consistent playoff contender.

In that time, the Bills went from enduring a 17-year playoff drought, which was the longest active streak in North America's four professional major sports, to qualifying for the postseason in five of the past six years. The run of success began with the team ending the drought in 2017, and now includes a four-year playoff run in which the Bills are three-time defending AFC East champions.

FOOTBALL

McDermott, who was hired in January 2017 following Rex Ryan's dismissal, is credited with instilling a winning culture built around a trusted group of leaders headed by the safety tandem of Micah Hyde and Jordan Poyer. He was also praised for helping

navigate the team through a series of adversity. The Bills finished second in the AFC at 13-3 in a season where safety Damar Hamlin went into cardiac arrest and was resuscitated on the field during a game at Cincinnati on Jan. 2. There also were two schedule disruptions because of snowstorms.

With a 62-35 record, McDermott ranks third on the franchise regularseason win list behind Marv Levy (123) and Lou Saban (70).

The only knock on McDermott has been how each of the past two Bills seasons have ended.

14

Arike Ogunbowale scored 14 of her 16 points in the first half and Satou Sabally had 13 points and 11 rebounds.

Ogunbowale made her first four shots and scored 12 points in the first quarter to help Dallas take a 27-13 lead. Howard had 15 points and seven rebounds as the Wings went ahead 42-33.

The teams play each other again on Sunday.

Liberty 110, Dream 80

in College Park, Betnijah Laney made four 3-pointers and scored a season-high 19 points, Marine Johannes added five 3-pointers and 18 points, and the New York Liberty beat the Atlanta Dream 110-80. New York (8-3) scored 100-plus points for the third time this season

- with two coming against Atlanta. Jonquel Jones scored 12 points in the first six minutes to help New York build a 22-9 lead. The Liberty extended it to 59-40 by halftime after shooting 10 for 20 on 3s. Jones tied her season-high with 15 points in the half and Breanna Stewart added 11 points as New York shot

51% from the field.

Jones finished with 18 points and nine rebounds for New York. Courtney Vandersloot had 16 points, 11 assists and seven steals, and Stewart added 13 points, 11 rebounds and six assists. Sabrina Ionescu, who returned after missing two games, added eight points.

New York made a season-high 17

3-pointers on 35 attempts.

Rhyne Howard scored 24 points for Atlanta (5-7). Allisha Gray scored 14 of her 17 points in the first half, and Cheyenne Parker finished with 13 points.

New York center Stefanie Dolson was helped off the floor with 1:33 left in the fourth quarter with an apparent ankle injury.

Swede to announce squad on Tuesday

team's longest-serving coach. Bob Lustig ranks as the Bills' longestserving GM, having held the job from 1967-78.

McDermott broke into the NFL ranks as a member of Andy Reid's staff with the 1999 Philadelphia Eagles. Beane's NFL career started as a member of the Panthers communications department in 1998.

Fans waiting for hours to greet No. 1 pick

Wembanyama arrives in San Antonio

SAN ANTONIO, June 24, (AP): The chants from hundreds of fans, some of whom waited outside for hours in nearly 100-degree heat, started at the very moment Victor Wembanyama stepped out of the private plane that carried him to his new NBA home.

"Wem-V-P!"

- "Wem-V-P!"
- "Wem-V-P!"

And the NBA's newest No. 1 draft pick - a star without having even played a game in the league yet - reveled in his first San Antonio moment, waving at the fans and letting them know how much he was enjoying it all.

Wembanyama arrived in San Antonio on Friday afternoon. He was a few hours behind schedule; Spurs fans had waited a long time for something like this, so a little more waiting did nothing to dampen the welcome they gave the generational talent from France who is expected to put the franchise on his back and carry it back to prominence as quickly as possible.

"This is love. This is family," said Spurs fan Gabriela Hernandez of San Antonio, who braved the sun and extreme heat just to get a glimpse of the arrival. "This is what family does.

Wembanyama will hold his introductory news conference in San Antonio on Saturday. He was drafted by the Spurs on Thursday night in New York, and arrived in San Antonio shortly before 4 p.m. Central time Friday.

One fan carried a sign asking Wembanyama to marry her daughter. Another man was dressed like an alien; that was the word LeBron James used last fall to describe the 7-foot-3 teen who just took his team to the French league finals. There were dozens of people in Wembanyama jerseys already, some from France, some the Spurs version.

His plane got a water-cannon salute from fire officials as it taxied to a stop, and even the police officers on motorcycles assigned to escort Wembanyama's vehicle out of the private airport got caught up in the joy of the moment. Wembanyama stopped and shook each of their hands as he made his way to the van, even posing for pictures.

"I think it just shows the culture of San Antonio and the people here," said Spurs forward Jeremy Sochan, who was at the draft on Thursday night and flew back Friday about a half-hour before Wembanyama arrived. "Things are very exciting. He's a very exciting prospect. It's going to be a lot of fun. ... It shows how much love we want to show to him and that it's a family here and that he has nothing to stress about. It's going to be good."

They're hoping for great, actually.

The Spurs struck gold - as in, trophy gold - with their past No. 1 picks, a pair of centers named David Robinson and Tim Duncan. Both became San Antonio royalty, both ended up in the Naismith Memorial Hall of Fame, and now Wembanyama will try with his size 20.5 foot to follow

their massive footsteps. The Spurs haven't won a title since 2014, haven't won a playoff series since 2017 and haven't even made the playoffs since 2019.

But with Wembanyama, they're instantly the talk of the town again - maybe the talk of the league, too.

"I can't speak for the city. I know how excited they are and how excited they were when we ended up with the first pick," Spurs coach Gregg Popovich said Thursday night, shortly after the selection became official. "But the city has always had a love affair with the Spurs, so it doesn't change no matter who we pick or what year it is.

"They've always been loyal, faithful fans who enjoy the Spurs and the players in return have always understood their responsibility to the city. We didn't do anything dif-

BASKETBALL

ferent in preparation. We are who we are, and the city has always supported us.

It was 98 degrees (37 Celsius) outside when the plane landed. Add in the humidity, and it felt like 108. The UV index was listed at 11, or extreme. And some of the fans waited and waited and waited for hours, some under umbrellas, one in a wheelchair, a few sharing bottles of water and other drinks they brought for the Wemby stakeout, and a few others buying cold drinks from an enterprising fan armed with a cooler and a bullhorn across the street from the air strip.

When Wembanyama arrived, nobody could hear the bullhorn anymore.

"It's going to be a lot of fun," Sochan said. "I think he's ready.

A few moments later, Wembanyama gave San Antonio a wave. Day 1 in his new home was underway.



San Antonio Spurs NBA basketball first round draft pick Victor Wembanyama throws T-shirts to fans at a meet at the rookies event in San Antonio. (AP)

Brazil coach Sundhage out to plug big gap in 'career' with Women's World Cup glory

TERESOPOLIS, Brazil, June 24, (AP): The decorated career of Swedish coach Pia Sundhage in women's soccer includes Olympic gold medals with the USA in 2008 and 2012 and a silver with her own country in 2016, national and continental titles and personal accolades.

But one big gap in the 63-year-old's coaching career is a World Cup crown. Next month she will try to achieve that with Brazil, which is also seeking its first trophy in the tournament as the great Marta nears the end of her playing days.

Sundhage said in an interview with The Associated Press at Brazil's training center in Teresopolis, outside Rio de Janeiro, she has a chance to triumph when it all kicks off in Australia and New Zealand on July 20.

Her team is in Group F with France the team that eliminated the Brazilians four years ago in the last 16 - Jamaica and Panama.

"I truly believe the 10 best-ranked teams, like we are, do have a chance to go all the way," Sundhage said. "If you look at USA, Germany, Sweden and England, they have a big chance to win.

SOCCER

"But look at Canada. They won an Olympic gold medal (in 2020) and they always come from behind. If you don't have any injuries, you have a great team, you gain confidence by winning and having a little bit of luck. Any of those could win the title.'

The Swede will announce her squad on Tuesday. She was USA coach in the 2011 World Cup final, won by Japan in a penalty shootout.

Sundhage took the Brazil job in 2019 and her contract will be up after the 2024 Olympics in Paris. She arrived with knowledge about the country's soccer culture but almost no Portuguese-speaking skills, and a demand-



Brazil's player Lauren heads the ball during a practice session at Granja Comary training center ahead the FIFA Women's World Cup tournament in Teresopolis, Brazil. (AP)

ing style. Now, as another Women's World Cup approaches, she has become a fan of Brazilian singers and adopted a more patient approach.

Sundhage said she felt a culture clash when she took the job, with players reliant on their skills but yet to grow in terms of teamwork.

In April, showing her side was on the rise, Brazil drew in England and beat Germany away in two friendlies despite having several players injured, including Marta.

"At the start it was overwhelming," Sundhage said. "When I went to the U.S. it was the same thing. They were very successful and who am I? Should I change anything? Yes, of course, a little bit. But it couldn't be too much of a change because they had been successful. And it couldn't be too small because they could just as well bring in an American coach. It is similar here.

"In Sweden we are very well organized, we have a game plan, especially in defense. When it comes to the U.S. it is go for it, one versus one. And of course that always brings a change to be more flexible and organized. This warm country with warm people is very emotional. They rely on their technique and doing special things that make you shine, your team shine.'

Defender Rafaella agrees Brazil's first experience with a foreign coach has improved the team's defense and brought a more tactical approach.

"She brought her style of a very compact team, it is very hard for others to break our lines. We evolved a lot," Rafaella told the AP. "Pia is an extrovert during our meetings, she sings and laughs, but she is very demanding about our fitness, intensity. We will never forget our intensive training with her. I hope we can carry those lessons beyond the 2024 Olympics, no matter how long she works with Brazil."

Sundhage's team has been affected by injuries. The three that stand out took striker Ludmilla out of the tournament, put the 37-year-old Marta at the risk of starting from the bench and cast doubts on midfielder Angelina.

"It is a team game, it is not one player that will win the World Cup. It will be the team and it will be a cohesive team," said Sundhage, who said some of the players she is adding to the roster "will be unstoppable" inside four years.

Sundhage knows Brazil fans will judge her on what happens in the World Cup but trusts she is on the right path. As to what happens after, she is unconcerned. The team's best previous result was a runners-up campaign in 2007, losing the final to Germany.

"I am on a fantastic journey to the World Cup. Then another fantastic journey to the Olympics in France. And then I have no idea," said the coach. "What matters is that I'm right here, right now."

Women's 2027 vote set for Bangkok

FIFA delays campaign and vote to pick men's 2030 World Cup hosts

GENEVA, June 24, (AP): FIFA's search for the men's 2030 World Cup hosts was postponed on Friday after failing to agree on rules for bid campaigns and a date for the final vote.

The vote by about 200 FIFA member federations was moved to the last quarter of 2024 instead of a previously expected meeting in September next year.

Bid rules will aim to be settled on at a FIFA council meeting before the end of October, soccer's governing body said, "with the bidding process to be officially launched thereafter." FIFA did detail basic needs for the

48-team, 104-game tournament: 14 stadiums, of which only seven can be new construction projects; "explicit public commitments" to human rights and climate action; worker protections; and "non-interference with journalists and human rights defenders" involved in work related to the World Cup.

One speculated project for2030 appeared to drop out this week when media in Greece reported a Saudi Arabia-led co-host bid that included Egypt will not go ahead.

Saudi Arabian soccer officials had not publicly confirmed what would have been an unprecedented threecontinent hosting plan in line with the kingdom's aggressive big-spending ambitions in global soccer. A bid for the 2034 World Cup has been seen as a more likely target.

Still, Saudi involvement could yet be revived even if it would mean bringing the World Cup back to Asia just eight years after Qatar hosted in 2022, and likely again in November-December in the middle of the European club season.

Europe has long committed to bidding for the 2030 World Cup with Spain and Portugal, and that project has added near-neighbor Morocco from Africa. Ukraine also is involved in that bid.

South America also wants to host the centenary World Cup, with original 1930 host Uruguay in a four-nation bid with Argentina, Chile and Paraguay.

Even if the South American bid loses, Uruguay could still be honored as the inaugural host by being given some of the 104 games to stage at the same Estadio Centenario in Montevideo.

FIFA said on Friday it wanted "additional consultation with all key stakeholders (for the 2030 World Cup) which will mark the centenary of men's football's showpiece tournament.'

The 2027 Women's World Cup vote is scheduled on May 17 next year and FIFA said its annual meeting to decide the host will be held in Bangkok.

SOCCER

The four candidates are Brazil; South Africa; a European co-hosting bid from Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands; and a United States-Mexico bid

The U.S., Mexico and Canada will host the first 48-team men's World Cup in 2026, and FIFA also decided on Friday to award the 2025 Club World Cup to the U.S. as a test event.

The recently expanded 32-team club tournament could also share some games with Canada and Mexico. FIFA awarded another men's agegroup tournament to Indonesia as host just three months after it was stripped of the men's Under-20 World Cup because the Muslim-majority country objected to Israel playing. Indonesia will host the men's Under-17 World Cup in November for which Israel did not qualify. That tournament was taken from Peru in April because its preparations fell behind schedule. Both Indonesia and Peru were originally chosen four years ago for the respective 2021 editions of those tournaments which were canceled because of the coronavirus pandemic.

De La Cruz has cycle and Votto hits 2 HRs as Reds edge Braves for 12th straight win

Rangers beat slumping Yankees

CINCINNATI, June 24, (AP): Dazzling rookie Elly De La Cruz hit for the cycle, Joey Votto launched tying and go-ahead homers and the Cincinnati Reds beat the Atlanta Braves 11-10 for their 12th straight win.

In a wild matchup of National League division leaders, Cincinnati erased an early 5-0 deficit and halted Atlanta's eight-game winning streak. The Reds' winning streak is tied for the second-best in franchise history, matching the 1939 and 1957 teams for the club's longest since 1900.

BASEBALL

De La Cruz became the first Cincinnati player in 34 years to hit for the cycle. He completed it by the sixth inning with a triple that gave him four RBIs. The cycle was the seventh in team history, fifth since 1900 and first since Eric Davis accomplished the feat against San Diego on June 2, 1989.

The Reds earned their major leaguebest 27th comeback victory of the season. Alex Young (3-0), the third of seven Cincinnati pitchers, got two outs for the win. Alexis Díaz pitched a hitless ninth for his 21st save in 21 tries.

Rangers 4, Yankees 2, 10 innings In New York, Adolis García hit a

two-run homer on Michael King's first pitch of the 10th inning, and the Texas Rangers beat the slumping New York Yankees 4-2 on Friday night for their fifth win in six games.

New York's offense again struggled in the absence of injured slugger Aaron Judge. The Yankees are last in the major leagues in batting average and runs in June, managing six hits or fewer in five of their last six games. They are 10-16 this year when Judge has been on the injured list, losing 10 of 16 since he hurt a toe. New York is 31-19 with Judge available.

The team's other big slugger, Giancarlo Stanton, is hitting .096 since returning from a strained hamstring, going 5 for 52 with a pair of solo homers for his only RBIs.

Texas leads the AL West and tops the majors in scoring and batting average.

García drove a hanging curve from King (1-4) into the left-field seats, giving him 17 homers and 60 RBIs. King has struggled of late, with a 9.95 ERA in his previous five outings.



Boston Red Sox's Masataka Yoshida swings for a single off Chicago White Sox starting pitcher Lucas Giolito during the first inning of a baseball game in Chicago. (AP)

The right-hander improved nings. to 2-1 with a 2.36 ERA in four June starts. Nick Pivetta finished the seventh and Chris Martin got three outs before Kenley Jansen worked the ninth for his 16th save.

Pirates 3, Marlins 1

In Miami, Carlos Santana broke a ninth-inning tie with an RBI single and Pittsburgh snapped a 10-game losing streak

Down 1-0 after eight innings, the Pirates scored three runs against relievers A.J. Puk (3-2) and Dylan Floro. Josh Palacios had a pinch leadoff single and Andrew McCutchen reached on a one-out infield single. Palacios and McCutchen then successfully stole bases before Connor Joe tied it with an RBI groundout.

pitched six strong innings, Trea Turner had a pair of RBIs and Philadelphia took advantage of two defensive miscues by New York.

Brandon Marsh had three hits, a double and an RBI as the Phillies won for the seventh time in nine games. Bryce Harper also drove in a run before getting ejected in the seventh inning for arguing with home-plate umpire Mike Estabrook after a called third strike.

Brandon Nimmo homered for the struggling Mets, who have lost three in a row and 14 of 18. Walker (8-3), who pitched for the

Mets the last two seasons before signing a four-year, \$72 million deal with Philadelphia last offseason, gave up one run and three hits.

his ninth game and MLB-leading Tampa Bay beat Kansas City. Siri had a three-run homer in the

second inning and gave the Rays a 4-3 led with an RBI single in the fourth.

Eflin (9-3) improved to 8-0 in eight home starts, allowing three runs and seven hits over six innings.

Nick Pratto and Salvador Perez homered for the Royals, who have the majors second-worst record at 21-55. Perez was checked by a trainer in the fifth inning and was replaced by Freddy Fermin at catcher one inning later due to a right hamstring cramp.

Harold Ramírez ended Zack Greinke's night with an RBI single to start a four-run fifth that made it 8-3. Greinke (1-8) gave up seven runs and nine hits in 4 2/3 innings. Reliever Jose Cuas entered and allowed all three batters he faced to reach base, including Taylor Walls' two-run single and a run-scoring double by Christian Bethancourt. Randy Arozarena picked up his 54th RBI on a single during a three-run eighth that put Tampa Bay ahead 11-3.

MLB Results/Standings

WASHINGTON standings from Tampa Bay Minnesota Milwaukee	the N 11 4 7	ALB Ka De Cle	game nsas (troit evelan	és on Fr City	iday. 3 1 1			
Oakland	- 5	To	ronto		4			
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Seattle	13	Ba	ltimor	е	1			
Boston	3	Ch	icago	W. Sox	1			
Colorado	7	LA	Ange	ls	4			
LA Dodgers			uston		2			
Pittsburgh		Mia			1			
Philadelphia	5	NY	' Mets		1			
Cincinnati	11	Atl	anta		10			
		Washington			3			
San Francisco	8	Ari	zona		5			
American League								
East Division								
		W	L	Pct	GB			
Tampa Bay	Ę	53	26	.671	_			

In women's youth tournaments in 2024, Colombia was picked to host the Under-20 Women's World Cup and the Dominican Republic will stage the Under-17 Women's World Cup.

American midfielder Weston McKennie and defender Sergiño Dest were suspended by soccer's governing body for North and Central America and the Caribbean from games they weren't scheduled to play in, a result of their ejections from the Nations League semifinal against Mexico.

CONCACAF said Friday that McKennie must serve a four-game suspension and Dest a three-game ban as a result of on-field conduct during the June 15 game. Mexican defender César Montes also was given a four-match suspension and defender Gerardo Arteaga was given a three-match ban.

Dest and McKennie are not on the roster for the CONCACAF Gold Cup, which starts Saturday. The U.S. Soccer Federation on June 12 announced a mostly junior varsity roster for the tournament, and the USSF said those games will count toward the suspension.

Montes and Arteaga are on Mexico's Gold Cup roster.

CONCACAF's discipline statement did not mention the homophobic chants by Mexican supporters that caused Salvadoran referee Iván Barton to end the June 15 match early. CONCACAF said after the game that it "strongly condemns the discriminatory chanting" and "will make a further statement in short order."

CONCACAF general secretary Philippe Moggio did not respond to an email from The Associated Press seeking comment.

All four players received automatic one-game suspensions as a result of their second-half red cards, which resulted from rough play that led to pushing and shoving and McKennie's jersey getting torn. CONCACAF said the penalties were based on Nations League regulations and FIFA's disciplinary code, but did not cite specific provisions.

Athletics 5, Blue Jays 4

In Toronto, Shea Langeliers hit a tiebreaking home run in the ninth inning and Oakland snapped an eightgame losing streak.

Langeliers hit his ninth home run off Blue Jays closer Jordan Romano (3-3) as Toronto lost the opener of a threegame series against the team with the worst record in the majors. Langeliers went 2 for 4 with two RBIs as the Athletics (20-58) became the last big league team to reach 20 wins and avoided falling 40 games below .500.

Blue Jays slugger Vladimir Guerrero Jr. hit a three-run home run, his first of the season at his home ballpark, but Toronto didn't score again after his third-inning drive.

Lucas Ĕrceg (2-0) struck out all three batters he faced to earn the win. and Trevor May pitched around Guerrero's leadoff double in the ninth for his fourth save in six chances as Oakland won for the first time since June 13 against Tampa Bay. That win over the Rays was the last in a seven-game streak for the Athletics.

Dodgers 3, Astros 2

In Los Angeles, Michael Busch doubled in the go-ahead run in the fourth inning, Mookie Betts homered and Los Angeles beat Houston.

The first interleague meeting since 2021 between the defending World Series champion Astros and the Dodgers, who led baseball with 111 wins last season, was filled with acrimony.

Most of the players from Houston's 2017 World Series championship team are gone, but that didn't stop Dodgers fans from expressing their lingering resentment from the Astros' sign-stealing scandal that season. The Astros' lineup was introduced to boos, with the loudest derision saved for Jose Altuve and Alex Bregman, who were a combined 0 for 6 while Bregman walked twice.

Dodgers starter Emmet Sheehan (1-0) allowed two runs and three hits in six innings, struck out four and walked two. Brusdar Graterol pitched a 1-2-3 ninth to earn the save.

Red Sox 3, White Sox 1

In Chicago, Rafael Devers hit a tworun homer and Brayan Bello pitched one-run ball into the seventh inning, helping Boston beat Chicago.

The Red Sox struck out 17 times and finished with just four hits, but they made the most of costly errors by shortstop Elvis Andrus and second baseman Tim Anderson. Boston won for the seventh time in nine games, bouncing back after two straight losses at Minnesota.

Bello (5-4) allowed six hits, struck out five and walked one in 6 2/3 in-

Santana chased Puk with a line drive to center. Floro relieved and allowed consecutive singles to Henry Davis and pinch-hitter Tucupita Marcano. Santana raced home on Marcano's single.

Pittsburgh starter Luis Ortiz settled down after allowing a run in the first and shut out Miami the next seven frames. Ortiz (2-3) gave up seven hits, walked two and struck out five. David Bednar closed with a perfect ninth for his 15th save

Twins 4, Tigers 1

In Detroit, Kenta Maeda pitched five scoreless innings in his return from the injured list and Minnesota beat Detroit.

Royce Lewis and Max Kepler homered for the Twins, who had two players and manager Rocco Baldelli ejected by home plate umpire Lance Barrett.

Maeda (1-4), who strained his triceps against the New York Yankees on April 26, allowed three hits, struck out eight and walked two. Jhoan Duran pitched the ninth for his 10th save in 12 tries. The Twins struck out 16 overall.

Joey Wentz (1-8) gave up four runs - three earned - and five hits with four walks in five-plus innings.

Minnesota took a 3-0 lead with a pair of second-inning homers. Lewis led off with a long drive over the Tigers bullpen in left field. After a one-out walk to Willi Castro, Kepler homered over the shortened fence in right-center field.

Giants 8, Diamondbacks 5

In San Francisco, Michael Conforto hit a pair of two-run doubles, Patrick Bailey homered to back Logan Webb's third straight winning start and San Francisco beat road-weary Arizona.

Webb (7-6) gave up four runs and five hits, struck out five with two walks in his latest gem. The Giants are 4-0 over his last four outings, winning for the 11th time in 12 games dating to June 11.

J.D. Davis hit a tying double in the fifth to make it 4-4 and chase Arizona right-hander Zach Davies (1-4), who lost his third straight start.

Corbin Carroll had an RBI groundout in the top of the fifth that briefly put Arizona ahead before Conforto came through again.

Evan Longoria homered in the second against his former San Francisco club. But with runners on second and third and two outs in the eighth, Tyler Rogers retired Longoria on a called third strike to escape the threat. Camilo Doval pitched the ninth for his 21st save, getting shortstop Brandon Crawford's beautiful diving stop and throw to first to end the game on Geraldo Perdomo's sharp grounder.

Phillies 5, Mets 1 In Philadelphia, Taijuan Walker

The Mets helped the Phillies take the lead in the first. Nimmo dropped Kyle Schwarber's liner to short center field. Schwarber went to second on Kodai Senga's wild pitch and scored on Harper's one-out, opposite-field single to left. Senga (6-5) loaded the bases with a walk to J.T. Realmuto before Bryson Stott's sacrifice fly to center scored Turner.

New York closed the margin to 2-1 on Nimmo's two-out solo shot to right in the third, but poor defense hurt the Mets again when the Phillies took a 5-1 advantage in the sixth.

Brewers 7, Guardians 1

In Cleveland, Willy Adames homered twice and drove in five runs and Wade Miley pitched six sharp, scoreless innings to power Milwaukee past Cleveland.

Adames belted a three-run homer in the sixth inning off Shane Bieber (5-5). Milwaukee's hard-hitting shortstop added a solo shot in the ninth and a run-scoring single in the first as the Brewers won the series opener and first in a 10-game trip. Adames went 4 for 5 in his third career multi-homer game. It was the sixth time he's gotten four hits.

Miley (5-2) allowed just three hits and retired his last 11 batters. It was the left-hander's first start against Cleveland since he threw a no-hitter at Progressive Field on May 7, 2021, when he was with Cincinnati.

José Ramírez homered for Cleveland, which had its winning streak stopped at four.

Bieber, who will likely be dealt by the Guardians before the Aug. 1 trading deadline, matched Miley for the first five innings - striking out eight before running into major trouble in the sixth.

Rays 11, Royals 3

In St. Petersburg, Jose Siri homered and drove in four runs, Zach Eflin won

Minnesota Twins pitcher Kenta Maeda throws against the Detroit Tigers in the fourth inning of a baseball game in Detroit. (AP)

Rockies 7, Angels 4

In Denver, Shohei Ohtani and Mike Trout hit back-to-back homers at Coors Field, but Elias Díaz's go-ahead grand slam in the eighth inning rallied Colorado.

Jurickson Profar launched a leadoff homer for the Rockies, who snapped their longest losing streak of the season at eight games.

Díaz doubled and finished with three hits. His 426-foot drive to center field marked the first grand slam by a Rockies player since Díaz went deep in Philadelphia on Sept. 10, 2021.

Ohtani smashed his major leagueleading 25th home run and was a triple shy of the cycle. He has at least one extrabase hit in 10 consecutive road games, a franchise record and the longest such streak in the majors since 2009.

Ohtani's tiebreaking solo shot in the fifth was followed by Trout's 16th of the season, giving Los Angeles a 4-2 lead. Both drives traveled a projected 434 feet.

Mariners 13, Orioles 1

In Baltimore, Logan Gilbert allowed two hits in seven innings, Teoscar Hernández and Tom Murphy homered and Seattle routed Baltimore.

Murphy hit a two-run shot off Kyle Gibson (8-5) to cap a four-run third for Seattle, and Gilbert (5-4) had an outstanding night on the mound. He struck out just five but induced plenty of weak contact.

American League batting leader Austin Hays singled in the second for Baltimore's lone hit until Anthony Santander homered in the seventh.

The Mariners were already comfort-



Tampa Bay	53	26	.6/1						
Baltimore New York	45 41	29 35	.608 .539	5- 10-					
Toronto	41	36	.532	11					
Boston	40	37	.519	12					
Central Division									
	W	L	Pct	GB					
Minnesota	39	38	.506	_					
Cleveland	36	39	.480	2					
Detroit	32 32	42 45	.432 .416	5- 7					
Chicago Kansas City	32 21	45 55	.416	17-					
	st Div		.270	17-					
110	W	L	Pct	GB					
Texas	47	28	.627	_					
Houston	41	35	.539	6-					
Los Angeles	41	36	.532	7					
Seattle	37	37	.500	9-					
Oakland	20	58	.256	28-					
	onal L st Div	eague	9						
Edi	W	L	Pct	GB					
Atlanta	48	27	.640	-					
Miami	43	34	.558	6					
Philadelphia	39	36	.520	9					
New York	34	41	.453	14					
Washington	28	47	.373	20					
Cent		ivisio		0.0					
Cincinnati	W 41	L 35	Pct .539	GB					
Milwaukee	39	36	.520	1-					
Chicago	36	38	.486	4					
Pittsburgh	35	40	.467	5-					
St Louis	31	44	.413	9-					
West Division									
	W	L	Pct	GB					
Arizona	46	31	.597	_					
San Francisco Los Angeles	43 42	33 33	.566 .560	2- 3					
San Diego	37	39	.300	8-					
Colorado	30	48	.385	16-					

ably ahead before they added seven runs in the eighth. Hernández, Ty France and Eugenio Suárez finished with three hits apiece. One Oriole who did manage a scoreless outing was infielder Josh Lester, who pitched the ninth.

Gibson allowed five runs and seven hits in three innings. That snapped a streak of 12 games in which Baltimore starters had allowed three earned runs or fewer.

Padres 13, Nationals 3

In San Diego, Xander Bogaerts, Juan Soto and Ha-Seong Kim hit home runs and Joe Musgrove threw seven strong innings to lead San Diego.

The superstar-laden Padres, who have struggled at the plate most of the season to tumble into fourth place in the NL West, scored in double digits in consecutive games for the first time this year. They won 10-0 at San Francisco on Thursday to avoid a fourgame sweep.

Bogaerts hit a three-run shot, Soto connected to drive in two runs and Kim hit his first career leadoff homer. Soto and Kim each had three RBIs.

Bogaerts capped the six-run fifth inning with a two-out shot into the left-field seats off Patrick Corbin (4-9), his eighth. His last homer came exactly a month earlier, at Washington. Kim hit a two-run single and Manny Machado had an RBI groundout that inning. Soto homered in the eighth, his 14th and also had an RBI double in the four-run seventh, when Nelson Cruz hit a two-run single and Trent Grisham an RBI double.



Damian McKenzie (left), of the Chiefs tackled by Scott Barrett of the Crusaders dur-ing the Super Rugby Pacific final between the Chiefs and the Crusaders in Hamilton, New Zealand. (AP)



Latest sports scores at — http://sports.arabtimesonline.com **Crusaders win 7th Super Rugby Pacific title**



Crusader players celebrate after defeating the Chiefs in the Super Rugby Pacific final in Hamilton, New Zealand. (AP)

Chiefs beaten in final

Hamdan, Al-Faneeni and Al Rashedi on target

HAMILTON, New Zealand, June 24, (AP): Seven out of seven. Scott Robertson ended his seven-year tenure as Crusaders head coach with a seventh title after his Christchurchbased team beat the Chiefs 25-20 in the final of Super **Rugby Pacific on Saturday.**

Robertson has celebrated every title distinctively by break-dancing on the pitch surrounded by his players and he did so again in Hamilton after a win sealed only in the last eight minutes. He now steps down to await the start of his All Blacks tenure after the World Cup in France in September.

Hooker Codie Taylor scored the second of his two tries from lineout drives in the 72nd minute to give the Crusaders a 22-15 lead after the Chiefs had rallied from 15-10 down at halftime to lead 20-15.

Flyhalf Richie Mo'unga converted the try and then kicked a penalty in the



Crusader players celebrate after defeating the Chiefs in the Super Rugby Pacific final between the Chiefs and the Crusaders in Hamilton, New Zealand. (AP)

Mo'unga in the 36th gave the Crusaders their 15-10 lead at the break.

The Chiefs rallied superbly in the second half and shut down the Crusaders for long periods. Narawa scored his try

Kuwait thrash Pakistan 4-0 in SAFF Championship

NEW DELHI, June 24, (KUNA): Kuwait won against Pakistan 4-0 in the South Asian Football Federation (SAFF) Championship Group A match held in the Sree Kanteerava Stadium in the southern Indian city of Bengaluru on Saturday.

Kuwait's Hassan Hamdan netted the first goal after in the tenth minute ten while Mubarak Al-Faneeni scored the second and third goals in the 17th and 46th minutes. Eid Al Rashedi netted the last goal in the 69th minute.

The Kuwaiti team defeated Nepal 3-1 in the opening match of the Group A Wednesday, and India beat Pakistan 4-0.

Kuwait will meet India while Pakistan will meet Nepal on Tuesday. In the Group B matches, Lebanon defeated Bangladesh 2-0, and Maldives overpowered Bhutan 2-0, and the Group B matches earlier.

As part of the second round matches of the Group B, Bhutan team are scheduled to meet Lebanon, and Bangladesh will take on the Maldives on Sunday

'It's going to be spectacular'

Olympic flame for 2024 Paris Games will be carried for 68 days before the cauldron is lit

PARIS, June 24, (AP): The Olympic flame for the 2024 Paris Games will pass through 64 departments - including five overseas - and 400 towns over 68 days before the cauldron is lit.

Organizers announced the route for the torch relay on Friday at a Paris university.

"Paris 2024 is the greatest collective project in our history," organizing committee president Tony Estanguet said. "The torch relay plays an important role because it has the capacity to touch so many people.'

The torch will be lit by the sun's rays on April 16 in Ancient Olympia, Greece. It will then be carried around the nation before its handover in Athens.

The flame will leave Athens on April 27 aboard a three-

mast ship named Belem for the French port of Marseille - a former

Polynesia, Gaudeloupe and Martinique before coming back to Nice on June 18.

"It's going to be spectacular," said Estanguet, a threetime Olympic canceing champion. Continuing over land, the torch will rise up the Alpine

mountain pass of Chamonix for Olympic Day on June 23 before spending July 14 - known as Bastille Day, France's national day - and July 15 in Paris.

The torch will then tour various suburbs of Paris until returning via Seine-Saint-Denis - home to the Stade de France - before arriving back in Paris.

"It's an occasion to all come together, whatever our origins," Hidalgo said.

More precise details of the route in Paris will be given on July 5.

The location of where the cauldron will be lit and at

last minute to seal the win in his last act for the Crusaders before leaving to play in Japan.

RUGBY

The Chiefs had looked like capping a record-breaking season when they snatched the lead after halftime with a try by new All Blacks winger Emoni Narawa, and extended the lead to five points with a penalty from flyhalf Damian McKenzie.

But the Crusaders finally broke the resilient Chiefs defense with Taylor's try, his 42nd from lineout drives for the Crusaders.

"We said at the start of the year to get to heaven we'd have to go through hell and we did that earlier in the season and really finished it off tonight," Taylor said.

He was referring to the many injuries the Crusaders had to overcome to win the title for the 12th time since the tournament began in 1996.

The Chiefs were pacesetters throughout the tournament, winning a club record 13 of 14 matches in the regular season and 15 from 16 coming into a home final.

They scored the first try of the match through fullback Shaun Stevenson in the 25th minute. But Taylor's first try in the 28th minute and another by

in the 43rd minute, winning back the lead for the Chiefs at 17-15, and then

> McKenzie dashed into to claim an over-thrown Crusaders lineout and linked with Narawa, who scored. But the referee ruled that McKenzie had encroached inside 10 meters for the lineout and therefore was offside.

> went in favor of the Crusaders are likely to be debated for several days.

> he was "gutted" by the loss "but I think a championship is definitely within these guys. It didn't happen tonight but it certainly will happen.

The Chiefs were attempting to win first since 2013.

Crusaders captain Scott Barrett said: "I don't know how we got away with that. The Chiefs were the form team all season. We knew it was going to be a heck of a job and it turned out to be that tonight.

The Chiefs battled throughout against three yellow cards, two in the first half and another to co-captain Sam Cane in the second.

"It hurts to come up short right at the

RABAT, June 24, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Athlete Abdulrahman Al-Azmi on Friday snatched the silver medal of the javelin throwing contest in the Arab Athletics Championship currently held in the Moroccan city of Marrakesh.

Al-Azmi made a new personal record after scoring 71.84 meters, giving Kuwait its second medal in the championship after a gold medal won on Wednesday by runner Yaqoub Al-Youha in the 110-meter hurdles competition.

In a statement to KUNA, the Kuwaiti national team coach Hamo Al-Bukili lauded Al-Azmi's achievement, expressing hope the team would win more medals and titles in this Arab event.

16 Arab countries, including Kuwait, are participating in the Arab Championship which commenced in Marrakesh on Tuesday and will conanother disallowed in the 56th.

That decision and many others that

Chiefs co-captain Brad Weber said

their third Super Rugby title and their

end there," Cane said. "A lot of credit absolutely must go to the Crusaders tonight. They've been the best for a number of years now and managed to show that again."

Kuwait's Al-Azmi wins silver medal

cluded on Saturday

Kuwait Special Olympics participates in a medical sports program during the summer global games of the 16th edition of the Special Olympics World Games (Berlin 2023) held in the German capital.

The medical examination program is one of the prime activities of the international event, with medical teams following up on health of athletes from 170 states, totaling 7,000.

The medics measure blood pressure, examine physique of the athletes such as height and weight, in addition to ensuring they feed on healthy food and drink sufficient amounts of water during the various games.

They also examine their psychological condition particularly in heated competitions.

On Wednesday, Lebanon will play against Maldives, and Bhutan will face Bangladesh.

Wolverhampton capt Ruben 'joins' Al-Hilal

WOLVERHAMPTON, England, June 24, (AP): Wolverhampton Wanderers captain Ruben Neves has become the latest high-profile player to move to Saudi Arabia after joining Al-Hilal for a transfer fee of £47 million pounds (\$59.7 million).

The fee is a record for English Premier League team Wolves.

The 26-year-old Portugal midfielder follows in the footsteps of Karim Benzema and N'Golo Kante, who completed free transfers to Al-Ittihad earlier this month, while Cristiano Ronaldo moved to Al-Nassr in December.

SOCCER

Neves, who scored 30 goals in 253 appearances during six seasons with Wolves, wiped away tears in an emotional video posted on the club's Twitter account, saying he had made "thousands of memories which will last forever".

Sergio Busquets is joining former Barcelona teammate Lionel Messi at Inter Miami, the team's second major addition in less than a month

The team confirmed the move Friday in a video posted on Twitter. Inter Miami displayed the phrase "Busi," referring to Busquets' nickname, accompanied by quotes from various soccer stars.

"On the field, he's always No. 5, but in reality as a player and a person, he's a 10," Messi wrote in Spanish.

The 35-year-old Messi announced on June 7 that he was joining Miami. He is expected to make his Major League Soccer debut in a home game on July 21, the team confirmed Tuesday.

Greek colony founded 2,600 years ago.

The Belem was first used in 1896, the same year the modern Olympics came back. It will be skippered by French navigator Armel Le Cléac'h, winner of the solo around-the-world race Vendée Globe in 2017. The crew will reach Marseille on May 8.

After leaving Marseille, the

torch relay will take in heritage sites such the imposing Mont Saint-Michel in Normandy and the 2,500-yearold medieval city of Carcassone. It will also trail along the famed red-wine vineyards of Saint-Émilion and white-wine vines of Chablis.

Hidalgo

"They are the Games of the country," said Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo, citing French author Victor Hugo and his theme of universality. "Paris belongs to the whole country.'

Including beyond its borders.

A passage in France's overseas territories, called the Relais des Oceans (Ocean Relay), will begin on June 9 in French Guiana and will take in the island of Reunion, what time are being kept secret until the day itself, amid wide expectations it will be at the iconic Eiffel Tower.

A total of 10,000 people will participate in the torch relay. The four captains of the relay will be Olympic swim-



ming champions Laure Manaudou and Florent Manaudou - who are siblings - along with Paralympians Mona Francis (triathlon) and Dimitri Pavadé (long jump).

Local police forces responsible for each section of the relay will help with security. Law enforcement will escort and protect the flame with a security bubble around the torch and its carrier.

A team of eight called "Les Gardiens de la Flamme" (The Guardians of the Flame) have been hand-picked to ensure the flame stays constantly lit. They were selected from police and military forces following an internal competition.

The Paris Games will run from July 26-Aug. 11, followed by the Paralympics from Aug. 28-Sept. 8. The flame for the Paralympics will be lit in the British town of Stoke Mandeville and will be carried by 1,000 people.



President of the Paris Organising Committee of the 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games President Tony Estanguet speaks during the unveiling of the route for the Paris 2024 Olympic Torch relay at the Sorbonne in Paris. (AP)

Editor-in-Chief AHMED AL JARALLAH

ARAB C TIME

Editorial Office: Airport Road, Shuwaikh

Telephone: 24813566 & 24849144 Fax: 24818267 P.O. Box 2270, 13023 Safat, Kuwait E-mail: arabtimes@arabtimesonline.com E-mail: advt@arabtimesonline.com

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