



baseball

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car racing

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Amir congratulates on Eid Al-Adha

Two million begin Hajj pilgrimage

Opinion

When leaders listen to criticism, not praises

By Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

THE course of countries changes only when there is ability and acceptance to learn from successful experiences, and listening to insightful minds that pinpoint where the problem is. From this aspect, the Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz launched the reform process, which represented a major shift against what was hindering the country's progress.

He operated by the principle that he has repeatedly mentioned in 2017, which is "Blessed by the one who guides me to my faults. If you or my fellow citizens who are now listening to me see anything that is not in the interest of your religion above all, and of your country - the country of the Two Holy Mosques - of which we are all servants, you are welcome to point it out. I repeat, our doors are open, our phones are open, and our ears are listening to every citizen."

Since that time, through firm directives ordered by the king and the measures implemented by Prince Muhammad bin Salman, the state has been following the right course. It began to combat corruption that almost threatened it for years. This has been the talk of the whole world because of its distinction of equality between the young and the old, and the removal of the social prestige from some princes.

In this regard, I also remember the time when I was on a visit in Dubai and I met Sheikh Mohammed Rashid. He spoke about what his country needs, and focused on the mistakes that must be avoided in order to achieve reform. This is because the main goal is development and competition for progress and development, pursuant to the words of Napoleon Bonaparte - "The heart of a statesman must be in his head." That is why the Emirates is distinguished by progressive steps that other countries require light years to achieve.

There is no doubt that this is the behavior of leaders who seek to build a capable state. Its institutions do not allow any of the corrupt to pollute it. For this reason, we have not heard of any transgressions in the Gulf countries for years, because the principle in them is to seek to enable the state and the people to be able to communicate with the leadership through an open-door policy.

This noble policy is in pursuant to the words of Confucius - "There has never been a leader who loves goodness, and his subjects fail to love probity. And it never happened that the people love probity without the affairs of the state becoming successful."

These countries, and many others in the world, have established what can be considered as their solid strength through the advice they receive from opinion-holders who are devoid of personal gains. This is because good is general and evil is specific. Therefore, the public's grumbling, if it falls on deaf ears, leads to ominous consequences, and contributes to weakening the state.

Kuwait, which built a legal system that was considered modern at the time, fell into the clutches of opportunists who passed a set of legislation that focused on oppressing people, and harming anyone who calls out corruption or responsible behavior that raises question marks.

This is why we wake up to one scandal, and sleep on another in most, if not all, ministries and institutions. We therefore are no longer surprised by the cries of some citizens who endured hard times, betrayed by those who had the ability to solve matters through their influence and position.

The Gulf countries have been able to get out of this impasse by opening doors and imposing maximum penalties on the transgressors. Therefore, when we talk about emulating these countries or Switzerland, Norway, or Sweden, it is because there is a general conviction among Kuwaitis that these people are not better than us but their officials have the ability to develop.

In this regard, Kuwait lacks the will, but if available and matched with honest and patriotic advisors, could definitely lead to a change in the situation for the better; otherwise we will continue heading towards the precipice.

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Day by Day

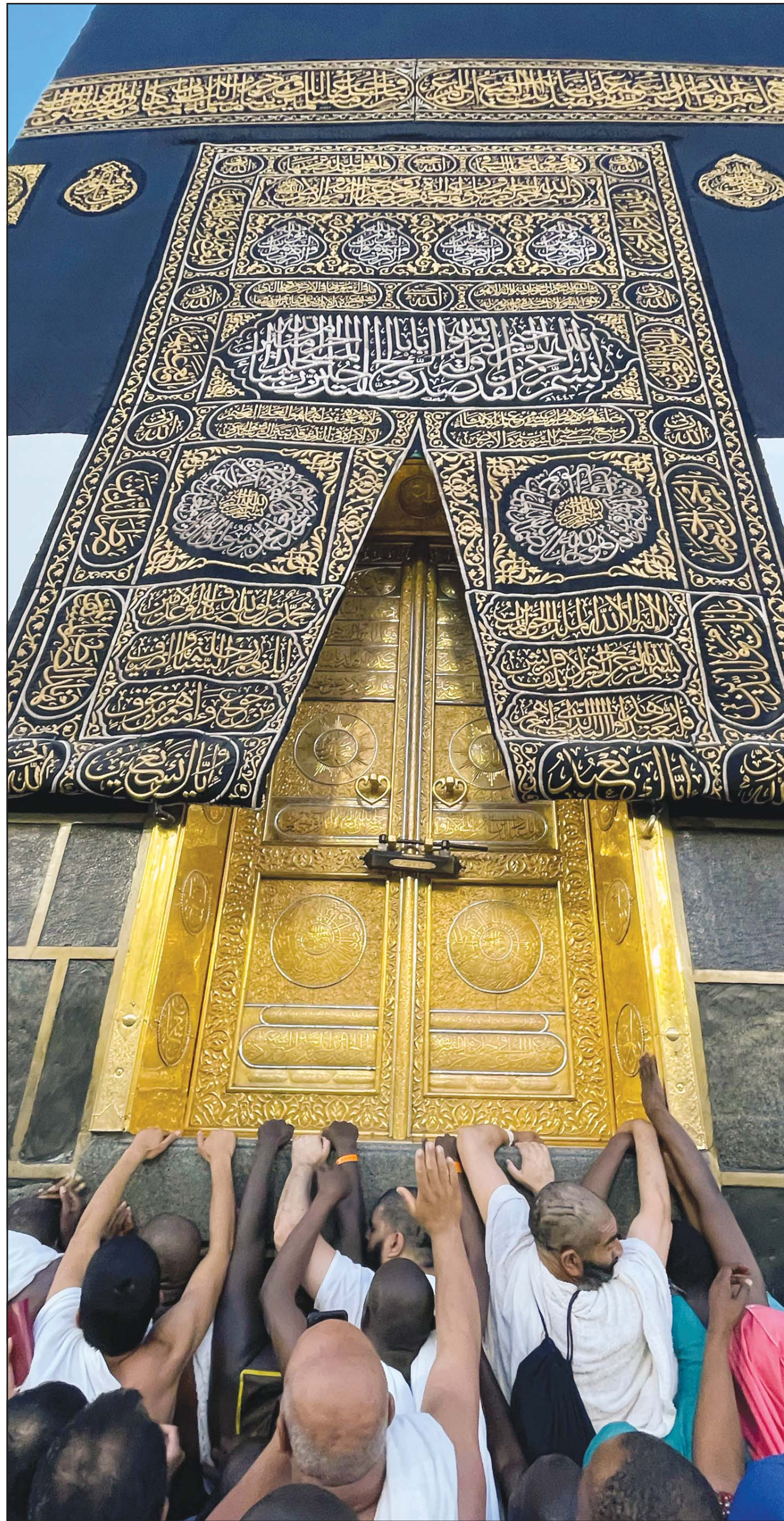
AS the noose tightens around the neck of the thief, his family and his relatives, he begins to ruffle his feathers, starts squawking, forges documents, and ends up making mistakes, especially when this person is a heart surgeon.

This poor doctor who keeps himself busy the whole day, spends his evenings in gambling and this is bad for people and their lives especially those who have weak hearts.

These days the thief talks about fake papers that no person with a sound mind can accept, which is what the protectors of justice and fairness have finally realized.

... Yet, tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar



Muslim pilgrims pray in front of the Ka'aba door, the cubic building at the Grand Mosque, during the annual Hajj pilgrimage in Makkah, Saudi Arabia, Monday, June 26, 2023, before heading to Mina in preparation for the Hajj, the fifth pillar of Islam and one of the largest religious gatherings in the world. (AP)

'Standing' today

MINA, Saudi Arabia, June 26, (Agencies): Some 2 million Muslim pilgrims officially began the annual Hajj pilgrimage on Monday, making their way out of Makkah after circling Islam's holiest site, the Ka'aba, and converging on a vast tent camp in the nearby desert for a day and night of prayer.

One of the largest religious gatherings in the world has returned to full capacity this year for the first time since the onset of the coronavirus pandemic three years ago.

The pilgrimage is one of the five pillars of Islam, and all Muslims are required to make the five-day Hajj at least once in their lives if they are physically and financially able to do it.

For pilgrims, it is a deeply moving spiritual experience that absolves sins, brings them closer to God and unites the world's more than 1.8 billion Muslims. Some spend years saving up money and waiting for a permit to embark on the journey.

Commemorate

The rituals during Hajj largely commemorate the Holy Quran's accounts of Ibrahim, his son Ismail and Ismail's mother Hagar.

Pilgrims have been doing the ritual circuit around the Ka'aba since arriving in Makkah over recent days. As the last ones performed it Monday, the pilgrims made their way by foot or by bus to Mina, where they will camp in one of the largest tent cities in the world. They will pray throughout the day and night before traveling on Tuesday to Mount Arafat, where the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is said to have delivered his final sermon.

Mina is vast and open, with little respite from the desert heat and blazing sun. Soldiers sprayed pilgrims with water to cool them down.

Egyptian businessman Yehya Al-Ghanam said he was at a loss for words to describe his feelings upon arriving at Mina.

"Tears will fall from my eyes out of joy and happiness," he said. "I do not sleep. I have not slept for 15 days, only an hour a day," overwhelmed by the magnitude of the emotions surrounding his pilgrimage.

After Arafat, pilgrims collect pebbles from a site known as Muzdalifa to be used in the symbolic stoning of pillars representing the devil back in Mina. The final three days of the Hajj coincide with the festive Eid Al-Adha holiday, when Muslims around the world slaughter livestock and distribute the meat to the poor.

Meanwhile in Kuwait, the Amiri Diwan on Monday relayed Eid Al-Adha greetings from His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to Kuwait's citizens and residents, wishing them happy Eid amid amity, security and safety.

Greetings

The Amiri Diwan seized this blessed opportunity to convey greetings to His Highness the Amir, His Highness the Crown Prince and His Highness the Prime Minister on the occasion of the Muslim festival.

His Highness the Amir also wished both Arab and Muslim worlds blessed Eid, security and stability, praying to Allah Almighty to protect Kuwait and its people from all evils and to grant them security and safety under the nation's wise leadership.

Straw hats, cross-body bags, and collapsible chairs: These are just some of the essentials Muslims bring to the Hajj pilgrimage.

Spiritually, the five-day Hajj is awe-inspiring for the faithful, an experience they say brings them closer to God and to the entire Muslim world.

Physically, it's grueling. Pilgrims walk outdoors for hours in broiling heat around holy sites in Makkah and the surrounding desert. They are caught in unimaginable and overwhelming crowds, all trying to get to the same place. Barriers directing the traffic mean that if you miss your turn, you might walk hours more to get where you want to be.

So the more than 2 million pilgrims don't just learn the complicated rules of how to properly

Strained relations with US to worsen

Israel ignores DC calls for restraint ... approves homes

JERUSALEM, June 26, (AP): Israel's far-right government on Monday approved plans to build thousands of new homes in Jewish settlements in the West Bank - a move that threatened to worsen increasingly strained relations with the United States.

The decision defied growing U.S. criticism of Israel's settlement policies. It also raised tensions with the Palestinians at a time of rising violence in the occupied territory.

Multiple Israeli media outlets said the Defense Ministry planning committee that oversees settlement construction approved over 5,000 new settlement homes. The units are at various stages of planning, and it was not immediately clear when construction would begin. The ministry did not immediately comment.

The international community, along with the Palestinians, considers settlement construction illegal or illegitimate and obstacles to peace. Over 700,000 Israelis now live in the occupied West Bank and east Jerusalem - territories captured by Israel in 1967 and sought by the Palestinians for a future state.

"The Netanyahu government is moving forward with its aggression and open war against the Palestinian people," said Wassel Abu Yousef, a Palestinian official in the West Bank. "We affirm that all settler colonialism in all the occupied Palestinian territories is illegitimate and illegal."

Israel's government, which took office in late December, is dominated by religious and ultranationalist politicians with close ties to the settlement movement. Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, a firebrand settler leader, has been granted Cabinet-level authority over settlement policies and has vowed to double the settler population in the West Bank.

The Biden Administration has been increasingly outspoken in its criticism of Israel's settlement policies. Earlier this month, Secretary of State Antony Blinken called the settlements "an obstacle to the horizon of hope we seek" in a speech to the pro-Israel lobbying group AIPAC.

Despite the criticism, the U.S. has taken little action against Israel. In a sign of its displeasure, the White House has not yet invited Netanyahu

Continued on Page 4

Continued on Page 4

Prayer Timings

Fajr 03:15 Asr 15:25
 Sunrise .. 04:50 Maghrib .. 18:51
 Zohr 11:51 Isha 20:24

Local

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

Weather

Expected weather for the next 24 hours:

By Day: Very hot with light to moderate freshening at times northwesterly wind to light variable wind with speeds of 10-50 km/h with a chance for rising dust

over open areas.

By Night: Hot to rather hot with light to moderate northwesterly wind with speeds of 15-38 km/h.

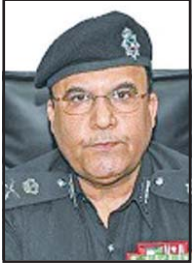
Station Max Exp Min Rec
 Kuwait City 46 34

Kuwait Airport	48	29
Abdaly	48	30
Jahra	49	32
Salmiyah	44	34
Ahmad	44	34
Nuwaisib	48	29
Wafra	48	31

Arrest ordered for those violating public morals

Mol and Municipality gearing up to tackle Eid holiday rush

KUWAIT CITY, June 26: The Ministry of Interior is continuing its preparations for the Eid Al-Adha holidays including the preparation of a comprehensive security plan that includes the deployment of about 4,000 officers from the public security, traffic, rescue, criminal investigation, women's police, public morals, and residence affairs departments. Officers, personnel, and patrol officers will also be distributed to Eid slaughterhouses, complexes, beaches, chalets, and farms in order to deter any violations that would disturb the public order or violate public morals, reports Al-Rai daily.



Al-Barjas

According to informed sources, instructions were issued by the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled, and the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior Lieutenant General Anwar Al-Barjas to prepare a comprehensive security plan for the Eid holidays, monitor any negative phenomena that violate the public morals of Kuwaiti society, and arrest anyone who does not abide by the law.

They highlighted the strict instructions to deal with law violators.

The sources explained that a security checkpoint has been set up on Kubbar Island by the Coast Guard Department to secure the island visitors and maintain public order. If any Kuwaiti violator is caught, he will be referred to the concerned authority, while expatriate viola-

tors will be deported from the country.

They identified the most prominent sites that will be under the watch of the security officers, and will be subject to intensified patrols. They include chalet areas, farms, stables, and the Jaber Bridge. This is aimed to deter any behavior outside the law. They will also increase security presence in some vital sites, such as commercial malls, and conduct field tours for sector leaders.

The sources affirmed the readiness of the Ministry of Interior to deal with all security reports through fixed checkpoints and by foot patrol officers in all governorates of the country in order to protect citizens and residents, allow them to enjoy the holidays in full safety and security, and arrest all outlaws.

They highlighted the coordination between security officers and the Kuwait Municipality to work on controlling mobile butchers who slaughter sacrificial animals either in front of homes or in other places, adding that any expatriate butcher who is caught is expelled from the country immediately.

On a related note, the Kuwait Municipality also finished its preparations by securing 1,020 cleaners who will be distributed at dawn on the first day of Eid Al-Adha to all mosques where Eid prayers will be held. It has also ensured the provision of 641 containers and more than 23 water tanks and presses to serve the worshippers in all governorates of the country.

It stressed the prohibition of the establishment of fences for sacrifices, and urged people not to deal with mobile butchers in private and model housing areas.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah looks at the invitation from the Saudi Crown Prince.

HH Crown Prince receives Saudi confab invitation

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace Monday morning the invitation from Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammad bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, to attend the seventh edition of the Investment Initiative conference 2023 in Riyadh slated for October 2023.

The invitation was delivered to His Highness by Saudi Ambassador to Kuwait Prince Sultan bin Saad bin Khalid Al-Saud.

Chief of His Highness the Crown Prince's Diwan Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, Undersecretary of the Amiri Diwan and Head

of His Highness the Amir's Office Ambassador Ahmad Fahad Al-Fahad, and His Highness the Crown Prince's Office Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs Mazen Issa Al-Issa also attended the meeting.

Meanwhile, HH the Crown Prince called the Sultan of Oman Haitham bin Tareq congratulating him on the occasion of Eid Al-Adha.

During the call, His Highness the Crown Prince conveyed His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah's greetings on this blessed occasion, wishing him and all Muslim nations health, success and prosperity.

On his part, the Omani Sultan expressed

his appreciation on this gesture remembering the deep brotherly ties and historical relations between the two countries.

HH the Crown Prince also called Bahrain's King Hamad Bin Essa Al-Khalifa congratulating him on Eid Al-Adha.

During the call, His Highness the Crown Prince conveyed His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah's greetings on the occasion, wishing him health, success and prosperity.

On his part, Bahrain's King expressed his appreciation on this gesture, wishing His Highness Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad good health, and progress and prosperity for Kuwait under his wise leadership. (KUNA)

Other Voices

Democracy and bread!

By Ahmad alsarraf

After every disappointing parliamentary result, every delay in the development and progress of the state and its openness, every delay in catching up with the developing countries, and every scandal of financial and political corruption, voices call for the death of freedom, the abolition of the democratic system, and the acceptance of individual rule.

This is a result of ignorance of what democracy means, or the existence of authoritarian tendencies or aspirations of some groups, and their tendency to a strong central authority, as is the case in the rest of the Gulf countries, with their belief that the presence of a unified leadership assisted by a small group of individuals can make better and faster decisions for society, compared to slow decision-making in democratic systems, which depend on collective wisdom, and deliberation in decision-making.

The opponents of democracy also believe that it requires a certain level of awareness, which is not available to all the peoples of the Third World, and therefore the decisions of the voters are often irrational. Moreover, underdeveloped peoples can easily be affected by emotional appeals, especially tribal, religious and narrow sectarian desires.

Some cultural or religious beliefs may also conflict with democratic principles, and this may push societies to promote certain traditional values at the expense of democratic values, and to adopt alternative systems, closely aligned with their very conservative standards.

More importantly, strong individuals or groups reject democracy for fear of their privileged positions that democracy may threaten their control over resources, wealth, or political influence, so they prefer regimes that concentrate power in one hand, or a select few.

Therefore, these anti-democratic groups, unable to abolish it, seek to complicate citizens' transactions, create harsh routine systems, and limit exceptions to the few, which are difficult for

the average citizen to reach, and thus push him, whether he is an ignorant or educated citizen, to resort, in a humiliating way, for the representative who is often more ignorant than him, to help him finish his dealings, so he ingratiate himself to the official who is more destructive than him, and with greater "humiliation" to end the dealings of his constituents, and the process sometimes takes place in audio and video, without any party being ashamed of what is happening, not caring that it may be evidence and thus a large proportion of the deputies are "domesticated", so that with time they become part of the choir of "government deputies" that they were elected to monitor and hold accountable.

Thus, the anti-democratic forces succeeded in pushing the voter/candidate to choose the candidate/representative who can help him obtain his "rights" and even what he has no right to. This pushes him to choose someone from the same tribe or sect and not someone who represents the nation.

This means that this approach will continue in every upcoming election, as long as the government is unable to stand up to the torrent of MPs' demands, in terms of appointments, promotions and tenders, because of its desire to win their favor at the expense of the public interest, and its inability, at the same time, to develop government administration, a matter that he will continue to push the voter to search for someone to end his governmental treatment through the back door, and the result is a complete and deliberate sabotage of the entire democratic system, humiliating the citizen and the representative and sabotaging their psyches, then comes those who say that democracy is the cause of ruin!

Democracy is not only our choice, but also our destiny. It is clear that many parties will not allow us to abandon it, and therefore it is better to live with it, and make serious attempts to reform it, rather than curse it, in order to cancel it. For the knowledge of my dear friend, if democracy disappears, then my journalist column and the column of my colleague Sami Al-Nisf will be the first victims, and this is the least of the expected evils from the absence of democracy, because 'man does not live by bread alone'.

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of His Highness the Amir's Office Ambassador Ahmad Fahad Al-Fahad, and His Highness the Crown Prince's Office Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs Mazen Issa Al-Issa also attended the meeting.

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'Strategic alternative' on hold

Amend cyber crimes bill: MP Bu Shehri

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh

Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 26: MPs Fahd Al-Masoud, Mubarak Al-Tasha, Khalid Al-Tamar, Hamad Al-Obaid and Fahd bin Jame'e have submitted a proposal to allocate two hours of the parliamentary session scheduled for July 11 to discuss the strategic alternative to the salary scale.

The MPs pointed out that despite the government-parliament agreement on the importance of improving the citizens' standard of living by increasing salaries and the minimum pension amount, the issue remains unsolved. They said the aim of the discussion is to clarify the vision of the government regarding the implementation of the strategic alternative to the salary scale and to specify the beneficiaries.

MPs Hani Shams, Ahmad Lari, Muhammad Al-Mahan, Khalid Al-Otaibi and Shuaib Shaaban submitted a bill on amending Law No. 10/1995 regarding the allowance of students in higher education institutions. They proposed increasing the allowance to KD300 per month and KD350 per month for those studying rare fields of specialization.

MPs Adel Al-Damkhi, Badr Nashmi Al-Anzi, Hamad Al-Elyan, Hamad Al-Medlej and Abdulhadi Al-Ajmi submitted a bill on the cancellation of Ministers Court Law No. 88/1995. The bill states that ministers are subject to the Penal Code during their trial or after leaving office.

Cyber crimes

MP Jenan Bu Shehri submitted a bill on amending the cyber crimes, audiovisual, publication and printing laws; particularly deleting the clause "consider any tougher penalties in other laws". She pointed out that this clause makes the judges look for tougher penalties — usually imprisonment instead of imposing a fine.

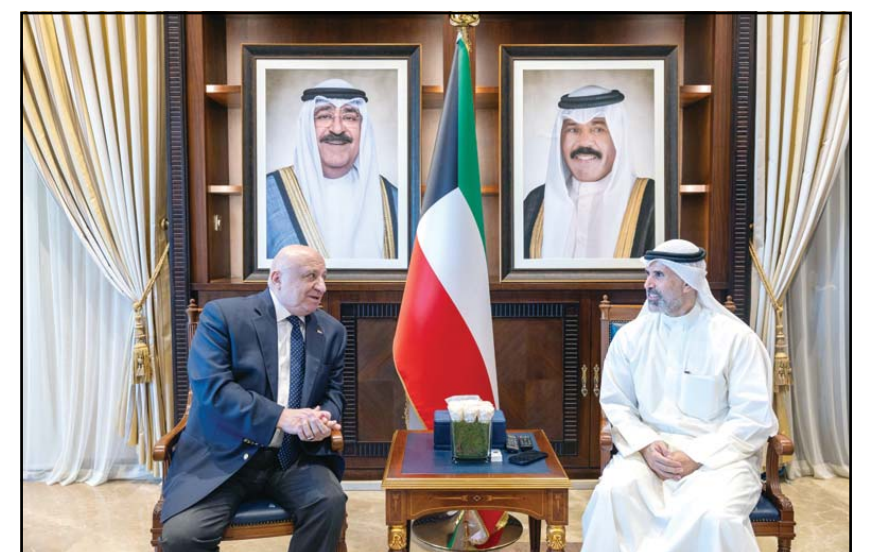
MP Mubarak Al-Tasha submitted a bill on establishing the National Commission for the Assessment of Education and Training. The commission will be tasked to take the necessary steps to improve the quality of education, oversee the educational institutions, lay down assessment rules and accreditation criteria, and conduct regular assessment of schools and higher education institutions.

The commission, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, will lay down the curriculum and exams criteria; and update them regularly.

The commission shall issue licenses for foreign institutions to engage in assessment and accreditation activities in the country. It will also provide consultations for public institutions and ministries in and outside Kuwait.

The Board of Directors of the commission will be chaired by the Ministry of Education undersecretary while the members include the Ministry of Higher Education undersecretary who will also serve as secretary general or chief executive officer. Other members are secretary general of the Public Universities Council; secretary general of the Private Universities Council; directors of public universities and the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET); representatives of the ministries of Education, Higher Education, Economic and Investment Affairs, Oil and Cabinet Affairs as well as the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) and Civil Service Commission (CSC), two accreditation and assessment experts, and one statistician.

The bill also states that Amiri Decree number 308/2006 on the establishment of the National Center for Educational Development will be cancelled.



Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah receives the Ambassador of the Republic of Georgia to the State of Kuwait.

Deputy FM receives Georgia envoy

Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Ambassador Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received on Monday outgoing Georgian Ambassador to Kuwait Constantine Giganti on the occasion of the end of his tenure.

The meeting took place at the ministry's headquarters, during which both

sides discussed bilateral ties between the two countries and ways to enhance them.

The deputy minister praised the ambassador's role in strengthening the Kuwait-Georgia relations and wished him luck and success in his upcoming career. (KUNA)

7,500 faithful go through airport

1,600 pilgrims on Makkah flights

KUWAIT CITY, June 26: Following the conclusion of an air bridge for the departure of Kuwaiti pilgrims to Makkah, four flights departed on Monday with 1,600 pilgrims on board, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The airport turned into a beehive in order to facilitate the movement of pilgrims from their entry until they boarded the planes. Work teams were allocated to organize their entry easily and smoothly, prepare the planes, and place them on the bridges in preparation for the entry of the pilgrims.

According to a source, the airport has received about 7,500 pilgrims departing for Makkah over the past few days, amid remarkable organizational measures and high-level field preparations.

On Saturday, the country witnessed the departure of 17 flights with 5,800 pilgrims on board, all of whom were destined for Jeddah.

The flights on Saturday represent the peak of the flights heading to Jeddah. Operational arrangements have been made for the pilgrims' flights, and the dates of their departure from the country, in proportion to the numbers.

The departure and return of pilgrims was

organized through three terminals - T4, T5 and T1 - to prevent crowding and facilitate procedures for their tasks.

Support staff were provided by all the agencies operating at the airport. They have been distributed to the departure and arrival halls as well as the corridor leading to the parking lots. Additional counters have been arranged to ensure the comfort of the pilgrims and facilitate them in a way that contributes to the completion of travel procedures easily and smoothly.

Meanwhile, a number of pilgrims praised the organizational efforts by the agencies operating at the airport to facilitate procedures since their arrival, adding that their boarding of the flight took place smoothly and easily.

In this regard, other sources affirmed that the success of this year's flight season was because of the preparation of an integrated plan to facilitate the movement of passengers inside the airport by easing procedures in a way that facilitates the pilgrims, as the number of counters were increased to serve the pilgrims, and work teams were set up around the clock for facilitation and guidance.

Gesture pleases inmates' families

'Guard' releases prisoners on Eid

KUWAIT CITY, June 26: The Undersecretary of the National Guard, Lieutenant General Hashim Al-Rifai, has issued a decision to release the military personnel who were detained on disciplinary grounds, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The daily quoting the National Guard office said, this came on the occasion of Eid Al-Adha, so that those who are released can spend the Eid holiday with their families.

In a press statement, Sunday, the office said this comes upon the directives of the President of the National Guard, His Highness Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah, and the Deputy Chief of the National Guard, Sheikh Faisal Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

His Highness Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah, according to the statement, congratulated His Highness the Amir, the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and His Highness the Crown Prince, Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, calling on God Almighty to protect and preserve them, and the leaders and forces of the National Guard, on the occasion of the approaching Eid Al-Adha.

He also prayed to God Almighty to shower Kuwait with goodness and blessings, and to perpetuate the blessings of safety and security throughout the dear country under the wise leadership of the Amir and his Crown Prince.

diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

‘Second opportunity to achieve co-op in legislative and executive performance’

“THE opening session of the National Assembly 2023 was one of the best parliamentary sessions over decades in the parliamentary process, and perhaps one of the main reasons for that is the official and parliamentary speeches delivered in that session, which were mostly agreed upon, praising the awareness shown by the people in the elections, and the importance of working to translate the aspirations of the Kuwaiti street, stressing that cooperation and achievement between the two authorities are the title of the next stage, appreciating the desire of members of the two authorities to extend a hand of cooperation and work and to hold plenary sessions for the National Assembly during the summer period for the sake of achievement,” columnist Dr **Muhammed Hussein Al-Dalal** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.



Dr Al-Dalal

“It is very unfortunate that the opportunity for consensus and joint cooperation between the Prime Minister and the National Assembly was missed, to form a consensual national government with the aim of correcting the course, reform and achievement, and the two parties bear responsibility for missing this precious opportunity, and in return, the two parties have a second opportunity to achieve cooperation in legislative, supervisory and executive performance in accordance with the constitution.

“This cooperation, which must go beyond slogans, by addressing previous negative experiences between the two parties, must lead to the establishment of written and specific practical mechanisms to achieve the required political and parliamentary cooperation, hoping to see the effectiveness of the two parties in this.

“We congratulate the Prime Minister and the ministers for the confidence of His Highness the Amir and His Highness the Crown Prince, may God preserve them, in assuming the ministry, but it is worth noting that the chronic problem of all the 43 ministries formed since the establishment of constitutional life is represented in the approach of ministerial formation that depends on the individual choice of ministers, away from the formation that requires management and a collective vision at work, and the wrong approach in the ministerial formation relies mostly on the selection of technocrat ministers, not those with political and administrative experience, and because of that, and despite the competence of some of the ministers and because of its general lack of political and administrative skills, falls in political and executive pitfalls, and unable to deal with the political reality, or to achieve the requirements of development.

“It is recognized that judging the current cabinet takes place after experimentation and testing, and the success of the current cabinet depends mainly on the extent of the ability of the members of the ministry to achieve joint work among them, and to overcome individualism in government work, as well as the extent to which the ministers are able to overcome the mentality of unilateralism towards adopting an approach, cooperation with the National Assembly, and success depends on the extent to which the Council of Ministers is able to understand the movements of the government’s opponents, and deal with them with political and legal professionalism.

“Finally, a high-level advisory body in legal, political and technical terms to support the government must be made available.

“Despite the dominant individual situation in the ministerial performance since previous decades, this did not prevent a number of those who held the ministry from excellence and positive performance, and with appreciation and respect to many ministers in the last ministry, which resigned after the results of the last elections, the last ministry emerged in which distinguished performance for some ministers, through some practical achievements, such as Minister Mai Al-Baghli in the Ministry of Social Affairs and Community Development, and one of her most prominent achievements is the national campaign to pay the debtors’ debts, as well as the positive performance of Minister Muhammad Al-Aiban, Minister of Commerce and Industry, by issuing practical decisions to stimulate trade and the economy, and referring to distinction some come from the point of giving distinguished people their right to praise, and also encouraging ministers after them on the importance of dedication and excellence in ministerial performance.

“During my membership in the National Assembly, I had submitted a proposal indicating the importance of the ministry following a new path in giving priority to vital developmental or political issues. The proposal is that the Council of Ministers, in parallel with the implementation of the development plan, identify an issue or priority. Each year it deals with the stages of planning, implementation, and follow-up for that priority (for example, determining the development of education in the first year, the second year of political reform, the third year of fighting corruption, etc.), and the Council of Ministers directs all concerned agencies to support the issue of the priority year, and seeks the assistance of civil society institutions. Academic institutions support the selected cause, and a monthly periodic report is submitted to the Council of Ministers, documenting the path of progress of that priority transparently in order to obtain popular support in achieving that priority, not to mention the support of the National Assembly for this approach, stressing that setting priorities does not conflict with the continued implementation of the path of the development plan.

“Among the proposals that contribute to achieving administrative reform and strengthening the quality of performance of the Council of Ministers and its affiliated government agencies is for the Council of Ministers to form a work team or more entrusted initially with evaluating the performance of the Council of Ministers institution, and in parallel evaluating each government agency separately according to quality and governance standards.

“The competent authority makes his recommendations related to the development of the institution and the entity subject to evaluation, and then the Council of Ministers examines and discusses each of the performance evaluation reports, and takes the necessary decisions to develop the work of that entity in terms of legislative, administrative and technical aspects, looking forward also to the Council of Ministers starting its journey by supporting the adoption of an integrated law regarding controls appointment

of leaders in the state.

“We ask God for success for the new government, which the people aspire to be as responsible as it is before God, the Amir and the Kuwaiti people; and we will continue in the next article regarding what is required of the National Assembly.”

Also:

“Last week, I recorded some of our expectations of His Highness the Prime Minister’s leadership of the executive authority, most notably the commitment to interdependence between the two authorities, coordination between them and exerting efforts into the path that embraces these efforts in order to reach common goals,” columnist **Abdullah Bishara** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

“This bilateral partnership is the message of the Constitution and the priority of action that provide ample space for efforts of the two parties, and establish interdependence in continuous harmony that guarantees success for the Parliament and satisfies the government.

“There is no escape for Kuwait in its security and future from national strength consistent in its sensitivity to the dangers threatening the country. They should agree that the unity of the two sides — government and Parliament — is the appropriate recipe for dealing with external risks.

“Kuwait lives in a place fraught with tension, and in a region whose life is threatened by a variety of practices emanating from psychological conditions that play an influential role in the life of the region and have produced five harmful realities experienced by countries in the region.

“First, the deadly extremism practiced by groups impulsive for goals to achieve with extraordinary violence. This type of bloody extremism that employs the mechanisms of extermination, which includes human groups living in an atmosphere of practices that Islam fights against and mobilize human groups in a violent climate filled with practices forbidden by Islam, calling for behaviors practiced by animals in their homes.

“Second, sectarianism, which collides with Islam’s call for the unity of Muslims, and supports them to reach noble goals inspired by the lofty principles of the Muslim religion, including their human rights.

“Third, expansion of the geography of terrorism that crossed from continents to the region in which Kuwait lives, desiring to form societies built by mentalities that employ killing and destruction, and subjecting societies to the dictates of fear as a means of controlling them. We have followed its brutality in neighboring countries and witnessed its stripping of human feelings.”

□ □ □

“We all look forward to realizing the future vision of our beloved country. The election has ended, the representatives have been chosen by the people, and the 17th legislative term has opened. We are waiting for the fruitful results that achieve development for the country,” columnist Dr **Hind Al-Choumar** wrote for **Al-Anba** daily.

“His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Mishaal Al-Ahmad stressed the need to move away from conflicts and settling scores, and focus on appropriate use of time to build the country and for the legislative and executive authorities to cooperate in the interest of Kuwait, as this is the ‘great entity that brings us together,’ and that reform is the only way toward development and stability.

“There is no room for wasting time by fabricating crises, as the people are looking forward to achievements and the country’s renaissance, so that our country will return to the Gulf as it was in the past.

“I wish the members of the government to present work programs with specific features and are implementable, taking into account the priorities and sustainable development in all sectors of the State.

“We are going through a sensitive period. We hope to correct the path for the country to achieve the goals and objectives toward the development of the country. Our country rises, especially after the period of inactivity that afflicted it not so long ago.

“The homeland is the soul, heart and mind of man. It is the sanctuary in which he lives in peace and stability. It is the mother who embraces her children from childhood until death. Therefore, the love relationship between a person and his homeland cannot be expressed, and the love of the homeland is part of faith. We must protect the homeland, and strive for its development and renaissance.

“Everyone is duty bound to protect the identity of the homeland and the minds of its people, and to fight against anyone who seeks to destabilize the nation and security — whether from inside or outside.”

□ □ □

“The Secretariat General of the National Assembly is considered a government agency, as its budget is borne by the government and recruitment is done through the government. It is one of the government agencies with an independent budget. It is an office of the Assembly that supervises and monitors its work, and proposes amendments when needed,” columnist **Abdullah Al-Abduljader** wrote for **Al-Anba** daily.

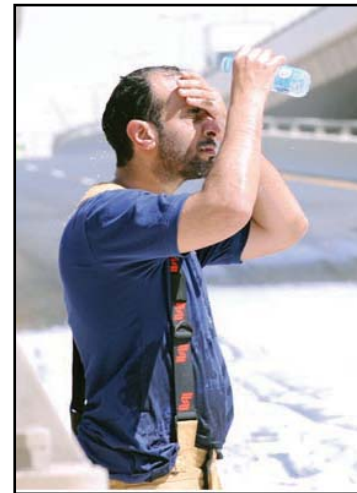
“Any business entity needs to review and update its organizational and functional structure, its internal regulations, and its work procedures to keep pace with the administrative, financial, economic and political changes and events in Kuwait. For this reason, the Assembly issued a decision to restructure the Secretariat in 2007.

“I was part of the consulting team tasked to update and prepare the organizational and functional structure, job descriptions, work procedures, internal regulations, salary scale and employment benefits. The Assembly and Civil Service Commission approved this project.

“In the 2013 Assembly, the Secretariat’s sectors were restructured and some of them were merged. In 2022, the Assembly Office proposed the amendment and modernization of the Secretariat in terms of the organizational structure, Kuwaitization of jobs and recruitment of retired Kuwaiti consultants. Then, that Assembly was dissolved and the 2023 Assembly was elected, followed by the election of parliamentary officials and committees.

“This is why I proposed restructuring the Secretariat to keep pace with developments and encourage the employment of Kuwaitis or the Kuwaitization of jobs. National competencies must be updated to complete tasks and achieve goals of the Secretariat in line with the latest administrative, financial and legislative developments.”

— Compiled by Mai Elsoukary



Photos by Rizk Taufiq

Top and above: Pictures taken at the blaze site. Firemen toiled in 45C plus temperatures and had to cool themselves with cold water.

Truck fire extinguished: KFF

Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) managed to put out a fire that engulfed a truck on Al-Ghazali Road on Monday.

KFF said in a statement the truck was laden with flammable materials, according to KUNA.

A pall of smoke could be seen rising into the sky from a distance. Meanwhile, two people were injured in a collision between two cars on Salmi Road.

According to the Public Relations and Media Department of the

Directorate-General of Fire Department (DGFD) the injured were rescued from the car wreck and handed over to the emergency medical personnel.

The cause of the accident is not known. (Agencies)

‘Strict measures taken to to peg smuggling routes’

Keep up with new updates: Al-Sharhan

KUWAIT CITY, June 26: The Acting Director-General of the General Administration of Kuwaiti Customs, Abdullah Al-Sharhan, says more efforts are being exerted now to face the challenges posed by the international trade environment, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Al-Sharhan said this when he was addressing the Council of the World Customs Organization, which concluded at the organization’s headquarters recently in Brussels, Belgium.

He pointed out strict measures were taken to confront the new smuggling routes, in addition to exchanging intelligence information and devoting commercial security.

Al-Sharhan stressed on the need to keep up with the rapid new updates in technological systems and programs, e-commerce and the digitization of data that the customs administrations of the member states of the organization seek, in addition to coordinating positions, programs and procedures to achieve this.

He also stressed on the necessity of exchanging intelligence information and participating in joint operations through the customs control network for illegal trade, “which negatively affects the security and facilitation of trade.”

He stressed the need to enhance the capabilities of customs officials, exchange data, and identify new methods of smuggling.

Ice-cream vendor dies in mishap

KUWAIT CITY, June 26: An Egyptian ice-cream seller died in a traffic accident in Jahra, reports Al-Rai daily.

A security source said the man died under the wheels of a car driven by an Egyptian woman, who reportedly lost control over

the steering wheel and crashed into the ice-cream cart.

The daily added, emergency medical personnel upon information rushed to the spot but could do nothing to save the victim. He reportedly died on the spot.

Al-Sharhan drew attention to Kuwait’s membership in the audit and review committee, which is one of the main committees in the organization. He explained the membership consists of two countries from each of the six regions, and its tasks are to provide objective and independent advice and recommendations to the Secretary-General, the Policy Committee and the Council, and it works to review annual plans and monitor the comprehensive implementation of the strategic plan to ensure efficiency and effectiveness.

During the meetings, Al-Sharhan reviewed the priorities of the General Administration of Customs in Kuwait, including qualifying workers, providing all means and providing all the necessary capabilities to build their capabilities, providing technical assistance to enable them to develop customs work, achieve security and facilitate trade, and provide opportunities for them to occupy positions in the organization, represent in committees, and raise the professional level to achieve the desired goals in the strategic plan.

During the regional meeting for the Middle East and North Africa region, Al-Sharhan stressed the importance of the agreement of the countries of the region on a financing mechanism for translating the work of the organization’s committees into Arabic to ensure the empowerment and activation of the participation of customs administration employees in the Arab countries, pointing out that the terms of reference document for the appointment of technical attachés for the countries of the region was also approved after the inclusion of observations Kuwait.

The meeting of the World Customs Organization Council 141/142 and the 58th regional meeting for the Middle East and North Africa region, which began on the June 21, concluded during which the organization’s budget reports 024/2023 and its financial committee were approved.

The delegation of the State of Kuwait to the meetings was headed by the Acting Director General of the General Administration of Customs, Abdullah Al Sharhan.

Al-Sharhan participated in the vote for the candidates for the position of Secretary-General of the World Customs Organization, which was won by the American Ian Sanders, succeeding the Japanese Kunio Mikuria.

CID men arrest 5 drug pushers

KUWAIT CITY, June 26: The Ministry of the Interior announced that the criminal security sector has taken into custody five people and seized from them about half a kilo of shabu and chemicals, and 70 psychotropic pills, reports Al-Rai daily.

The Public Relations and Security Media Department of the Ministry of Interior said efforts to combat the scourge of narcotics and psychotropic substances and to arrest drugs pushers and smugglers is an ongoing process to protect the country’s youth from its devastating dangers.

The ministry said the suspects have admitted to trafficking and abusing drugs following which they and the seizures were referred to the competent authority in order to take all necessary legal measures against them.

HH Crown Prince and HH Premier send similar greetings

HH Amir congratulates Madagascar, Mozambique on national days

KUWAIT CITY, June 26, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent on Monday a cable of congratulations to the President of Madagascar Andry Rajoelina on his country's National Day.

His Highness the Amir wished the president lasting good health and his country and its friendly people more progress and prosperity.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber

Al-Sabah sent a cable of congratulations to President Rajoelina on his country's National Day.

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

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah also sent a cable of congratulations to President Rajoelina on his country's National Day.

In the meantime, His Highness the Amir sent Monday a cable of congratulations to President of Mozambique Filipe Nyusi on

his country's National Day.

His Highness the Amir wished him a long healthy life and more development for Mozambique and its friendly people.

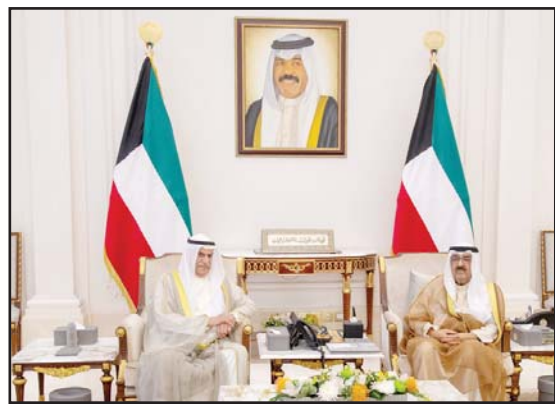
His Highness the Crown Prince also sent a cable of congratulations to President Filipe Nyusi on his country's National day.

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

Also, His Highness Prime Minister sent a cable of congratulations to President Filipe Nyusi.

Kuwait 4th best city in the region to live in, says EIU

CSC chief Dr Al-Rubaian submits his resignation



KUNA photo HH Crown Prince with Speaker Al-Saadoun.

CP receives parliament speaker

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received National Assembly Speaker Ahmad Al-Saadoun at Bayan Palace on Monday. (KUNA)

KUWAIT CITY, June 26: The Economist Information Unit has placed the Kuwait City fourth among the best livable cities in Mideast and North Africa region for 2023, while Dubai and Abu Dhabi retained the first and second positions respectively for the fifth year in a row, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Included on the list of the top ten cities at the regional level are Doha, Manama, Muscat, Riyadh, Oman and Jeddah.

The Canadian, European and Australian cities dominate the global list of the best cities to live in. Vienna ranks first, followed by Copenhagen, Melbourne, Sydney, Vancouver, Zurich, Calgary, Geneva, Toronto, Osaka and Auckland, while the least livable cities are Damascus, Tripoli, Algiers, Lagos, Karachi, Port Moresby, Dhaka, Harare, Kiev and Douala, according to the EIU.

The study classifies living conditions in 173 cities across several categories such as stability, health care, culture, environment, education, and infrastructure.

It is worth noting that last January; the Resonance Consultancy ranked Dubai first regionally and fifth in the world as the best city in the world based on the categories of prosperity, safety, landmarks, outdoor activities, and others. The study stated that among the groups surveyed, only the stability rate declined on average in 2023, mainly due to a workers' strike in Greece, pension protests in France, and clashes in Peru.

CSC chief resigns: Director of the Civil Service Commission (CSC) Dr Essam Al-Rubaian has submitted his resignation, reports Al-Qabas daily quoting sources.

Sources revealed that CSC will witness structural and administrative changes in the coming days, including the director whose competencies will be transferred to the CSC's agent.



Ambassador HE Chung Byung-Ha cutting the ribbon.



Some of the Korean fruits on display.

Event to run until July 2 at Monoprix

Korean Embassy in Kuwait organizes 'Product Week: Taste of Korea' festival

KUWAIT CITY, June 26: The Embassy of the Republic of Korea in Kuwait and Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency (KOTRA) organizes the "Korean Product Week: Taste of Korea" festival from June 25 to July 2, 2023, at the Monoprix, the Assima Mall in downtown Kuwait City.

The Kuwaiti food enthusiasts and those with curious palates now have the opportunity to enjoy a delightful culinary adventure as the rich and diverse cuisine of Korea offers vibrant hub of flavors, aromatic spices, and exquisite ingredients.

The festival was inaugurated on June 26 at Monoprix, Assima Mall, by the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea, HE Chung Byung-Ha, in the presence of top management officials from Monoprix in Kuwait, as well as a large gathering of shoppers and well-wishers of the brand. This marks the beginning of an exciting week filled with promotions, offers and the opportunity to explore a wide range of authentic Korean goods.

The shoppers can look forward to discovering an extensive array of carefully

selected Korean products from leading brands such as Samyang Foods, CJ, Binggrae, Cook-tok, Crown, Daesang, Dongseo, Haitai, Jaeho, Kwangdong Pharmaceutical, Lotte, Nongshim, Ottogi, Samjin, SPC Samlip, OKF, SFC, Wooyang, Young poong, Youus, Dong-A, Haepyo, HBAF, Namyang Dairy, Paldo, and Sempio.

The 'Taste of Korea' aims to bring the best of Korean products to consumers in Kuwait, offering exceptional value with competitive prices. This initiative reflects KOTRA's commitment to providing a diverse and exciting shopping experience that caters to the multicultural tastes and preferences of customers.

Ambassador Byung-Ha emphasized that "whether you are a fan of Korean cuisine, K-pop, skincare, or simply curious to explore the wonders of Korean culture, the 'Taste of Korea' event is not to be missed."

As the joyous occasion of Eid Al-Adha coincides with the delightful "Taste of Korea," visit the Monoprix Assima Mall that will take you on a culinary and cultural journey through the enchanting world of Korea.

Two million

Continued from Page 1

perform the rituals, which began Monday. They also pick up helpful hints and tricks of the trade to get by, learned from other hajjis - as those who have completed the pilgrimage are known.

Here's a look at what they say is essential gear.

Dress for the heat, since daytime temperatures regularly soar past 40 degrees Celsius (104 degrees Fahrenheit). The majority of rituals take place outdoors in the desert, including climbing the Mount of Mercy and stoning the Jamarat, a row of pillars representing the devil.

Sun hats are key. Pilgrims often opt for wide-brimmed straw hats or even cowboy hats. Umbrellas of every color are everywhere. Some balance their prayer mats on their heads or the canopies from umbrellas.

All men are required to wear simple white robes without any stitching, a rule aimed at uniting rich and poor. Women must forego beauty products and cover their hair but have more latitude to wear fabrics from their native countries, resulting in a colorful display of Islam's multiculturalism.

When it comes to footwear, it's best to wear something that's durable for the long walks but that also slips on and off easily, as pilgrims must remove their shoes before entering Makkah's Grand Mosque.

Sandals are sensible, but some pilgrims say it's best also to wear socks as the mosque's marble floor can be surprisingly cold as they walk around the Ka'aba seven times.

A daypack of some kind is essential for carrying food, water, sunscreen and other sundries. But backpacks can be a hassle when you're crammed shoulder-to-shoulder.

Far more popular are cross-body bags that you can access without turning around.

Many pilgrims also carry a separate drawstring bag or pouch for their shoes. Usually at mosques, you can leave your shoes with an attendant at the entrance, but with hundreds of thousands at the Grand Mosque, that's a sure way to lose your shoes, or at best waste a long time getting them back. It would also mean you have to exit the same way you entered, not always possible when the crowd takes you in another direction.

Umaima Hafez, a five-time hajjah from Egypt, packs like a pro.

Sitting on her portable plastic stool, she reaches into her large pack and pulls out a

blanket, homemade granola and crackers, a travel towel that she wets and places on her head when it gets hot, an extra-thick prayer mat - for her knees - and some medications. The stool fits into the bag as well. She'll carry it throughout Hajj, then leave it behind for someone else to use.

She insists her bag isn't heavy. "Everything is beautiful and easy with God. ... And people give out a lot of water and food here."

Israel ignores

Continued from Page 1

for a visit - as is customary following Israeli elections.

And this week, the U.S. said it would not transfer funds to Israeli institutions for science and technology research projects in the West Bank. The decision restored a longstanding policy that had been canceled by the pro-settlement Trump administration.

Ahead of Monday's vote, Israeli Cabinet Minister Issac Wasserlauf, a member of the far-right Jewish Power party, played down the disagreements with the U.S.

"I think the alliance with the U.S. will remain," he told the Army Radio station. "There are disagreements, we knew how to deal with them in the past."

Simcha Rothman, another far-right member of the governing coalition, accused the Biden Administration of having a "pathological obsession" with the Israeli government.

Netanyahu's government, the most right-wing in Israel's 75-year history, has made settlement expansion its top priority.

Senior members have been pushing for increased construction and other measures to cement Israel's control over the territory in response to a more than year-long wave of violence with the Palestinians. Last week, four Israelis were killed by a pair of Palestinian gunmen who opened fire next to a Jewish settlement.

Israel expanded its military activity in the West Bank in early 2022 in response to a series of deadly Palestinian attacks. Over 135 Palestinians have been killed in fighting in the West Bank and east Jerusalem this year. Roughly half of them were affiliated with militant groups, though Israel says that number is much higher. But Palestinian stone-throwers and people uninvolved in violence were also killed. Some 24 people have been killed in Palestinian attacks.

EID AL ADHA

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Sheikh Salem commends achievements of Kuwaiti women in realm of diplomacy

Kuwait marks International Day of Women in Diplomacy with gala

KUWAIT CITY, June 26, (KUNA): Kuwait's Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Sunday marked International Day of Women in Diplomacy with a lavish ceremony recognizing the increasingly significant role of women in the realm of diplomacy, which brought together a bevy of Kuwaiti diplomats.

Citing some of the most notable achievements of women diplomats in Kuwait, Minister Sheikh Salem Al-Sabah spoke of the recent influx of women in Kuwaiti diplomacy, applauding the move as a shrewd one given their dedication and com-

mitment. He went on to say that, his ministry backs all initiatives to support women as they seek to establish parity with their male counterparts, the minister underlined.

Addressing the gathering, renowned Kuwaiti diplomat Amal Al-Hamad spoke of her prolific career that spanned decades, attributing her success as a diplomat to the overwhelming support the Kuwaiti foreign ministry has given her.

In her speech, Assistant Foreign Minister for International Development and Cooperation Tahani Al-Nasser spoke of the "evolution" of the Kuwaiti foreign ministry, citing a raft of significant international deals sealed as of late.

Foreign Ministry Advisor Sheikha Jawaher Al-Sabah was grateful for the ceremony to mark such a pivotal occasion, saying women have left an "indelible mark" on Kuwaiti diplomacy with their numerous achievements.



Group photo during the celebration of International Day of Women in Diplomacy.

KUNA photo

Company joins UN-backed initiative

KOC undertakes a project to restore vegetation as part of KERF program

KUWAIT CITY, June 26: The Kuwait Oil Company is undertaking a large-scale project to restore vegetation cover in northern and southern Kuwait.

The project is part of the Kuwait Environmental Rehabilitation Program, which aims to improve the environment and reduce the effects of climate change, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The company had floated a tender in January 2023 for companies to market its soil rehabilitation project.

The tender was conducted through the Central Agency for Public Tenders, and is expected to be awarded to the winning companies by the third or fourth quarter of 2023.

The project is expected to be completed by the first quarter of 2029.

The daily reported that the company aims to rehabilitate the environment through the Kuwait Environmental Rehabilitation Program (KERF), which aims to clean up and restore the environment that was damaged during the Gulf War.

The company also participates in an UN-backed initiative to afforest

many areas in the country. In addition, KOC launched the national initiative to support the desertification program, which aims to make Kuwait green.

The Vegetation Restoration Project aims to plant and rehabilitate damaged terrestrial ecosystems in Kuwait. The project will establish new plant soils to restore and enhance biodiversity and natural plant coverage.

This will create a favorable environment for many plant and animal species, and help achieve environmental recovery and ecosystem balance in Kuwait. The project will also help preserve existing natural resources and enhance their sustainability. All the projects fall within the scope of the strategic plans and as part of the United Nations' sustainable development goals.

The Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research, the Environment Public Authority, the Public Authority for Agriculture Affairs and Fish Resources, and the Kuwaiti Focal Point agreed on the plant selection, which includes eight types of shrubs, two types of herbaceous plants and other trees.

Municipality asked to approve final Wafra Economic Zone detailed plan

Development supports Kuwait's gross domestic product growth

KUWAIT CITY, June 26: The Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) called on the Kuwait Municipality to approve the final detailed structural plan for the economic zone in Wafra, provided that the connecting land is located on the Nuwaiseeb and Sulabiya road, and the building system for storage and planned use is approved, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The structural plan of the economic zone shows that its establishment was based on Kuwait's desire to diversify the economy away from oil by attracting more investments. This requires the development of economic zones in a way that supports the growth and expansion of the country's gross domestic product base with the aim of improving the quality of life and educational attainment, and increasing Kuwaiti employment in the private sector.

According to the plan, Wafra Economic Zone represents the southern gateway to international trade for Kuwait. It can be developed as an integrated commercial and economic zone, as the zone is expected to represent a commercial center and a major destination for the Gulf region as a whole due to its privileged location within the comprehensive commercial and economic zone.

Wafra Economic Zone is located on an area of seven square kilometers in the southern region of the country. It represents an integrated commercial and economic zone, and is expected to become the southern gateway to international trade. The area is an internal location in the far south of Kuwait, parallel to the Kuwaiti-Saudi border, 65 kilometers southwest of downtown and about 30 kilometers from Kuwait coast.

The area can be easily reached via the railway line and the main roads proposed to be built in the area. It is expected to enhance mobility and integrate the Wafra economic area with the Gulf region to become a commercial center.

As for the economic and social components of the project based on the structural plan and according to the updated planning, it includes the following:

- The expected population is 18,000
- The expected number of total housing units is 7,800 housing units
- The job opportunities available in the project are approximately 42,000.
- 33 industrial plots (light industries), with an area of 53.7 square hectares, equivalent to 7.6 percent of the total allocated area.
- 19 industrial plots (research and development) with an area of 32.3 square hectares, equivalent to 4.6 percent of the total area allocated for the project.
- 187 warehouse and logistic services

- plots with an area of 222.88 square hectares, equivalent to 31.8 percent of the total area allocated for the project.
- 24 plots for future use, with an area equivalent to 5.2 percent of the total area of the project.
- Nine commercial plots, with area equivalent to 1.6 percent of the project area
- 142 private housing plots with an area of 0.99 percent of the total area
- 15 collective housing plots (bachelors and workers).
- 19 investment housing plots
- Six hotel plots
- Schools, a clinic, six mosques, parks and gardens

New senior appointees at KPC to be announced after Eid-Al-Adha

KUWAIT CITY, June 26: The Kuwait Petroleum Corporation says the names of new senior officer bearers in the oil sector will be announced after the Eid Al-Adha, reports Al-Rai daily.

Oil sources attributed the postponement of announcing the outcome of the trade-offs and the names of the senior officers of the so-called 'second row' in the oil sector until after Eid was necessitated by the

travel of the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Oil and circumstances which did not permit the holding a meeting of the KPC board of directors in the recent past.

The sources pointed out that the coming period will witness changes in the KPC Board of Directors, in addition to updating the boards of directors of the oil subsidiaries within the framework of the new directions.

Medical Camp Flyer

Mar Baselios Movement to conduct Free Medical Camp on 30th of June

KUWAIT CITY, June 26: Mar Baselios Movement, a Spiritual & Charitable Organization of St. Gregorios Indian Orthodox Maha Edavaka, is organizing a free medical camp in association with Indian Doctor's Forum, Indian Dentists' Alliance, and The Basil Arts Kuwait on Friday 30th June 2023 from 8.00 am to 1.00 pm at Indian Central School, Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh.

The camp will be led by specialist doctors from Indian Doctors Forum Kuwait and Indian Dentists' Alliance for General Internal Medicine, Neurology, Medical Oncology (Cancer), Cardiology, Orthopaedics, Gastroenterology, ENT, Ophthalmology (Eye), Nephrology, Gynaecology,

Paediatrics, Urology, Dermatology (Skin), and Dental.

It is intended mainly to benefit inmates of camps, housemaids, and those who have no other chance of getting medical attention in Kuwait.

The camp is in connection with the Golden Jubilee celebrations of Mar Baselios Movement and will be free of charge and basic tests and services will be provided. It will also provide health information and education to patients in order to promote better health and wellbeing. This camp is a great opportunity for those who have limited access to healthcare and medical services. For more details please contact on 66772550.

Kuwait's humanitarian aid to Sudan praised

KHARTOUM, June 26, (KUNA): Sudanese Health Minister Haiham Ibrahim on Sunday commended Kuwait's efforts in providing medical and humanitarian assistance to Sudan, which greatly contributed to bringing medical and drug supply during a time when the crisis faces the country.

In an exclusive interview with KUNA, Ibrahim said that Kuwait provided great assistance that contributed to covering Sudan's needs for medicine, noting the high-level coordination with the Kuwaiti side, whether with Kuwait's Ambassa-

dor to Sudan Fahad Al-Dhafiri, the Kuwaiti Ministry of Health (MoH) or humanitarian organizations in Kuwait.

Kuwait's help covered a large deficit in surgical contributions and kidney medicines in Sudan, he added, thanking and appreciating the Kuwaiti leadership, government and people for standing with Sudan.

Kuwait has strong ties with Sudan especially in the health field, as the best evidence for this is the Kuwaiti institutions and hospitals that provide services to Sudan,

Ibrahim explained.

He hopes for continued Kuwaiti support to cover the needs of the health system and Sudanese hospitals, especially in medicines for tumors, chronic diseases, anesthesia, and public health supplies to combat epidemics and diseases, as well as rebuilding the health system and rehabilitating hospitals after the destruction of medical equipment.

Ibrahim referred to the severe damage to the health system in Sudan during the crisis continuing for the third month in a row, especially in Khartoum and Darfur.

world leaders & scientists to discuss issue

"Fundamental Life Science Meets Climate, Environment, and Sustainability," invites world leaders and scientists to forge new partnerships and propose systems-level approaches to solve global challenges. The events contribute toward the U.N. International Year of Basic Sciences for Sustainable Development.

High-Level Summit, 27 June, at French Academy of Sciences: International Scientific Symposium, 28 & 29 June, at Auditorium André et Liliane Bettencourt.

Press Contact: English speakers: Rachael Bishop, rbishop@hfsp.org, +33 (0)7 81 87 62 21. French speakers: Hélène Boulanger, h.boulanger@logos-france.fr, +33 (0) 66 88 79 31 67.

To attend in-person, register with press contacts. See the HFSP website for updates. Watch a video on the

events. Partners: the French National Research Agency, the French Academy of Sciences, National Center for Scientific Research, the Institut Pasteur, the International Science Council, the European Molecular Biology Laboratory, and UNESCO.

The Human Frontier Science Program was established in 1989 to advance international research and training at the frontier of life sciences. (PR Newswire)

Maue Group, a provider of global HR, employment, and business consultancy solutions has been awarded ISO 27001 certification. Awarded by the British Assessment Bureau, this certification is the international standard for managing risks related to the security of information and data held by an organisation.

This certification demonstrates Maue's commitment to providing the top levels of security to its clients. Obtaining ISO 27001 certification involved rigorous assessments of Maue's information security infrastructure - confirming that Maue employs a spectrum of procedures, such as security information management, robust client confidentiality policies, risk management strategies, and data encryption across the entire organisation.

Companies that are awarded ISO 27001 certification for complying with relevant legal requirements - including GDPR - can benefit from strengthened data security; securing valuable information assets and minimising data threats.

Jonathan Ellis, Maue Group's System Operations Manager expressed: "We are delighted to announce Maue Group has been awarded ISO 27001 certification, which highlights our dedication to upholding the International Standard of Security of Data and Information. (PR Newswire)"

Maue Group awarded ISO 27001 certification

Market Movements

26-06-2023

	Change	Closing pts		Change	Closing pts
PAKISTAN - KSE 100	+3.23	41,386.57	UAE - DFM	-0.01	3,791.99
PHILIPPINES - PSEI	+2.03	6,523.09	JAPAN - Nikkei	-0.25	32,698.81
EGYPT - EGX 30	+2.18	17,665.29	SAUDI - Tadawul	-0.06	11,458.98

Business

The Conversation

Idea a growing challenge to established economic order

A BRICS currency is unlikely to dislodge dollar any time soon

By Mihaela Papa
Tufts University

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

Could a new currency be set to challenge the dominance of the dollar? Perhaps, but that may not be the point.

In August 2023, South Africa will host the leaders of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa - a group of nations known by the acronym BRICS. Among the items on the agenda is the creation of a new joint BRICS currency.

As a scholar who has studied the BRICS countries for over a decade, I can certainly see why talk of a BRICS currency is, well, gaining currency. The BRICS summit comes as countries across the world are confronting a changing geopolitical landscape that is challenging the traditional dominance of the West. And while the BRICS countries have been seeking to reduce their reliance on the dollar for over a decade, Western sanctions on Russia after its invasion of Ukraine have accelerated the process.

Meanwhile, rising interest rates and the recent debt-ceiling crisis in the U.S. have raised concerns among other countries about their dollar-denominated debt and the demise of the dollar should the world's leading economy ever default.

That all said, a new BRICS currency faces major hurdles before becoming a reality. But what currency discussions do show is that the BRICS countries are seeking to discover and develop new ideas about how to shake up international affairs and effectively coordinate policies around these ideas.

With 88% of international transactions conducted in U.S. dollars, and the dollar accounting for 58% of global foreign exchange reserves, the dollar's global dominance is indisputable. Yet de-dollarization - or reducing an economy's reliance on the U.S. dollar for international trade and finance - has been accelerating following the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

The BRICS countries have been pursuing a wide range of initiatives to decrease their dependence on the dollar. Over the past year, Russia, China and Brazil have turned to greater use of non-dollar currencies in their cross-border transactions. Iraq, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates are actively exploring dollar alternatives. And central banks have sought to shift more of their currency reserves away from the dollar and into gold.

All the BRICS nations have been critical of the dollar's dominance for different reasons. Russian officials have been championing de-dollarization to ease the pain from sanctions. Because of sanctions, Russian banks have been unable to use SWIFT, the global messaging system that enables bank transactions. And

the West froze Russia's US\$330 billion in reserves last year.

Meanwhile, the 2022 election in Brazil reinstated Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva as president. Lula is a longtime proponent of BRICS who previously sought to reduce Brazil's dependence on and vulnerability to the dollar. He has re-energized the group's commitment to de-dollarization and spoken about creating a new Euro-like currency.

The Chinese government has also clearly laid out its concerns with the dollar's dominance, labeling it "the main source of instability and uncertainty in the world economy." Beijing directly blamed the Fed's interest rate hike for causing turmoil in the international financial market and substantial depreciation of other currencies. Together with other BRICS countries, China has also criticized the use of sanctions as a geopolitical weapon.

The appeal of de-dollarization and a possible BRICS currency would be to mitigate such problems. Experts in the U.S. are deeply divided on its prospects. U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen believes the dollar will remain dominant as most countries have no alternative. Yet a former White House economist sees a way that a BRICS currency could end dollar dominance.

Although talk of a BRICS currency has gained momentum, there is limited information on various models under consideration.

The most ambitious path would be something akin to the Euro, the single-currency adopted by 11 member states of the European Union in 1999. But negotiating a single currency would be difficult given the economic power asymmetries and complex political dynamics within BRICS. And for a new currency to work, BRICS would need to agree to an exchange rate mechanism, have efficient payment systems and a well-regulated, stable and liquid financial market. To achieve a global currency status, BRICS would need a strong track record of joint currency management to convince others that the new currency is reliable.

A BRICS version of the Euro is unlikely for now; none of the countries involved show any desire to discontinue its local currency. Rather, the goal appears to be to create an efficient integrated payment system for cross-border transactions as the first step and then introduce a new currency.

Building blocks for this already exist. In 2010, the BRICS Interbank Cooperation Mechanism was launched to facilitate cross-border payments between BRICS banks in local currencies. BRICS nations have been developing "BRICS pay" - a payment system for transactions among the BRICS without having to convert local currency into dollars. And there has been talk of a BRICS cryptocurrency and of strategically aligning the development of Central Bank Digital Currencies to promote currency interoperability and economic

integration. Since many countries expressed an interest in joining BRICS, the group is likely to scale its de-dollarization agenda.

To be sure, some of the group's most ambitious past initiatives to set up major BRICS projects to parallel non-Western infrastructures have failed. Big ideas like developing a BRICS credit rating agency and creating a BRICS under-sea cable never materialized.

And de-dollarization efforts have been struggling both at the multilateral and bilateral level. In 2014, when the BRICS countries launched the New Development Bank, its founding agreement outlined that its operations may provide financing in the local currency of the country in which the operation takes place. Yet, in 2023, the bank remains heavily dependent on the dollar for its survival. Local currency financing represents around 22% of the bank's portfolio, although its new president hopes to increase that to 30% by 2026.

Similar challenges exist in bilateral de-dollarization pursuits. Russia and India have sought to develop a mechanism for trading in local currencies, which would enable Indian importers to pay for Russia's cheap oil and coal in rupees. However, talks were suspended after Moscow cooled on the idea of rupee accumulation.

Despite the barriers to de-dollarization, the BRICS group's determination to act should not be dismissed - the group has been known for defying expectations in the past.

Despite many differences among the five countries, the bloc managed to develop joint policies and survive major crises such as the 2020-21 China-India border clashes and the war in Ukraine. BRICS has deepened its cooperation, invested in new financial institutions and has been continuously broadening the range of policy issues it addresses.

It now has a huge network of interlinked mechanisms that connect governmental officials, businesses, academics, think tanks and other stakeholders across countries. Even if there is no movement on the joint currency front, there are multiple issues on which BRICS finance ministers as well as central bankers regularly coordinate - and the potential for developing new financial collaborations is particularly strong.

No doubt, talk of a new BRICS currency in itself is an important indicator of the desire of many nations to diversify away from the dollar. But I believe focusing on the BRICS currency risks missing the forest for the trees. A new global economic order will not emerge out of a new BRICS currency or de-dollarization happening overnight. But it can potentially emerge out of BRICS' commitment to coordinating their policies and innovating - something this currency initiative represents.

Wall Street drifts to start what could be a quiet wk

Asian shares mixed after armed rebellion quelled in Russia

NEW YORK, June 26, (AP): Stocks are drifting Monday in their first trading since a big rally for Wall Street hit its first roadblock in six weeks.

The S&P 500 was 0.2% lower in afternoon trading. It's still close to its highest level in a year, reached a couple weeks ago. The Dow Jones Industrial Average was up 42 points, or 0.1%, at 33,770, as of 12:29 p.m. Eastern time, while the Nasdaq composite was 0.8% lower.

Electric vehicle maker Lucid Group jumped 6.7% after announcing a deal where it would provide powertrain and battery systems to Aston Martin. PacWest Bancorp, one of the banks Wall Street has punished in its hunt for the system's next potential weak link, rose 5.4% after it sold a portfolio of loans to strengthen its cash position.

Carnival, meanwhile, fell 11% despite reporting stronger results and revenue for its latest quarter than expected. Its forecasted ranges for earnings per share, occupancy levels and other measures in the current quarter may have disappointed some investors.

Trading was mostly quiet in financial markets around the world as the fundamental question remains the same, and unanswered for investors: Will the economy be able to avoid a painful recession after central banks around the world hiked interest rates at a blistering pace to get inflation under control?

Adding to the uncertainty was a short-lived armed rebellion in Russia over the weekend. The war in Ukraine has already helped push upward on inflation around the world, but investors mostly looked past the brief mutiny by mercenary soldiers.

Some say \$800 duty-free limit was a mistake

Packages from China are surging into the US

WASHINGTON, June 26, (AP): Conservatives anxious to counter America's leading economic adversary have set their sights on a top trade priority for labor unions and progressives: cracking down on the deluge of duty-free packages coming in from China.

The changing political dynamic could have major ramifications for e-commerce businesses and consumers importing products from China valued at less than \$800. It also could add to the growing tensions between the countries.

Under current U.S. law, most im-

ports valued at less than \$800 enter duty-free into the United States as long as they are packaged and addressed to individual buyers. It's referred to as the de minimis rule.

Efforts to lower the threshold amount or exclude certain countries altogether from duty-free treatment are set to become a major trade fight in this Congress.

"De minimis has become a proxy for all sorts of anxieties as it relates to China and other trade-related challenges," said John Drake, a vice president at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, who ar-

gues that the current U.S. law should be preserved.

The rule speeds the pace of commerce and lowers costs for consumers. It also allows U.S. Customs and Border Protection to focus its resources on the bigger-ticket items that generate more tariff revenue for the federal government.

The volume of products coming into the U.S. that benefit from the de minimis rule has soared in recent years. Congress raised the U.S. government's threshold for expedited, duty-free treatment from \$200 to \$800 in 2016.

Europe

France's CAC 40 dipped 0.4% in early trading to 7,135.23. Germany's DAX slipped 0.2% to 15,797.27. Britain's FTSE 100 fell 0.8% to 7,403.10.

Asia

Asian shares fell Monday after a short-lived armed rebellion in Russia added to uncertainties over the war in Ukraine.

Benchmarks declined in Tokyo, Sydney Hong Kong and Shanghai, but rose in Seoul.

The rebellion by mercenary soldiers who briefly took over a Russian military headquarters on an ominous march toward Moscow was over. But the brief weakened President Vladimir Putin just as his forces were facing a fierce counteroffensive in Ukraine.

Yevgeny Prigozhin and his Wagner troops were some of Russia's most effective fighters in Ukraine. Their aborted takeover of the capital also left their fate uncertain.

Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 lost nearly 0.3% to finish at 32,698.81. South Korea's Kospi rose 0.5% to 2,582.20. Hong Kong's Hang Seng was down 0.2% to 18,853.18, while the Shanghai Composite, reopening after a holiday, dropped 1.5% to 3,150.62. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 shed 0.3% to 7,078.70.

Oil

In energy trading, benchmark U.S. crude gained 44 cents to \$69.60 per barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. It fell 35 cents to \$69.16 Friday. Brent crude, the international standard, added 55 cents to \$74.40 a barrel.

Currencies

In currency trading, the U.S. dollar fell to 143.02 Japanese yen from 143.58 yen. The euro cost \$1.0901, inching down from \$1.0903.

In the bond market, the yield on the 10-year Treasury fell Friday to 3.73% from 3.79% late Thursday.

Bid to accelerate digital transformation

Danske selects Infosys as a strategic partner

BENGALURU, India and COPENHAGEN, Denmark, June 26, (PR Newswire): Infosys (NSE: INFY), (BSE: INFY), (NYSE: INFY), a global leader in next-generation digital services and consulting, today announced that it has signed a strategic collaboration with Danske Bank, a leading Nordic Bank, to accelerate the bank's digital transformation initiatives with speed and scale. This collaboration will help Danske Bank achieve its strategic priorities towards better customer experiences, operational excellence, and a modernised technology landscape, powered by next-gen solutions.

Headquartered in Denmark, Danske Bank provides banking services to personal and business customers, as well as large corporate and institutional customers. In a bid to accelerate the bank's technology transformation, optimise their access to talent and capabilities and improve productivity, Danske Bank chose Infosys as its strategic partner.

As part of this collaboration, Infosys will also acquire Danske Bank's IT center in India, where over 1,400 professionals are employed. With its global expertise and industry solutions, Infosys will accelerate the bank's digital agenda by significantly enhancing their IT operations and capabilities, powered by Infosys Topaz, an AI-first set of services, solutions and platforms, experience design, and services that support operations.

Frans Woelders, Chief Operating Officer, Danske Bank, said, "Our Forward '28 strategy sets clear ambitions for Danske Bank to be a leading bank in a digital age. This is backed by significant investments in digitalisation and technology, including plans to further develop our customer-facing digital solutions, and modernising our technology infrastructure to enable even better customer experiences and drive operational efficiency. We have a strong starting point, and we want to further accelerate our digital and technology transformation. We have conducted a thorough process to find a partner that can help us achieve that. Infosys has the tools, experience, and expertise to support us in accelerating our transformation using cloud and AI technologies. Given Infosys' global

presence and scale, this collaboration will also give us access to wider talent pools and capabilities."

Salil Parekh, Chief Executive Officer & Managing Director, Infosys, said, "We are delighted to bring our rich experience in financial services transformation to work for Danske Bank and help the bank accelerate its strategic growth agenda. Infosys will collaborate with Danske Bank to strengthen their core business with greater digital, cloud and data capabilities. This will help Danske Bank create more value for their customers using powerful advances in AI, including generative AI.

Infosys looks forward to welcoming Danske India employees joining our team as part of this journey.

Nordics is a strategic market for Infosys and this collaboration further enhances our commitment to the region. Infosys has acquired BASE Life Science in Denmark and Fluido in Finland, and recently opened a new proximity center in Gothenburg, Sweden and Oslo, Norway. With this relationship with Danske Bank, Infosys has further enhanced its localization strategy in the Nordics.

Infosys expects the transactions to be completed before Q2'FY2024, subject to customary closing conditions.

About Danske Bank A/S

For more than 150 years, Danske Bank has strived to be a driver of growth and development in society. We have developed in tandem with the societies we are part of, and our advisory services, expertise and financial solutions have helped individuals, families, businesses and organisations to realise their ambitions and potential. With long-term sustainable development as our ambition, we will continue to work every day to be the best possible bank, for the benefit of our customers, employees, shareholders and the societies we are part of.

About Infosys

Infosys is a global leader in next-generation digital services and consulting. Over 300,000 of our people work to amplify human potential and create the next opportunity for people, businesses, and communities. We enable clients in more than 56 countries to navigate their digital transformation.

SANY renewable energy's 5MW onshore wind turbine receives UL Solutions certification

BEIJING, June 26, (PR Newswire): UL Solutions, a global leader in applied safety science, recently certified SANY Renewable Energy's 5MW onshore wind turbine in Beijing in June. In addition, SANY Renewable Energy was acknowledged as a laboratory partner by UL Solutions during an award ceremony. Present at the event were Nivedh B S, the General Engineering Manager of UL Solutions Wind Asia, and Yang Huaiyu, the Director of SANY Renewable Energy Research Institute.

UL Solutions, established in 1894, provides safety-focused services and products for global companies, promoting innovation and growth. Their certification

is a trust symbol, indicative of product quality and SANY Renewable Energy's commitment to safety.

Wind power now yields the lowest kilowatt-hour cost across the clean energy range and SANY Renewable Energy believes the technology will play an integral part in carbon reduction and tackling China's "Dual Carbon" goals. To address this, SANY Renewable Energy has developed technologically-advanced wind turbine products with excellent performance and reliability that not only supports global initiatives to tackle climate challenges but also promote the significant

transformation of the global energy market.

SANY Renewable Energy's 5MW onshore wind turbine was certified by DNV in 2021, which labeled the company as the first wind turbine supplier in China to obtain the international certification of large MW wind turbine with a box-type substation.

The wind turbine unit adopts a platform-based design approach and mature "high-speed double-fed" technology to ensure high reliability, high efficiency, low operation and maintenance costs, and resulting in greater economic value for customers.

KIB to be closed during Eid holiday, providing services through digital platforms

Kuwait International Bank (KIB) announced that it will continue to provide its online banking services around the clock during Arafat Day and Eid Al-Adha holiday for the Hijri year 1444. The Bank aims to meet the needs of its customers, whether inside Kuwait or abroad, during the holiday break.

The Bank will be officially closed starting Tuesday, 27 June 2023 till Sunday, 2 July 2023. Tuesday will be an official holiday on the occasion of Arafat Day, while Wednesday, Thursday and Friday will be official Eid holidays. Sunday, 2 July will be considered

a rest day, with official working hours resuming on Monday, 3 July 2023.

KIB highlighted its commitment to serving its customers and enabling them to follow up on their financial affairs and complete their banking transactions with the utmost efficiency and without disruption at all times. The Bank indicated that it will continue to provide its banking services through all its digital platforms 24/7 during the holiday, which includes the KIB Mobile smartphone application that allows customers to perform most basic banking

operations, in addition to the Live Chat and KIB Online services on the Bank's website www.kib.com.kw. Customers can also reach KIB via its call center, at 1866866 for local calls and at +965 22957300 for international calls, or through its WhatsApp account registered with the local bank number 1866866 for general inquiries about products and services.

KIB also emphasized the readiness of the Bank's ATMs to accommodate the expected increased demand for cash withdrawals during the holiday, both in terms of

providing sufficient liquidity and the number of machines available in different areas in Kuwait.

Kuwait International Bank (KIB) is a bank that operates according to the Islamic Shari'ah, based in the State of Kuwait. Incorporated in 1973, and originally known as Kuwait Real Estate Bank, KIB made the transition to its current Islamic operating model in 2007. In 2018, KIB embarked on a new phase of its journey full of innovation and development. As part of its new strategic direction, the Bank focuses on offering

a next-level customer experience under the slogan: "Bank for Life".

Through a network of branches spread across the State of Kuwait, KIB offers a broad range of banking products and services, as well as innovative digital banking solutions in line with international best standards. As part of its duty towards the community, the Bank also encompasses a leading social responsibility program that aims at positively impacting all members of the community through a wide range of impactful initiatives and activities.

Malabar Gold & Diamonds forays into Europe

Jewellery retailer launches 320th showroom in London

KUWAIT CITY, June 26: Malabar Gold & Diamonds, the 6th largest jewellery retailer globally, has launched their new showroom in the UK in London. This marks the global jewellery brand's expansion into its 11th country of operation and its first foray into the European continent. Malabar Gold & Diamonds currently has an extensive retail presence of 320 showrooms in India, the UAE, the KSA, Qatar, Oman, Kuwait, Bahrain, Malaysia, Singapore, the USA & the UK.

The inauguration of the new showroom was conducted by Ms. Lyn Brown, Member of Parliament for West Ham and Shadow Minister for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development affairs, in the presence of Mr. Abdul Salam K P, Vice Chairman of Malabar Group, Mr. Shamlal Ahmed, International Operations Managing Director of Malabar Gold & Diamonds, Mr. Faisal A K, Head of Manufacturing at Malabar Gold & Diamonds, other senior Malabar Gold & Diamonds management team members, customers and well-wishers.

"We are immensely proud to launch our inaugural showroom in Europe, in London. What began as a single jewellery showroom in 1993 has now grown into an expansive global enterprise spanning 11 countries. Our dedication to delivering an exceptional jewellery shopping experience, encompassing top-quality products and exemplary



The inauguration of a new showroom in London.

service, has been the driving force behind our ascent as the premier Indian international jewellery retailer. As we mark the 30th anniversary of Malabar Gold & Diamonds, we are one step closer to our dream of being crowned as the world's largest jewellery retailer. We express heartfelt appreciation to our customers, shareholders, team members, and associates for their invaluable support throughout the years, as they have been an integral part of our journey," commented Mr. M.P. Ahammed, Chairman of Malabar Group.

The showroom in London, which is in the East shopping centre Green Street, will house a wide collection of gold, diamond and precious gem jew-

ellery in addition to exclusive brands and collections curated by Malabar Gold & Diamonds from over 15 countries. The new store will also showcase an extensive collection of bridal jewellery, alongside a wide range of options for occasional wear, daily wear & office wear.

Milestone

"The new showroom in London not only marks a significant milestone for Malabar Gold & Diamonds but also carries immense importance of being the cornerstone for our growth aspirations in the region and play a pivotal role in shaping our future endeavors and fostering growth throughout the European continent. Over the years,

we have catered to the needs of customers residing in the UK and Europe through our diverse array of stores located in India and the Middle East. The persistent demand from our customers for a physical presence in Europe has led us to establish our presence in the region as a priority. In addition to crafting a unique experience for jewellery lovers in London, we also aim to leverage our experience of adorning over 10 million brides to redefine and make bridal jewellery shopping more accessible and convenient in Europe," commented Mr. Shamlal Ahmed, Managing Director - International Operations, Malabar Gold & Diamonds.

"Upholding the motto of 'Make in India; Market to the world', Malabar

Gold & Diamonds has been instrumental in the proliferation of Indian jewellery at the global stage; crafting, promoting, and selling jewellery that is an intersection of Indian art, heritage, culture and tradition to a global audience. Our expansion into the United Kingdom signifies a significant step in this direction. The ambitious and exciting plans that we have laid out for the future include strengthening our retail presence in existing markets, as well as expansion into new markets such as Australia, Canada, South Africa, Egypt, Bangladesh, Turkey and New Zealand," commented Mr. Abdul Salam K.P, Vice-Chairman of Malabar Group.

Malabar Gold & Diamonds has con-

sistently demonstrated a commitment to adapt its operations and practices to the evolving technological and business landscape. To enhance overall efficiency and provide exceptional and differentiated service to our customers, Malabar Gold & Diamonds has embarked on a journey of technological advancement, transforming into a technology-driven organization with omnichannel retail capability. To achieve this, they have formed strategic partnerships with renowned global technology giants such as Microsoft, IBM, Accenture, E&Y, and Deloitte.

Malabar Gold & Diamonds is renowned globally for offering an unparalleled jewellery buying experience with convenience, and customer-friendly policies along with the 'Malabar Promise' of incomparable quality and service assurance. Malabar Promise includes a transparent price tag indicating stone weight, net weight and stone charge of the jewellery, assured lifetime maintenance from any of the showrooms across 11 countries, guaranteed buyback, IGI and GIA-certified diamonds ensuring 28-point quality check of global standards, 100% value on gold exchange, 100% value on diamond exchange, jewellery exchange within 15 days, 100% UK hallmark jewellery, responsible sourcing, fair price policy, and fair labour practices.

ESG (Environmental, Social & Governance) has been a primary commitment of Malabar Group since its inception in 1993, setting 5% of its net profits towards such causes in every region of operation. The group operates on the strong belief that the most successful companies are the ones that integrate responsibility and sustainability into their core business. The key focus areas of Malabar Group's ESG initiatives are Health, Housing, Hunger Eradication, Education, Environment & Women empowerment. The group periodically strengthens its ESG goals to remain a socially conscious and responsible organization.

Most services are available in several channels around the clock

KFH continues to serve customers during Eid

KUWAIT CITY, June 26: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) continues to provide its banking services around the clock through a group of various technological and digital tools during the Eid holiday.

Most of the banking services are available in several channels around the clock, whether through the bank's website, KFH.com, or via the KFH Online mobile application, or through the KFH Go electronic branches that are spread in many important locations, in addition to the KFH accounts on social media and many E-service channels and KFH branch at Kuwait international airport.

KFH Go branch is considered a new electronic channel that helps transfer normal customer transactions to an innovative automated branch, that provides capabilities that allow customers to benefit from highly efficient banking services. It includes more than 80% of the services and business provided by the branches in their traditional sense, which makes KFH Go branches the preferred choice to many segments of customers, especially the youth.

KFH Go branches include the XTM device that allows direct video call with service personnel, as well as automatic teller machines and cash deposit machines. The cash deposit machines receive 300 notes per transaction.

Moreover, Customers can perform a variety of interactive banking services through KFH Go's 10 branches located in various places in Kuwait, including Kuwait International Airport, such as: establishing "Murabaha" financing transactions, requesting credit and prepaid cards, updating data and phone numbers, activating bank cards, opening deposits and accounts, instant cheque printing, receiving gold biscuits (10 grams), opening (gold, savings, Al-Rabeh, electron) accounts, online gold purchase and sell, cardless withdrawals using QR code through mobile, or by using Civil ID or phone number, in addition to many other financing and banking services conducted quickly, easily and safely.

The electronic banking services at KFH are also characterized by their



Alfouz weekly winner.

ABK announces Abdulwahab Abdullah as winner of weekly draw prize of KD 10,000

KUWAIT CITY, June 26: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) announced Abdulwahab Abdullah Al Wazzan as the winner of KD10,000 in the Alfouz weekly draw. The winner was announced on Monday, 26 June, 2023. The draw was held under the supervision of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

The Alfouz draw account offers ABK customers the chance to win life-changing rewards. With Alfouz, ABK customers will get a chance to win KD10,000 in the weekly draw and the ultimate grand prize of KD5,000 monthly additional income for 10 years. Both new and existing

high efficiency in addition to ease and safety. This was evident in the number of electronic banking operations that KFH customers carried out via KFHonline, on the website or through the mobile application.

The e-banking transactions include: opening an bank account online for citizens and residents to join become a KFH customer without having to visit the branch, local and telex financial transfers, opening deposits, adding beneficiaries, balance inquiry, cheque book request, requesting financing, opening an account, requesting Al-Kheir Card, and checking the PINs for credit and debit cards, activating new bank cards, reporting a lost credit/debit cards, checking the financing obligations and the number of installments, perusal of investment plans, receiving account balances and deposits summary, along with other wide range of digital services.

KFH has recently launched digital signature service in personal financing

products through KFH mobile app or desktop from anywhere without having to visit the branch, instant card issuance within 3 minutes, Live FX Pricing, instant cross-border payments service at KFH-Turkey using Ripple's technology and digital Wallet service through smart mobiles and watches which provides advanced and smart digital payment methods according to highly developed security standards in cooperation with Samsung, Fitbit and Garmin.

Meanwhile, the call center continues to provide services around the clock to receive customer calls, listen to their enquiries and respond to them through a qualified and technically advanced staff. KFH provides the automated telephone service 1803333 that works with the same efficiency and speed, to respond to transfers between accounts, inquire about financial operations, pay bills, and recharge Mobile phone cards, along with other services.

For more information about ABK, please visit aahl.com or contact an ABK customer service agent via 'Ahlan Ahli' at 1899899. Alternatively, you can visit your nearest ABK branch.

Company served worshippers at the mosque

Zain's contributions to Grand Mosque recognized

KUWAIT CITY, 26: Zain recently welcomed a delegation from the Grand Mosque of Kuwait in an official visit to recognize the company's efforts and contributions in serving guests and worshippers at the mosque during the last ten days of the Holy Month of Ramadan and Eid Prayers.

During the visit, Chief Corporate Affairs and Relations Officer, Waleed Al Khashti and Zain's Corporate Relations team welcomed the Director of the Grand Mosque's Administration, Ali Abdullah Shadad and his team to the company's main headquarters in Shuwaikh. The delegation expressed its thanks to Zain for its continuous partnership with the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs and the Grand Mosque's Administration.

Every year, in the last ten days of the Holy Month of Ramadan, and specifically during Qiyam prayers, Zain shares the spiritual atmosphere of this blessed period of time with worshippers by offering hospitality services to lighten the hot weather conditions and providing golf carts to facilitate transportation between parking areas and the Grand Mosque. The company also shared the cherished Eid breakfast meal with worshippers at the mosque during Eid Prayers to celebrate this blessed and joyous occasion.

Cloudsky is expanding its 'presence' in Saudi Arabia

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia, June 26: Cloudsky, a global leader in advanced computing solutions and services, recently announced its strategic partnership with Saudi Excellence Company. The partnership is for driving digital transformation and supporting Saudi Arabia's "2030 Vision" strategic framework. The collaboration, recently unveiled during the 10th China-Arab conference, will harness cutting-edge technologies to propel the country's digital economy forward.

Saudi Excellence Co., an investment company under Al-Ramez International Group, specializes in providing state-of-the-art solutions in AI, robotics, data, energy, and gaming.

Crusoe Mao, Chairman and CEO of Cloudsky, underscored the importance of the partnership, stating, "Saudi Arabia is a dynamic country with a keen interest in emerging technologies and digital transformation. The '2030 Vision' sets a clear goal of increasing the digital economy's contribution. Cloudsky is committed to delivering advanced computing solutions and services to empower the global digital economy. We are thrilled to collaborate with Saudi Excellence Company to promote local economic development in Saudi Arabia and support the objectives of the '2030 Vision' plan."

Sheikh Abdullah Zaid Al-Meleihi, CEO of Al-Ramez, stated, "We are pleased to establish a partnership with Cloudsky, a global leader in next-generation computing infrastructure. This

alliance marks a significant step in our mission to assist Saudi Arabia in developing a comprehensive digital economy ecosystem. It will catalyze and transform the future of emerging technologies in the entire region. We look forward to closely collaborating with Cloudsky to facilitate the digital economy development in Saudi Arabia and beyond."

Cloudsky has engaged in fruitful discussions with the Saudi government, enterprises, and universities, fostering the integration of industry, academia, and research. Cloudsky has established a strong partnership with Saudi Telecom, working together to advance the development of a 5G edge cloud infrastructure. The government agencies, such as the Ministry of Investment of Saudi Arabia (MISA) and the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT), have pledged comprehensive support for business initiatives. Furthermore, Cloudsky has agreed to engage in extensive technology research and development as well as talent exchange programs with Prince Sultan University.

Cloudsky's business footprint is expanding globally, focusing on the Middle East. The company aims to localize its leading technology and extensive experience in customer service and project implementation in Saudi Arabia, fast-tracking the realization of the "2030 Vision."



Director of Grand Mosque, Ali Shadad with Al Khashti and Zain's team.



KFH round the clock services.

Seattle-based company restructuring operations

Expedia CEO talks about his co, travel demand, high prices

By David Koenig

Online travel agency Expedia Group is benefiting as Americans continue to make up for trips they skipped during the worst of the pandemic, and Wall Street expects it to post a solidly profitable 2023 after a money-losing first quarter.

The Seattle-based company has been restructuring operations, and next month it will launch a rewards program that will tie together its disparate brands including Expedia, Hotels.com and Vrbo, which competes with Airbnb.

CEO Peter Kern talked with The Associated Press about the company, demand for travel, whether consumers can tolerate higher prices, and his management style. The answers have been edited for length and clarity.

Question: The question of the moment in the travel industry is whether demand is going to remain strong. What do you see?

Answer: We see macro demand pretty strong. It depends where you are in the world, but by and large demand has remained robust, and it's going to be a busy summer for sure.

Q: Are high prices having any effect on travel spending?

A: We've seen travel demand remain quite robust notwithstanding all the economic indicators in the world, and as far as we can tell it's really that people are prioritizing travel over everything else. Even though travel is somewhat more expensive than it used to be, it's still the thing that people miss the most and the thing people still want the most in terms of how they spend their money.

Q: Despite record revenue, Expedia still lost money in the first quarter. What happened?

A: That's not unusual for us in the first quarter. Lots and lots of bookings take place, which means we spend a lot of money in marketing, but a much smaller percentage actually stay (in hotels or vacation rentals) in the first quarter. So you end up with this typical mismatch of lots of bookings, lots of marketing spend, but not that much actual revenue because revenue is really when people stay.

Q: Expedia has suggested that margins will increase. Why should investors believe that will happen?

A: We have given the market some guidance in terms of what we expect on the year, and that does mathematically pencil out to further expansion of margins and growth. We haven't

set very specific numbers around that, but we've been investing ... in buying the right customers, investing in the long-term value of customers, and we've also been improving the product a lot. We've talked about all of the work we've done on technology to re-platform the whole company. Those are things you have to pay for in the short term, but they pay off in the longer term.

Q: You just reported long-term debt of around \$6.3 billion. Do you plan to reduce that in the near term? Or will that have to wait?

A: We signaled to the market that our intent was to get to around two times leverage. (The company reported in May that leverage, or debt divided by EBITDA, was 2.7 times.) We may reduce debt if we feel like it makes sense to get to our goals, but that goal is not that we need to be there by September per se. It's just a goal we want to get to. And of course, we're buying back our own equity in a significant way because we believe our equity is very cheap.

Q: You're launching a new loyalty program next month that combines the Expedia and Hotels.com programs and adds Vrbo. How big a boost will you get from One Key?

A: We think it's a big game-changer long-term in terms of just the customer experience. Now customers who rent a Vrbo will be able to use their points, their One Key cash, to buy an airline ticket or stay in a hotel or a cruise. We've had a lot of different brands over a long period of time. They were very discrete. They often have different loyalty programs or no loyalty programs. And what we're trying to say is like, we want our customers to get the benefit of all our capabilities and stay in our ecosystem. So we think the benefit of that is substantial.

Q: Speaking of Vrbo, Airbnb is putting new focus into renting individual rooms. Could they steal price-conscious customers from Vrbo?

A: They skew to lower ADRs (average daily rates) than we do, partly because we do whole apartments or villas and they do shared spaces, which we have not wanted to get into. Depending on the mix of business, that may benefit them or us at any given time depending on where demand is moving.

Q: Did Vrbo gain business from the complaints about Airbnb's cleaning fees, and even lists of chores for their guests?



Peter Kern, the chief executive officer of Expedia, is shown in this undated photo provided by Expedia. (AP)

A: Those are funny stories, we enjoy those, but it's hard to detect those little bits of noise. It's a big marketplace for both of us.

Q: Your 2021 compensation was eye-popping: The company valued it — with all the stock awards and options — at \$296 million if the company does well. Is anyone worth that much?

A: I can't say if anybody's worth a number or not worth a number. All of my economics are tied up in the success of the business. So whether I end up making that or less or more is entirely a function of how the business performs. I think a CEO should be closely tied to the performance of the company. (AP)

US Coast Guard will lead probe of Titan implosion

Canada, France, UK to offer help

The U.S. Coast Guard said Sunday it is leading an investigation into the loss of the Titan submersible that was carrying five people to the Titanic, to determine what caused it to implode.

Capt. Jason Neubauer, chief investigator, said the salvage operations from the sea floor are ongoing, and they have mapped the accident site. He did not give a timeline for the investigation. The convening of a Marine Board of Investigation is the highest level of investigation conducted by the U.S. Coast Guard, Neubauer said.

Investigators are working closely with other national and international investigative authorities, including the U.S. National Transportation Safety Board, Transportation Safety Board of Canada, the French marine casualties investigation board and the United Kingdom Marine Accident Investigation Branch, Neubauer added. Evidence is being collected in the port of St. John's, Newfoundland, in coordination with Canadian authorities.

The Coast Guard board can make recommendations to prosecutors to pursue civil or criminal sanctions as necessary.

"My primary goal is to prevent a similar occurrence by making the necessary recommendations to advance the safety of the maritime domain worldwide," Neubauer said.

The U.S. Navy said Sunday that it won't be using a large piece of salvage equipment that it had deployed to the effort to retrieve the Titan submersible.

The Flyaway Deep Ocean Salvage System had the capability of lifting an intact Titan back to the surface. The U.S. Coast Guard announced on Thursday that debris from the submersible had been found roughly 1,600 feet (488 meters) from the Titanic in North Atlantic waters.

The Titan submersible imploded on its way to tour the Titanic wreckage, killing all five on board. Debris was located about 12,500 feet (3,810 meters) underwater.

The Navy would only use the ocean salvage system if there were pieces large enough to require the use of the specialized equipment.

The Navy describes the Flyaway Deep Ocean Salvage System as a "portable, ship lift system designed to provide reliable deep ocean lifting capacity of up to 60,000 pounds for the recovery of large, bulky, and heavy sunken objects such as aircraft or small vessels."

The Titan weighed 20,000 pounds (9,071 kilograms).

The Navy is continuing to support the U.S. Coast Guard as operations continue.

On Saturday, the Transportation Safety Board of Canada said that it has begun an investigation into the loss of the submersible and has been speaking with those who traveled on Titan's mother ship, the Polar Prince.

Authorities from the U.S. and Canada began the process of probing the cause of the underwater implosion and are grappling with questions of who is responsible for determining how the tragedy unfolded.

The Polar Prince left Newfoundland on June 16, towing the ill-fated Titan. There were 41 people on board the ship - 17 crew members and 24 others - including the five-man team of the Titan.

Fox said the Canadian Transportation Safety Board will share information it collects with other agencies, like the U.S. National Transportation Safety Board and the U.S. Coast Guard, within the limits of Canadian law. Voice recordings and witness statements are protected under Canadian law, she said.



U.S. Coast Guard Rear Adm. John Mauger, commander of the First Coast Guard District, right, speaks to members of the media as Capt. Jason Neubauer, chief investigator, U.S. Coast, left, looks on during a news conference, Sunday, June 25,

2023, at Coast Guard Base Boston, in Boston. The U.S. Coast Guard said it is leading an investigation into the loss of the Titan submersible that was carrying five people to the Titanic, to determine what caused it to implode. (AP)

The Conversation

Danger, prestige, authenticity draw thrill-seekers to adventure tourism

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

By Scott Smith

University of South Carolina

The tragic news of the destruction of the Titan submersible has brought attention to the thrilling, dangerous and expensive world of extreme tourism.

As a researcher who studies hospitality and tourism management, I pay attention to the trends in tourism and study ways in which organizations like theme parks and resorts operate and change over time.

Tourists are generally seeking more authentic experiences that occur without prescribed paths or known endpoints. Technology can often make the extreme environments of adventure tourism more safe, but at the bottom of the ocean, the vacuum of space or the cold of a mountain summit the consequences of failure can be high.

In recent years, there has been a trend in the tourism industry toward authentic experiences. More and more, people want to experience something unique and not in a preprogrammed or controlled setting.

An example of the difference between authentic and inauthentic tourism is the difference between a zoo and a safari. Zoos are built to allow large crowds of people to easily view unique and often dangerous animals. Zoos are typically a spectator experience and are very safe,

"We don't want to duplicate efforts. We want to collaborate," she said.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police also announced Saturday that they are studying the circumstances that led to the Titan deaths to decide whether a full investigation is warranted. That full probe will only take place if it appears criminal, federal or provincial law may have been broken, officials said.

The Coast Guard led the initial search and rescue mission, a massive international effort that likely cost

but they offer little opportunity for visitors to interact with the animals.

A safari in Africa, by comparison, provides a much more authentic experience by removing a lot of the safety barriers between you and the animals. Most safaris bring a limited number of tourists, with guides who can provide closer interaction with the animals in their real environment. This, of course, also increases the risk for tourists, as the barriers and safety features found in a zoo don't exist in the wild. The sense of danger that comes from authentic tourism often adds to the adventurous traveler's experience.

The final appeal of adventure tourism is the status or prestige of a dangerous, expensive trip. Almost everyone can afford to visit a local zoo, whereas an African safari requires a level of spending that is a display of your status and income.

The same authenticity, danger and prestige apply to many types of adventure tourism, whether it is mountaineering, space tourism or trips to the bottom of the ocean.

As technologies have improved, companies and tourists have been able to push the limits of safety for many activities. For example, over the past 30 years, roller coasters have gotten progressively taller, faster and more extreme to capture the attention of thrill-seekers. These rides are able to maintain high levels of safety thanks to better engineering and technology.

The narrative that advanced technology provides safety in extreme situa-

millions of dollars. "The Coast Guard doesn't charge for search and rescue nor do we associate a cost with human life," said Rear Adm. John Mauger, of the Coast Guard First District.

OceanGate Expeditions, the company that owned and operated the Titan, is based in the U.S., but the submersible was registered in the Bahamas. OceanGate is based in Everett, Washington, but it closed when the Titan was found. Meanwhile, the Titan's mother ship, the Polar Prince, was from Canada, and those killed were from England,

tions typically helps to reassure tourists the activity they choose to engage in is safe. The reality is that any activity - whether it's crossing the street or visiting the wreck of the Titanic - will always carry some level of risk. The problem is that many of these extreme activities take place in very dangerous environments and have incredibly small margins for error. When something does go wrong, the consequences can be catastrophic or, as with the case of the Titan submarine, fatal.

It is hard to get exact numbers on extreme tourism deaths per year, but when these sad events do occur, they typically receive a lot of attention from the press. As a tourism researcher, I follow these types of stories and feel comfortable saying that very few occur in the U.S.

In the U.S., there are federal, state and local tourism boards and agencies. More often than not, specialized agencies regulate activities most relevant to their areas of expertise - for example, the Federal Aviation Administration regulates space tourism, and national park and state park agencies permit mountaineering in many places. These organizations generally promote tourism and safe practices, but no amount of regulation and oversight can absolutely guarantee anyone's safety. And for many activities, like deep-water tours, there is no mandatory certification process.

Perhaps the best advice for people seeking authentic, thrilling experiences would be to use the idea of "buyer beware."

Pakistan, France, and the U.S. The deep-sea investigations promise to be long and painstaking. How the overall investigation will proceed is complicated by the fact that the world of deep-sea exploration is not well-regulated.

A key part of any investigation is likely to be the Titan itself. The Titan was not registered as a U.S. vessel or with international agencies that regulate safety. And it wasn't classified by a maritime industry group that sets standards on matters such as hull construction.

The Conversation

Why crewless subs are used

Submersible disaster 'reiterates' dangers of deep-sea exploration

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

By Nina Mahmoudian

Purdue University

Rescuers spotted debris from the tourist submarine Titan on the ocean floor near the wreck of the Titanic on June 22, 2023, indicating that the vessel suffered a catastrophic failure and the five people aboard were killed.

Bringing people to the bottom of the deep ocean is inherently dangerous. At the same time, climate change means collecting data from the world's oceans is more vital than ever. Purdue University mechanical engineer Nina Mahmoudian explains how researchers reduce the risks and costs associated with deep-sea exploration: Send down subs, but keep people on the surface.

When we talk about water studies, we're talking about vast areas. And covering vast areas requires tools that can work for extended periods of time, sometimes months. Having people aboard underwater vehicles, especially for such long periods of time, is expensive and dangerous.

Tools

One of the tools researchers use is remotely operated vehicles, or ROVs. Basically, there is a cable between the vehicle and operator that allows the operator to command and move the vehicle, and the vehicle can relay data in real time. ROV technology has progressed a lot to be able to reach deep ocean - up to a depth of 6,000 meters (19,685 feet). It's also better able to provide the mobility necessary for observing the sea bed and gathering data.

Autonomous underwater vehicles provide another opportunity for underwater exploration. They are usually not tethered to a ship. They are typically programmed ahead of time to do a specific mission. And while they are underwater they usually don't have constant communication. At some interval, they surface, relay the whole amount of data that they have gathered, change the battery or recharge and receive renewed instructions before again submerging and continuing their mission.

Crewed submersibles will be exciting for the public and those involved and helpful for the increased capabilities humans bring in operating instruments and making decisions, similar to crewed space exploration. However, it will be much more expensive compared with uncrewed explorations because of the required size of the platforms and the need for life-support systems and safety systems. Crewed submersibles today cost tens of thousands of dollars a day to operate.

Use of unmanned systems will provide better opportunities for exploration at less cost and risk in operating over vast areas and in inhospitable locations. Using remotely operated and autonomous underwater vehicles gives operators the opportunity to perform tasks that are dangerous for humans, like observing under ice and detecting underwater mines.

The technology has advanced dramatically in recent years due to progress in sensors and computation. There has been great progress in miniaturization of acoustic sensors and sonars for use underwater. Computers have also become more miniaturized, capable and power efficient. There has been a

lot of work on battery technology and connectors that are watertight. Additive manufacturing and 3D printing also help build hulls and components that can withstand the high pressures at depth at much lower costs.

There has also been great progress toward increasing autonomy using more advanced algorithms, in addition to traditional methods for navigation, localization and detection. For example, machine learning algorithms can help a vehicle detect and classify objects, whether stationary like a pipeline or mobile like schools of fish.

One example is underwater gliders. These are buoyancy-driven autonomous underwater vehicles. They can stay in water for months. They can collect data on pressure, temperature and salinity as they go up and down in water. All of these are very helpful for researchers to have an understanding of changes that are happening in oceans.

One of these platforms traveled across the North Atlantic Ocean from the coast of Massachusetts to Ireland for nearly a year in 2016 and 2017. The amount of data that was captured in that amount of time was unprecedented. To put it in perspective, a vehicle like that costs about \$200,000. The operators were remote. Every eight hours the glider came to the surface, got connected to GPS and said, "Hey, I am here," and the crew basically gave it the plan for the next leg of the mission. If a crewed ship was sent to gather that amount of data for that long it would cost in the millions.

In 2019, researchers used an autonomous underwater vehicle to collect invaluable data about the seabed beneath the Thwaites glacier in Antarctica.

Energy companies are also using remotely operated and autonomous underwater vehicles for inspecting and monitoring offshore renewable energy and oil and gas infrastructure on the seabed.

Underwater

Underwater systems are slow-moving platforms, and if researchers can deploy them in large numbers that would give them an advantage for covering large areas of ocean. A great deal of effort is being put into coordination and fleet-oriented autonomy of these platforms, as well as into advancing data gathering using onboard sensors such as cameras, sonars and dissolved oxygen sensors. Another aspect of advancing vehicle autonomy is real-time underwater decision-making and data analysis.

My team and I focus on developing navigational and mission-planning algorithms for persistent operations, meaning long-term missions with minimal human oversight. The goal is to respond to two of the main constraints in the deployment of autonomous systems. One is battery life. The other is unknown situations.

For battery life, we work on at-sea recharging, both underwater and surface water. We are developing tools for autonomous deployment, recovery, recharging and data transfer for longer missions at sea. For unknown situations, we are working on recognizing and avoiding obstacles and adapting to different ocean currents - basically allowing a vehicle to navigate in rough conditions on its own.

To adapt to changing dynamics and component failures, we are working on methodologies to help the vehicle detect the change and compensate to be able to continue and finish the mission.

The Conversation

Angry customers vent, but fearful customers don't come back

Fear trumps anger when it comes to data breaches

By Rajendran Murthy

Rochester Institute of Technology

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

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The Research Brief is a short take about interesting academic work.

When a person is notified of a data breach involving their personal information, if they react with a feeling of fear - as opposed to anger - they're more likely to stop using the site.

That was the main finding of a study I conducted with three co-authors that examined which emotions lead customers to change their behavior after a breach. We found that angry customers, on the other hand, are more likely to vent on different social media platforms but then return to the breached site.

We surveyed 208 U.S. consumers, ages 18 to 60, and asked them to describe their feelings after being informed of a data breach on their favorite and frequently used website. Subscription websites, such as Netflix and Xbox Live, and free-to-use websites, such as Facebook and Snapchat, were considered. We then asked the participants to explain, in their own words, what actions they took in response.

We found that positive attitudes toward the website before the breach did not meaningfully affect whether consumers reengaged with the website after the

breach, as some prior research has indicated. Instead, the emotional response of fear, in particular, weighed heavily on customers.

Fearful customers appeared to stop using the breached site to reduce their feelings of stress and vulnerability. Other customers resorted to providing false biographical details or removing credit card data, name and date of birth from the website as they continued using it.

In 2022 alone, US customer data was compromised in over 1,800 incidents, affecting over 400 million individuals.

Research

Much of the prior research has focused on customer anger in the wake of a data breach and the need for companies to placate angry customers or manage negative media coverage. To do so, companies may engage crisis managers to contain the damage, partner with identity protection services, pay fines or settlements, or try to lure back customers with free services.

However, our research shows that companies need to address fearful customers differently after a data breach has occurred - if they want to avoid customer loss. To do this, companies can work with their IT departments to identify customers who are no longer active after a breach and then reach out to them directly to assuage their fears.

It is not yet known how companies should react in the aftermath of a data breach. It isn't clear why customers return. One likely explanation is privacy fatigue - when customers believe keeping their online data secure is futile.

In our study we found one-third of customers returned after a breach without even changing their passwords. More than half returned after making some changes, such as removing their credit card data, changing their passwords or removing personal information. This may be why researchers cannot provide reliable recommendations for handling data breaches. From a company's standpoint, if customers will return anyway, there is little incentive to do more than the bare minimum to address a breach.

We are now studying the behavior of people who have experienced multiple data breaches in the past year. We want to know how these customers change their behaviors, as well as how they judge the recovery efforts of the companies whose sites were breached.

Recent regulations, such as the EU's 2018 data protection law and newly introduced state bills in the US - along with updates to the California Consumer Privacy Act - will force companies and data brokers to think more seriously about the kinds of data being collected and stored. Health care, retail, finance, social networking and other websites will need to make significant changes in how they inform customers of - and compensate them for - such data breaches. (AP)

'Make kids independent'

Should parents 'financially' support their adult children?

By Elizabeth Ayoola
NerdWallet

Some parents will tell you firsthand there's no expiration date on this raising kids gig. For some, that means they extend financial help to their kids into adulthood. When I was 21 and got into a master's program at a college of my dreams, my mom swooped in to help me pay for my degree. Many parents have been kind enough to do this and more.

When I say "many," I'm backed up by a 2023 survey from Savings.com that found 45% of parents with a child 18 or older spend an average of over \$1,400 per month supporting their kids financially, excluding adult kids with disabilities.

But is this financial support always a good idea? A certified financial planner and a therapist who both have experience in this department share their thoughts.

Why parents should support adult kids?

There are many reasons a parent may choose to support their adult kids. Disabilities and wanting to help them achieve major life milestones are a couple. Shelmehia Hill-Brown, the CEO of Wholistic Resolutions LLC in Chesapeake, Virginia, is a social worker and therapist who works with parents who financially support their adult kids. A major theme she sees is parents helping pay for school, especially since the pandemic. Buying a home and exploring infertility treatments are other reasons her clients financially support their kids.

While some parents offer financial support because they want to, others feel obligated even when it's financially inconvenient. Sometimes, the obligation stems from guilt of not preparing their kids for financial independence early on, Hill-Brown says. "They didn't do that one-on-one time with them, to sit down and actually teach them," she says. "But a lot of that also stemmed from, it never (being) done with them, as well, so they were learning along the way, and it made it a little bit more challenging to sit down and come up with a plan to implement with their own children."

Risks of supporting adult kids

Supporting your kids can be satisfying, but it also may be detrimental if you're not financially secure. It also can affect retirement savings, which many Americans already have concerns about. Fidelity's 2023 Retirement Savings Assessment tells us 52% of American households may not be able to cover essential expenses in retirement. And roughly 50% even plan to work during retirement.

Nonetheless, some parents think about dipping into their savings so their adult kids don't have to take out loans, says Kayla Walter, a certified financial planner at Bailey Wealth Advisors in Silver Spring, Maryland. She advises clients against that, seeing as there are student loans, but no loans for retirement.

"You're blowing through your savings at a much faster rate, and it's not going to last you as long as maybe you intend to live," she says.

Protecting finances

The risk in providing for adult kids is twofold: It can affect your finances and relationship. Yes, it may give you a sense of purpose and make you feel connected to your child, but it also can cause resentment, says Hill-Brown.

"There are some (parents) who actually find themselves in a financial bind because they were not open with their own financial responsibilities and how it would be impacted," she says. "And that's where that resentment and guilt takes place as a result." She adds that resentment can happen even for parents who can afford to support their kids.

To protect your finances, make sure you can afford to extend help to your kids before saying yes, and know your limits. You can then communicate these limits with your child. For those who have kids who are financially dependent on them, gradually reduce support and set boundaries around how financial support will look moving forward, Hill-Brown says. Also,

Start saving for retirement

Some financial tips for new college graduates

By Kimberly Palmer
NerdWallet

For new college graduates, receiving that first post-degree paycheck can be almost as exciting as getting the diploma itself. But it also presents a challenge: Given the many demands on a young person's budget, how should those funds be managed?

We asked five money experts to share their best personal finance strategies to help this year's college grads successfully launch their financial lives. Here's what they said.

Find budgeting style

To figure out how to allocate your money toward needs, wants and everything else, Erin Lowry, author of the "Broke Millennial Workbook," says that instead of following the latest budgeting trend on TikTok, it's helpful to just sit down with a pen and paper. "Write down what your big expenses are," she says.

After accounting for large items like rent, car payments and food, you can then see what nonessentials also fit. "You might want to go out to dinner with friends, build up new work attire or adopt a dog," Lowry says. Writing out the budget helps you figure out what you can afford and when, she adds.

"We conceive of budgets as restrictive things that keep us from having fun, but you should be thinking of it as a way of controlling how your money is spent. If you don't know, you've sacrificed all control," Lowry says.

Factor in taxes

Melissa Jean-Baptiste, a financial educator and the author of the book "So... This Is Why I'm Broke," says it's easy to forget to account for taxes, so you might have less take-home pay than you anticipated. Retirement contributions and other deductions can further lower that amount.

Jean-Baptiste suggests setting aside some time to really understand your first paycheck and all those deductions. "Take yourself on a money date so you understand how much you're bringing home and how much you have left to save and invest," she says.

Save smartly

Even if they're paying off debt, Alex Rezzo, a certified financial planner and the founder of Andante Financial in the Los Angeles area, urges new grads to start saving for retirement right away. "There will always be a more immediate excuse to delay saving for retirement," he says, but he urges people to find a way to save at least 1% of each paycheck and to increase that amount over time.

be willing to say no when necessary. If you're feeling guilty about it, keep in mind that financial support without limits could keep your child from becoming financially independent, which is something Hill-Brown says they could then pass on to the next generation.

Encouraging financial independence

After setting those financial boundaries, you can start steering your child toward financial independence.

One way to help do this is by bringing them into your finances, Walter says.

"If they're feeling like they didn't do enough for their children, a good time to kind of help them learn more

He also suggests parking your direct-deposited paycheck funds in an online bank that offers a competitive high-yield account and is backed by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. That way, the money likely will earn more than it would sitting in a traditional bank's checking or savings account.

Protect your credit

As you build your independent financial life, making at least the minimum payments on your student loan and credit card accounts can help protect your credit. Missing a payment, Lowry says, could damage your credit score. She suggests focusing on paying down any high-interest debt first to reduce the total amount going to interest.

Lowry also suggests freezing or locking your credit, which makes it much harder for identity thieves to apply for new credit in your name. Just remember that if you freeze your credit, you'll also have to thaw it if you want to apply for credit yourself, she says, adding, "you might want to wait until you're through a period of time when you're applying for new accounts."

Learn from mistakes

Kennedy Reynolds, chief education officer at Acorns, a financial services company, says mistakes are part of the learning process, whether it's overspending or accruing credit card debt, but the key is to learn from the experience. "If you have debt to pay down, take that paycheck and split it up" toward those bills until they are paid off, she says.

"Try to picture yourself later and know that the choices you're making now will have a long-term impact," she adds.

Look beyond paycheck

Linda Whiteman, a personal finance teacher at Outschool, an online learning platform for kids, teaches her students to think entrepreneurially. After all, she tells them, most millionaires are business owners.

"You don't have to work for someone," she says. She asks her students to consider what they can teach others, whether offering piano lessons online or creating digital art. Pursuing additional income streams outside of a paycheck can help grow wealth, she adds.

Jean-Baptiste found success doing exactly that: She used her experience as a teacher to create and sell lesson plans online. "I was bringing in \$10,000 a year that I could put toward debt," she says. Her lesson plans eventually turned into the financial literacy business that she operates today.

Earning additional income outside of a paycheck, she says, "can be a game-changer" - financial wisdom that applies at any age. (AP)

about finances would be bringing them into the meeting with your adviser and make it a family meeting so that way they can see what's going on," she says.

Another option is to point adult kids to financial services that can help. For instance, instead of loaning them money if they're in serious debt, you could direct them to a debt consolidation service. Additionally, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau has an abundance of resources.

Finally, Walter suggests being a good example to your kids and mirroring healthy money habits.

"There's never not a good time to set a good financial example for your children." (AP)

Economy uncertainty, declining pensions

Gen X confronts harsh reality of 'retirement': unreadiness

NEWARK, N.J., June 26: America's 65 million Generation Xers (born between 1965 and 1980) are confronted with a new set of financial challenges that are redefining their plans for retirement, just as they enter their final working years, according to Prudential Financial, Inc.'s (NYSE: PRU) latest Pulse research survey, "Gen X: Retirement Revised."

Key findings of the survey include:
■ Nest egg empty. Up to 30 million (46%) Gen Xers do not think they will have enough saved to live comfortably in retirement. Those fears reflect Gen X's savings reality: 35% have less than \$10,000 saved, and 18% - reflecting up to 12 million Gen Xers - have nothing saved.

■ Delaying retirement. Almost half (47%) of all working Gen Xers expect to retire later than anticipated. Forty percent plan to work part-time after retirement.

■ Won't bet the house. Only 16% of Gen X plan to use their home value to help fund retirement. Most of Gen X are not planning to follow in the footsteps of baby boomers, who are tapping into record home equity and currently make up the highest share of buyers and sellers nationwide.1

■ Not flying south. Approximately two-thirds (65%) of Gen X plan to stay in one city or town in retirement. Only 15% plan to split time between locations.
■ Disrupting the "Great Wealth Transfer." A mere 12% say an inheritance will be a source of retirement income, even as boomers are expected to pass down over \$70 trillion.2 What's more, 84% of Gen Xers are not planning to leave an inheritance.

"Gen X faces one of the most complex landscapes for retirement readiness in decades, including the decline of defined benefit pension plans which supported prior generations' retirement, as well as significant uncertainty about the economy and long-term Social Security benefits," said Prudential Vice Chair Rob Falzon. "This data underscores how important it is for Gen X to adopt a new set of retirement strategies designed to protect and grow their savings, and, when possible, translate their assets into reliable sources of future income."

Security

Gen X is facing complex situations not seen by previous generations. At the same time, they are not currently following a retirement strategy, saving enough, or accounting for long-term expenses and situations.

Social Security ... not so secure. Despite projections that Social Security trust fund reserves could be depleted by 2033, 58% of Gen X say they will rely on it as a source of retirement income.

Pensions in the past. Only 20% of Gen X plan to use pensions as a source of retirement income, and only 11% will mostly rely on a pension. This reflects the known steep decline in the number of pension plans, which fell by 73% between 1985 and 2020.4
Saving without a plan. Almost half (48%) are saving, but don't have a plan.

Inflation. More than two-thirds (68%) of working Gen Xers are concerned about reaching their savings goals due to inflation, and nearly three-quarters (72%) of all Gen Xers say the current environment makes it hard to plan beyond day-to-day.

Work worries. While an economic downturn still ranks as the biggest threat to job security among working Gen Xers (35%), fears of being replaced by younger (29%) and less expensive (26%) workers are close behind.

Critical expenses overlooked. Nearly two-fifths (38%) are not factoring in healthcare costs, and three-quarters (75%) are not accounting for assisted living expenses.

"Gen Xers are contemplating significantly different approaches than prior generations to achieve retirement security," said Dylan Tyson, president, Prudential Retirement Strategies. "Together, we must find ways to incorporate the fundamental best practices of traditional pensions into today's defined contribution-based retirement system. Strategies like protected accu-



Credit card spending can stimulate the brain's reward centre and drive you to make more purchases, according to a study. (AP)

'Switch your payment method'

Three signs your credit cards need a 'time-out'

By Melissa Lambarena
NerdWallet

When your finances start to spiral and it becomes increasingly difficult to keep up with credit card payments or build toward financial goals, switching your payment method temporarily to cash or debit could help.

Spending with credit cards can stimulate the brain's reward center and drive you to make more purchases, according to a recent study by MIT Sloan School of Management. The 2021 study had a small sample size of 28 participants, but other research also finds that people are likely to spend more with credit cards. However, it is possible to avoid overspending and the costs of interest charges on outstanding debt by using cash instead.

A vacation from credit card spending isn't for everyone, though. If you want to preserve your credit scores, you'll still need to keep zero-balance credit cards open and active with small recurring purchases such as paying for streaming service subscriptions or other similar transactions. Issuers may close inactive accounts, which can cause credit scores to drop.

By not piling new purchases on your credit cards, you can make more progress on reducing debt or building savings. Here are some instances in which shifting your spending to cash or debit cards can make sense.

1. Overspend in certain categories

You might not need to go cold turkey on your credit card spending. If you tend to overspend only in specific categories, consider setting aside a fixed amount of cash or funds on your debit card to cover those expenses. For those purchases that don't lead your budget astray, continue using a credit card and paying it off in full every month to avoid interest charges.

If, however, you usually overspend across multiple categories, using only cash may help you stay on track.

2. Emotional or impulsive spender

You may not be aware that you're an emotional or impulsive spender. However, it's possible to get an idea by reviewing credit card statements and reflecting on the reasons behind the purchases, said LaQuessia Clemons, a financial therapist at Freedom Life Therapy and Wellness in Connecticut.

"When you get upset or whenever you're emotional, this may be when you find yourself on Amazon or going to the mall," Clemons said. "As a way

to avoid negative feelings, you may find yourself buying items because this can give you a euphoric feeling to replace the negative emotions."

If you realize you might be in this category after reviewing your purchases, stop spending with credit cards and analyze your financial habits, she said.

You might also consider meeting with a financial therapist if it's difficult to accomplish financial goals or you're in a continuous cycle of debt. The Financial Therapy Assn. has a directory to help you find a professional.

3. Debt trap

If your credit cards are maxed out or you're struggling to keep up with minimum payments, it's time to come up with a strategy to pay off the debt.

After several layoffs early in her career, Aileen Luih, a digital content creator based in California, said she had to rely on credit cards to get by. Her combined balances grew to \$10,000 by 2015, putting a wrench in her plans, so she came up with a new one.

"I was kind of tapping into my skill sets to start scraping up money in little corners of my life, and it all added up," Luih said.

She also used a balance transfer to consolidate debt from several credit cards onto one with a lower interest rate, and she didn't add new purchases to the card. With these tactics, she said, she paid off her balance in 2017.

Balance transfers typically require a good credit score of 690 or higher. The ideal balance transfer card will have an interest-free window long enough to pay off debt, no annual fee, and a balance transfer fee of 3% or lower. To determine if a transfer is worth it, consider whether the balance transfer fee costs less than what you're projected to pay in interest charges on the current credit card. (An online interest calculator can help.) You'll also make more progress on the debt if you stop putting new purchases on credit cards.

With less-than-ideal credit, you still have options if it's becoming increasingly difficult to meet payments. Consider meeting with a counselor from a nonprofit credit counseling agency. They aren't mental health professionals, but they can offer financial guidance and help you determine whether you qualify for a debt management plan that consolidates debt into a single payment with a lower interest rate. Your credit cards may be closed if you enroll in this plan, so expect to shift to cash or debit to cover expenses. (AP)

mulation and protected income planning are required to help Gen Xers avoid the potential hazards of longevity risk and market volatility on otherwise well-balanced financial plans."

The Prudential Pulse survey was conducted on behalf of Prudential by Brunswick Group from March 31 to April 6, 2023, among 2,000 pre-retiree Gen Xers in the United States. Generation X are those individuals born between 1965 and 1980, ages 43 to 58.

The sample includes 1,717 occupied/working Gen Xers, defined as those currently working full- or part-time, seeking work, or studying. The interviews were conducted online, and quotas were set to reflect a nationally representative population based on age, gender, race/ethnicity, educational attainment, and region. Results from the full survey population have a margin of error of +/-2 percentage points at a 95% confidence level.

Parse Biosciences launches CRISPR Detect

Parse Biosciences, a leading provider of accessible and scalable single cell sequencing solutions, announced today the launch of CRISPR Detect, enabling single cell pooled CRISPR screens at unprecedented scale. Bulk pooled CRISPR screening has been a valuable tool to understand gene function on a genome scale. Adding single cell resolution to pooled CRISPR screens pairs individual gene

perturbations with rich whole transcriptome expression phenotypes. This approach has expanded the capabilities of pooled CRISPR screening to understand cell types of perturbed cells and quantify changes in gene expression, regulatory networks, signaling pathways, and other complex signatures. However, the applications and scale of these studies have been limited by the throughput and cost of droplet-based single

cell RNA-seq technology. CRISPR Detect brings the scale of existing Parse Evercode technology to single cell CRISPR screening by enabling users to pair perturbations and transcriptional profiles in up to one million cells in a single experiment. This scale will expand the applications of single cell CRISPR screening particularly in drug discovery where cost has limited their use to targeted validation studies. (AP)

Blinken to launch Global Coalition on synthetic drugs

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken announced Friday he will host a virtual ministerial meeting on July 7 to launch a Global Coalition to Address Synthetic Drug Threats. "This coalition seeks to unite countries worldwide in a concerted effort to prevent the illicit manufacture and trafficking of synthetic drugs, identify emerging drug trends, and respond effectively to their public health impacts," he said in a statement. Blinken added that "following the

establishment of the Global Coalition, the United States will engage in consultations with participating countries to prioritize specific, concrete actions to address synthetic drug threats." He indicated that the Global Coalition plans to reconvene on the margins of the 78th UN General Assembly and the March 2024 UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs. He noted that "these gatherings will provide critical platforms to share progress and achievements

with a wider audience and facilitate the advancement of international drug policy." "Synthetic drugs represent a grave and growing risk to the health and safety of Americans and people around the world," he remarked. He affirmed that the US "wishes to engage with all countries concerned about the public health and security risks associated with synthetic drugs. We encourage partners to join this coalition and contribute to building a safer world." (KUNA)

Emulate expands organ-on-a-chip tech applications

Chip-A1 offers improved vitro models for research in cancer

BOSTON, June 26: Emulate, Inc., the leading provider of next-generation models, has announced the launch of the Emulate Chip-A1™ Accessible Chip through an early access program. This new Organ-Chip design expands on the original Chip-S1-which models tissue-vascular interfaces with relevant biomechanical forces such as stretch and flow-by allowing users to create thicker tissues within the epithelial culture chamber and apply additional drug treatment options, including topical or aerosolized applications.

"This is the first time, to our knowledge, that it has been possible to study epithelial-stromal interactions and carry out heterogeneous tissue recombinants using cells isolated from the same patient in vitro," said senior author Donald Ingber, MD, PhD, Founding Director of the Wyss Institute. "Moreover, the ability to create patient-specific cancer models and understand how those cancer cells interact with their surrounding environment brings us closer to delivering on the promise of personalized medicine."

Chip-A1 allows researchers to model complex 3D tissues by incorporating gels up to 3 mm thick within the Chip-A1's accessible culture chamber, integrating stroma into the epithelial layer, creating stratified epithelia, and applying organ-specific biomechanical forces. Further complexity and human relevance can be achieved with Chip-A1 by incorporating circulating immune cells or bacteria. With these features, Chip-A1 offers improved in vitro modeling capabilities for research areas such as cancer and cosmetics, which require enhanced 3D models and more direct compound dosing options.

In addition, researchers from the Wyss Institute used a Chip-A1 prototype to create a skin model with a thicker tissue layer that could be uniformly strained, as reported in Nature Biomedical Engineering. In a separate publication, Emulate researchers used the prototype to create proof-of-concept models of the skin and lung that recapitulated their organotypic architectural complexity.

"From the beginning, our vision has been to enable more human-relevant research with Organ-on-a-Chip technology," said Josiah Sliz, Vice President of Platform Development at Emulate. "Chip-A1 allows users to more effectively model complex epithelial-stromal interactions with vasculature and circulating immune cells. With these capabilities, researchers have a new approach to unraveling complex diseases lacking effective therapeutics, including disorders of the skin and cancer."

Novel features of Chip-A1 include:

- An accessible culture chamber that enables users to create extracellular matrices up to 3 mm thick for modeling a wide variety of organs, including skin and lungs

- A hinged lid that provides users direct access to the culture chamber for topical or aerosolized drug treatments

- A tissue-vascular interface that enables the creation of an air-liquid interface

- Full integration into the Human Emulation System for automated culture conditions, including fluid flow in both channels and cyclic stretch

"With Chip-A1, we are demonstrating our commitment to innovation by expanding the capabilities of Organ-on-a-Chip technology to reach new dimensions of tissue modeling," said Luke Dimasi, Senior Director of Product Management at Emulate. "Through our early access program, Emulate experts will provide customers with hands-on training and product support to successfully start building their biological models of interest."

Oncology drug candidates are currently the least likely type of therapeutic to succeed in clinical trials, with only 5.1% of Phase I candidates going on to receive FDA approval. Better oncology therapeutics are desperately needed, as more than 10 million people globally are expected to die of cancer this year, according to the World Health Organization. Understanding a tumor's microenvironment is key to regulating cancer progression and developing more effective therapies—and Chip-A1 will give researchers this capability.

Emulate is igniting a new era in human health with industry-leading Organ-on-a-Chip technology. The Human Emulation System provides a window into the inner workings of human biology and disease, offering researchers an innovative technology designed to predict human response with greater precision and detail than conventional cell culture or animal-based experimental testing. Pioneered at the Wyss Institute for Biologically Inspired Engineering at Harvard University and backed by Northpond Ventures, Founders Fund, and Perceptive Advisors, Organ-on-a-Chip technology assists researchers across academia, pharma, and government industries through its predictive power and ability to recreate true-to-life human biology.

Approach

In their online article titled 'Epithelial-Stromal Interactions in Barrett's Esophagus Modeled in Human Organ Chips,' researchers from the Wyss Institute for Biologically Inspired Engineering at Harvard University used a prototype of Chip-A1 and found that it offered a new approach for studying epithelial-stromal interactions and broader underlying mechanisms associated with esophageal cancer progression. The team also reported that this model could potentially serve as a tool for personalized drug-response assessments between different patients or genetic subpopulations.

Produce high efficacy drugs at faster pace, reduced costs

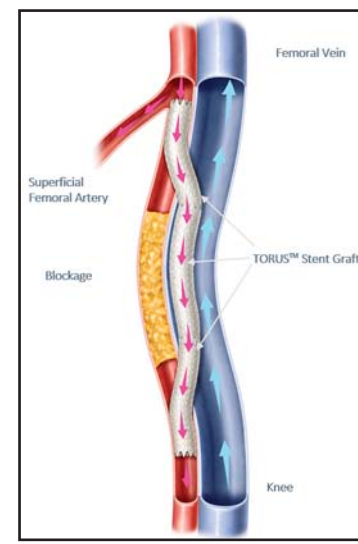
Lantern uses AI platform to develop breakthrough 'ADCs' with Bielefeld

Over 8.5mn Americans affected by PAD

Endologix's 'Detour' approved to treat long complex femoropopliteal lesions

DALLAS, June 26: Lantern Pharma Inc. (NASDAQ: LTRN), a clinical-stage biopharmaceutical company using its proprietary RADR® artificial intelligence ("AI") and machine learning ("ML") platform to transform the cost, pace, and timeline of oncology drug discovery and development, has announced it will be leveraging its AI platform, RADR®, in a research collaboration with Bielefeld University (Bielefeld, Germany) to develop antibody-drug conjugates (ADCs) with high therapeutic and antitumor potential. The collaboration will leverage insights from Lantern's recently developed RADR® AI ADC module in combination with research from Professor Norbert Sewald, Ph.D., the principal investigator for Bielefeld and leader of Magicbullet::reloaded, a European consortium focused on developing novel drug delivery mechanisms, including ADCs. Outcomes from the collaboration are expected to pave the way for next-generation ADCs and other drug conjugates that are designed using AI and that can be developed with potentially higher efficacy, at a faster pace, and with significantly reduced costs.

IRVINE, Calif., June 26: Endologix LLC, a privately held, global medical device company dedicated to providing disruptive therapies for the interventional treatment of vascular disease, has announced that the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has granted approval for the Detour System to treat patients with complex peripheral arterial disease (PAD).



With the introduction of the PTAB therapy, Endologix continues to build on its legacy of disruptive vascular therapies to improve patient outcomes. The Detour System represents a breakthrough in the treatment of PAD, and the company is committed to focusing on patients with the most pressing unmet clinical needs.

Over 8.5 million Americans are affected by PAD. This condition can cause significant pain, reduced mobility, and even amputation. At present, patients with long blockages of the superficial femoral artery (SFA) have limited treatment options. The recommended therapy is open surgical bypass, which is invasive, has a high early complication rate, and requires prolonged recovery. Endovascular treatments are feasible in selected patients but have limited patency.

Percutaneous Transluminal Arterial Bypass (PTAB) using the Detour System.

Endologix LLC is a California-based, global medical device company dedicated to improving patients' lives by providing innovative therapies for the interventional treatment of vascular disease. Endologix's therapeutic portfolio includes a variety of products in various stages of development that are designed to treat diseases that currently have clinically relevant unmet needs. These products are designed to treat a wide spectrum of vascular disease from abdominal aortic aneurysms to lower limb peripheral vascular disease. Endologix's current commercial EVAR (Endovascular Aneurysm Repair) products include the AFX®2 Endovascular AAA (Abdominal Aortic Aneurysms) System and the ALTO® Abdominal Stent Graft System. Endologix is wholly owned by Deerfield Management, an investment management firm committed to advancing healthcare through investment, information, and philanthropy. In April 2021, Endologix completed the acquisition of PQ Bypass, Inc., a privately held medical technology company, adding the DETOUR System and TORUS Stent Graft to the Company's product pipeline.

The initial aim of the collaboration will be to synthesize and evaluate novel ADCs linked to cryptophycins, which are promising antitumor molecules, in part because of their potency at ultra-low, picomolar, concentrations. The cryptophycin-ADCs will be tested across multiple cancer cell lines and initial results are expected during 2023. "We have ample experience in structure-activity relationships of cryptophycins as well in the synthesis of ADCs and small molecule-drug conjugates (SMDCs). Teaming up with top researchers from European academia and industry in the consortium of Magicbullet::reloaded further reinforced this capacity. We now look forward to the collaboration with Lantern," said Dr. Sewald.

Thompson, MD, President, and CEO of Endologix. "PTAB therapy represents a significant step forward for patients with complex PAD, they have long needed a more effective and less invasive treatment option for long lesions of the SFA. We are proud to be pioneering this novel approach and continuing to innovate on behalf of patients. We look forward to launching this new therapy in the U.S. through a targeted market release in the coming weeks."

Plans

After the initial aims of the collaboration are completed, Lantern plans to leverage its AI ADC development module, which is fully integrated into RADR®, to launch multiple ADCs that can leverage cryptophycins or other promising payloads. Lantern also expects to use the AI ADC development module with other collaborators, both academic and commercial, to develop promising ADC candidates for launch into targeted clinical trials. This AI-guided strategy has the potential to de-risk the ADC drug development process, while simultaneously enhancing the creation of effective and targeted ADCs. The rapidly growing

global ADC market is currently valued at over \$4.0 billion and is projected to reach \$14.0 billion by 2027. There are currently 12 ADCs that have been approved by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for the treatment of cancer and approximately 37 ADCs in current late-stage oncology trials.

Under the terms of the collaboration, Dr. Sewald and his group will synthesize, optimize, and provide initial testing of the cryptophycin-ADCs. Lantern is also receiving an exclusive and worldwide option to license intellectual property (IP) from Bielefeld University related to the collaboration and IP generated from the collaboration.

Dr. Sewald is a Professor of Or-

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The Academy Awards best picture rules are changing

LOS ANGELES, June 26, (AP) - The theatrical requirements for movies vying for the Oscars top prize are getting a little tougher.

Starting with the 97th Academy Awards in 2025, best picture hopefuls will have to spend more time in theaters to qualify for film's top prize. The changes, announced by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences this week, come after three years of adjusted release standards due to the pandemic.

On top of the current one week "qualifying run" in one of six US cities - New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Atlanta, San Francisco or Miami - best picture contenders would now also have to play for an additional seven days in 10 of the top 50 US markets. Additionally, there's several other new rules about when the movies must play in theaters.

"It is our hope that this expanded theatrical footprint will increase the visibility of films worldwide and encourage audiences to experience our art form in a theatrical setting," Academy CEO Bill Kramer and Academy President Janet Yang said in a statement.

It's part gesture to theaters still struggling from the pandemic, partly for audiences in markets outside of New York and Los Angeles who don't always get theatrical access to best picture contenders, and partly a statement to deep-pocketed streaming services that theaters remain paramount for Hollywood's top prize.

The film academy's leaders also say the decision was born out of many conversations with industry partners and that they feel that this "evolution benefits film artists and movie lovers alike."

But some in the industry questioned what it really changes, who it benefits and who it might hurt.

Michael O'Leary, the President and CEO of the National Association of Theater Owners, applauded the "important initiative." In a statement, O'Leary said it "affirms that theatrical exhibition is the keystone of the industry."

For traditional studios, from the big ones like Warner Bros., Universal and Disney, to the smaller players, like A24 and Neon, behind recent best picture winners "Everything Everywhere All At Once" and "Parasite," it likely affects very little.

For streaming services, it could be a case-by-case adjustment depending on the company but not a hurdle. Amazon is already planning to release 12 to 15 movies theatrically every year, as they've already done with Ben Affleck's "Air." Apple is also set to spend \$1 billion a year on movies that will land in cinemas before streaming, including Ridley Scott's "Napoleon."

Diversity

Netflix has had a bigger theatrical footprint lately too. Not only do they control two US theaters - New York's Paris Theater and Los Angeles' American Cinematheque - but they've also historically given theatrical runs to their awards hopefuls. All of Netflix's nominees since "Roma" have met the requirement. Its most recent best picture nominee, "All Quiet on the Western Front," played in hundreds of theaters.

The new rule may weed out the possibility of a grassroots campaign on behalf of a very small film, however. Independent theaters and those willing to play independent films have become rarer and the competition is fierce for those screens in the major markets. Some of the bigger

indie stalwarts are even scheduling major studio films, leaving fewer times and screens available for true independents.

Much like the diversity requirements that went into effect this year, few could think of recent best picture players that wouldn't have met this threshold. Apple's best picture winner "CODA" played in about 40 theaters. Even non-traditional Oscar "underdogs" like "Drive My Car" and "RRR" had substantial theatrical runs.

"It's important to consider that qualifying is merely a first step in a long process that involves robust and costly campaigning," said Dan Berger, the president of the independent film company Oscilloscope. "I think it's fair to say that nearly any film that doesn't meet these parameters never stood a chance in a best picture race anyway."

Berger added: "Hopefully the result of this isn't more robust and more costly campaigning that only serves to further divide merit based results from campaign based results."

There are a lot of unknowns about the specifics of the expansion, including whether there will be minimum of showtimes and screens. Could companies simply rent out eight screens that will play to minimal or no crowds in densely populated areas that are relatively cheap and that are also not historically great for indie films? It'll check the box, but will it help theaters, the films or audiences? And will it lead to an even greater year-end bottleneck of releases?

Questions also remain about how it will affect the eligibility of animated films and documentaries, which wouldn't have to meet these requirements to qualify in their individual categories but now might have to adopt a different strategy to be in contention for best picture.

Film

Variety

Features

ARABO TIMES

TUESDAY, JUNE 27, 2023



Busta Rhymes performs a medley at the BET Awards on Sunday, June 25, at the Microsoft Theater in Los Angeles. (AP)

Music

Hip-hop's 50 years marked with tributes to Takeoff, Tina Turner

BET Awards show honors Busta Rhymes

LOS ANGELES, June 26, (AP) - The 2023 BET Awards celebrated 50 years of hip-hop with tributes to the genre's earliest voices, late legends, and new talent during a show packed with spectacular performances that consistently felt like a party.

Sunday's biggest surprise came when Quavo and Offset, the surviving members of Migos, performed "Bad and Boujee" in front of an image of Takeoff, who died in a shooting last December.

"BET, do it for Take," the duo shouted near the beginning of their set, as their backdrop switched from the image of a space shuttle to one of Takeoff pointing in the air.

Throughout the show, whether it was Tupac, Notorious B.I.G., Biz Markie or Pop Smoke, performers and emcee Kid Capri paid homage to late hip-hop stars, often by quickly highlighting a taste of their best-known hits. In a show where few awards were given, Capri and BET kept the emphasis on the music.

Busta Rhymes took home the night's biggest honor, the Lifetime Achievement Award, handed to him by Swizz Beatz. The 12-time Grammy Award nominated rapper, producer, and pioneering hip-hop figure is widely regarded as one of the great MCs, with seven Top 10 Billboard Hot 100 hits to his name.

Diddy, Janet Jackson, Chuck D, Missy Elliot, Pharrell Williams, and Mariah Carey recorded a video tribute to Rhymes.

"Alright, Imma wear it on my sleeve. I do wanna cry," Rhymes started his speech, as his eyes started to water. He talked about his six children, being kicked out from his hip-hop group Leaders of the New School, and learning how to rebuild by going into studios, sharing a cigar with whoever was in the studio, and "quickly whipping up a 16 bar verse. ... By default, I pioneered the feature," he said. "A lot of greatness from out people in our culture is by default. Because it's just a magic we have."

An energetic tribute to Rhymes followed - the MC teamed up with Spliff Star for "Ante Up Remix," "Scenario," "Look At Me Now," "I Know What You Want", before a long list of A-listers jumped in: Scar

Lip with "This Is New York", Coi Leray with "Players," BIA with "Beach Ball," among them. Halfway through the performance, Rhymes shifted gears to celebrate dancehall alongside Dexta Daps "Shabba Mada Pot," Spice, "So Mi Like It," Skillibeng, "Whap Whap", and CuttyRanks' "A Who Seh Me Dun (Wait Deh Man)."

Throughout the show, old school hip-hop heroes and modern stars mixed it up onstage, performing tracks celebrating rap's most influential cities and innovation. For Miami, Trick Daddy and Trina rocked through "Nann" and Uncle Ludy took on "I Wanna Rock (Doo Doo Brown)." For Atlanta, Jeezy ripped through "They Know", T.I. hit "24's," and Master P did "No Limit Soldiers" into "Make 'Em Say Ugh." And for hip-hop's reggae influence, Jamaica's Doug E. Fresh and Lil 'Vicarious did an acapella version of "Freaks," Mad Lion performed "Take It Easy," and PATRA nailed "Romantic Call."

Capri spun some of Tupac's "Hail Mary" to tease a crash course on West Coast rap: Warren G's "Regulate," Yo-Yo's "You Can't Play With My Yo-Yo," Tyga's "Rack City", and E-40's "Tell Me When To Go."

Performance

An ode to trap started with Capri spinning the late Pop Smoke's "Dior", before Chief Keef nailed "Fane-to" and Ying Yang Twins did "Wait (The Whisper Song)."

Audience members, danced, sang along (and a few hopped up on stage) while Capri and MC Lyte kept the hostless show moving. It was a mostly hiccup-free show - save for a hitch during Patti LaBelle's performance and the show running nearly four hours - particularly noteworthy for an event scheduled in the midst of the ongoing Hollywood writers' strike.

LaBelle honored the Tina Turner with a performance of the late singer's hit "The Best," telling the audience at one point she couldn't see the words. "I'm trying, y'all!" she said before powering into the chorus.

A masked Lil Uzi Vert opened the show at Los Angeles' Microsoft Theater before it jumped into a quick

history lesson. Capri walked the audience through a medley of the earliest days of New York City '80s rap culture featuring The Sugarhill Gang's "Rapper's Delight," MC LYTE's "Cha Cha Cha", D-NICE's "Call ME D-Nice" and Big Daddy Kane's "Raw," into a partial cover of "Just A Friend," an homage to the late great Biz Markie.

"I would not be in this business on the stage tonight if it wasn't for one person," Big Daddy Kane said introducing the song. "Rest in peace." He invited audience members to sing along to the song's infectious chorus.

The coveted best new artist award went to Coco Jones, in a category which featured only female performers.

"For all of my black girls, we do have to fight a little harder to get what we deserve," she said in her acceptance speech. "But don't stop fighting even when it doesn't make sense. And you're not sure how you're going to get out of those circumstances. Keep pushing because we are deserving of greatness."

It was followed by a supermarket-themed performance of AP's pick for club song of the summer, Lat-to's "Put It On Da Floor Again," sans featured artist Cardi B but no less catchy. It ended with a text tribute: "RIP Shawty Lo," a screen read.

Teyana "Spike Tey" Taylor won video director of the year, which was accepted by her mom Nikki Taylor - like a true matriarch, she interrupted the show to videocall her daughter and let her have the moment.

At the end of his acceptance speech, Rhymes urged the hip-hop community to "stop this narrative that we don't love each other," urging veteran musicians and newcomers alike to embrace one another.

It was the perfect mirror for the night: New York rapper Ice Spice ran through abridged versions of "Munch (Feelin' U)," "Princess Diana" and "In Ha Mood"; Glorilla brought "Lick Or Sum" to the BET stage, and Kali powered through her TikTok hit, "Area Codes."

In the audience, generations of hip-hop heavy-hitters cheered.

who hired a woman (Lawrence) to date and boost his confidence.

With "Spider-Verse" and "No Hard Feelings," Dergarabedian said Sony should be pleased about the turnout for both films. (AP)

□ □ □
SAN BERNARDINO, Calif: Hikers found human remains Sat-



Lawrence



Feldman

urday in a Southern California mountain area where actor Julian Sands disappeared five months ago, authorities said.

The body discovered around 10 a.m. in wilderness near Mount Baldy was transported to the coroner's office for identification next week, the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department said

in a statement.

Additional details were not immediately available.

Sands, an avid hiker and mountaineer, was reported missing January 13 after setting out on the peak that rises more than 10,000 feet (3,048 meters) east of Los Angeles. The region was pounded by severe storms during winter.

On Friday, his family released its first statement since Sands' disappearance.

"We continue to hold Julian in our hearts with bright memories of him as a wonderful father, husband, explorer, lover of the natural world and the arts, and as an original and collaborative performer," the statement said. (AP)

People & Places

Music

'2023 champion'

Who will have the song of summer?

LOS ANGELES, June 26, (AP) — The sun is shining, the beach is calling, and school is out: It's time to prepare the song of the summer.

Often, there's a clear champion: In 2017, Lusi Fonsi, Daddy Yankee, and Justin Bieber's "Despacito" was unavoidable. In 2019, Lil Nas X's ubiquitous "Old Town Road" foretold future superstardom. Olivia Rodrigo's "Drivers License" did the same in 2021. But that's not always the case.

Was Harry Styles' "As It Was" the go-to jam of the 2022 season? Who claimed the title during the summer-that-barely-was in 2020? When all the world's music is available on streaming platforms, can general listeners agree on a single song of the summer?

What if they didn't have to? Well, here are AP's 2023 song(s) of the summer predictions - and holders of each crown from past years:

Rapper Latto's combative, no-nonsense flow atop a hot, minimalist beat on "Put It On Da Floor" makes it a club-ready contender for song of the summer. It also doubles as a seasonal mantra: "I'm sexy dancin' in the house/I feel like Britney Spears," guest Cardi B spits.

Past champion: "Break My Soul" by Beyoncé (2022)

The dream duo of PinkPantheress hyperpop-punk and lackadaisical rapper Ice Spice created "Boy's a Liar PT. 2," a treatise on modern dating with an undeniable hook, and a very creative pronunciation of the word "Liar." (That boy's a ... Leo?) Few songs have six-plus months worth of staying power, but few songs have challenged what a pop hook can sound like: space-y and, at times, charmingly self-effacing. Like the Capricorn it is.

Remix

Past champion: So nice, it must be mentioned twice - "Drivers License" by Olivia Rodrigo (2021)

What do you get when you take a confrontational evangelical sermon on "slut-shaming" given by a woman who calls herself Sister Candy on college campuses, remix it and give it a trap beat? A hit, thanks to comedian/rapper Angel Laketa Moore and artists Carl Dixon and Steve Terrell.

Past champion: "Birthday Suit" by Cosmo Sheldrake (2019)

Those waiting for a Texas-sized country anthem from Miley Cyrus will continue to do just that, but in the meantime: "Flowers" is an '80s synth-rock for those brokenhearted - and getting over it. For Cyrus, it's a song about life after divorce, but for her fans, it is a celebration in finding partnership within yourself.

Past champion: "Next Girl" by Carly Pearce (2020)

Like a summer fling, Kylie Minogue's disco heart-beat "Padam Padam" is crush-worthy pop music for those who like their songs to burn bright, fast, and hard.

Past champion: "Work From Home" by Fifth Harmony (2016)

The reign of Morgan Wallen continues into the summer, with his country pop-rock breakup record "Last Night" dominating terrestrial radio - and, likely, the headphones of the person next to you.

Past champion: "Somebody That I Used to Know" by Gotye, Kimbra (2011)

The country star takes the Tracy Chapman classic and turns it into a North Carolina campfire tune. Perfect for driving in your car, speed so fast.

Past champion: "Fast Car" by Jonas Blue, Dakota (2015) - or really any another cover of "Fast Car," past and present

In a phrase: Karma is my boyfriend, Karma is a god, "Karma" is everywhere this season ... just like Taylor Swift, as her Eras Tour continues.

Past champion: "Red" by Taylor Swift (2013)

With a title like "WHERE SHE GOES," it might seem like the Puerto Rican reggaetonero Bad Bunny was preparing to release a crossover hit recorded in English. But that's not his style. Instead, Benito (as he's lovingly dubbed by fans) marries the world of dembow and drill, still sung in Spanish - perfect for a late-night party or the early morning at the beach that follows.

Past champion: "Mi Gente" by J Balvin, Willy William (2017)

Fantasy

SZA's genre-ambivalent soulful pop reaches new levels of self-actualization in this revenge fantasy. "I might kill my ex," she croons, a soft exorcism of her worst impulses. "Not the best idea."

Past champion: "Where My Girls At" by 702 (1999)

Is there a greater success story than the sierrero hit "Ella Baila Sola" from Eslabon Armado and Peso Pluma? Regional Mexican music has entered the American mainstream - horns and all - and this flirty track about a woman dancing on her own is proof.

Past champion: "Buy You A Drink (Shawty Snappin')" by T-Pain, Yung Joc (2007)

The inescapable Afrobeats track from Nigerian singer Rema and pop star Selena Gomez isn't slowing down this season. Expect to hear it at an oceanside hang and inside your local grocery store in equal measure, but mostly, playing quietly during a backyard make out session.

Past champion: "I Swear" by All-4-One (1994)

A children's choir, a trap beat, and an inspirational hook make "All My Life" the feel-good track of the summer, a reminder that positive attitude is a potent medicine.

Past champion: "Born This Way" by Lady Gaga (2011)

Bangers come and go, but ballads live inside the soul. Rapper Toosii's "Favorite Song" is for those hoping to have a romantic summer spent inside with a loved one.

Past champion: "If Your Girl Only Knew" by Aaliyah (1996)

Apologies to all fans of the indie-adjacent pop group Boygenius (Phoebe Bridgers, Lucy Dacus, and Julien Baker), but the sad girl song of the summer comes courtesy the K-pop girl group Fifty Fifty. The harmonies on their lovelorn bubblegum pop song "Cupid" are sweet like candy, ripe for rolling the windows down and scream-singing along.

Past champion: "Summertime Sadness" by Lana Del Rey (2012)



Patti LaBelle performs 'The Best' during an In Memoriam tribute to the late singer Tina Turner, pictured onstage at the BET Awards on Sunday, June 25, at the Microsoft Theater in Los Angeles. (AP) — Details Page 11

Music

'Carlos' chronicles meteoric rise of Santana

'My guitar is my best lover, ever'

NEW YORK, June 26, (AP) — "Take no prisoners - peacefully," Carlos Santana sometimes tells his bandmates before taking the stage.

"I don't like to coast. I don't like to rope-a-dope," Santana says. "I want to get in the middle of the ring and knock the sucker out. That way the referee can't steal the fight from me."

Santana, 75, can still whip a crowd into a frenzy like few others. He's been doing it since he stormed onto the San Francisco scene in the late '60s. He left the Woodstock audience dazed and stunned before the first Santana record came out.

The new documentary by Rudy Valdez, "Carlos," which premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival and will be released this fall in theaters by Sony Pictures Classics, chronicles the meteoric rise of one of the most singular guitar players in rock history. The critic Robert Christgau once wrote: "He is less a man of style than of sound, a clear, loud, fluent sound that cleanses with the same motion no matter how often that motion is repeated."

Santana, who launched the nationwide 1001 Rainbows Tour in Newark, New Jersey, on June 21, recently spoke by Zoom from his Bay Area home in California. He's been in San Francisco since his family (his father played the violin in a mariachi band) moved from Mexico in the 1960s.

"The Bay area definitely attracts characters, you know?" said Santana. "Like Minnesota Fats or Les Paul. Rascals. I call them Divine Rascals."

Santana, speaking with a panoramic photograph of the Woodstock performance hanging on the wall behind him, reflected on his journey, his sound and some of the demons he's faced along the way.

"I have nothing but good memories," said Santana. "I have developed selective celestial amnesia."

AP: How was it to watch a movie of your life?

Santana: It's strange. It's interest-

ing to watch this person constantly strive and believe that he belongs. Ha ha! That he belongs on stage with these incredible musicians. Who would have thought it that one minute I'm washing dishes at Tic Tock (Drive-In) and the next I'm on stage with Jerry Garcia and Eric Clapton and they're looking at me like I definitely got something they want to learn from? They'd all go, "Where did you get that?" And I'd say, "Well, when you were listening to this, I was listening to a Hungarian gypsy musician named Gabor Szabo." And also drummers. So I learned how to scramble the eggs differently. The guys from Creedence Clearwater used to say: "What is it you call that music you're playing?" And I go, "African rhythms with blues guitar."

AP: There are many enduring relationships you have in "Carlos" but how would you characterize your relationship to the guitar?

Santana: My guitar is my best lover, ever. Lovers come and go, but your relationship with the guitar - any brand or anything - stays. But it's your relationship with that sound. When you put your fingers on that note, you get chills. That's the best lover. You discover the sensation of getting the first French kiss. I'll stop there because this should be PG. But it all deals with the same thing. It all deals with "Oh my God." The big G-spot, which is God. When you hit that, they all go, "Oh my God." When you play music like that, it's more than just clever notes. It becomes emotion, feelings, passion. That's music to me. Music without emotion, passion or feelings is just clever noise.

AP: You have always had a distinct, instantly recognizable guitar sound, like a voice. Where did your tone come from?

Santana: I used to lock myself in a closet in the dark and try to play like B.B. or Otis Rush, all the people that

I love. And it used to frustrate me that I couldn't sound like that. Then one day I woke up and I go, "Hey, stupid. You're not supposed to sound like them. They sound like them. You're supposed to sound like you." Then you realized: "How do I play like me?" Just shut up and play. Right now, I'm only listening to three things: Nina Simone, Etta James and Tina Turner. I want that sound that those women get in my guitar. I want my guitar to sound like a woman.

AP: In the film, you recount how Jerry Garcia gave you mescaline shortly before you took the stage at Woodstock, thinking you had hours before you performed. In arguably the most celebrated set of Woodstock, you were tripping and praying...

Santana: "God, please let me stay on tune and in time." I could have laid a big egg in front of everybody. It was scary to look at the audience. But what came through was my mother's confidence: God is by your side. How can you go wrong?

AP: In the film you talk about being molested from the ages of 10 to 12. Did music bring some measure of healing from that experience?

Santana: All I can say with certainty and clarity is: I am not what happened to me. I still am, as God created me, with purity and innocence. I have a habit of sending people to the light instead of the hell. I used to say, "Eat s-- and die." But I don't say that anymore. Now I go: You know what? I'm going to look at you like you're seven years old. And I'm going to send you into the light that is behind you. If I send you to hell, then I'm going to go there with you. And I don't want to go to hell. By doing that, I'm able to not be stuck with the victim mentality. "I'm Santana and I was a victim of child molestation" - I don't want to do that. I don't want to think like that. I'm Carlos Santana and by grace I can create blessings and miracles.



Carlos Santana poses for a portrait on Friday, June 16, in New York. (AP)



Doja Cat

Tomlinson

Variety

LOS ANGELES: Rapper-singer Doja Cat - the Grammy Award winner, fashion muse, and creator of many TikTok hits - is set to embark on a 2023 North American tour this fall.

Doja Cat will be joined by song of the summer contender Ice Spice and up-and-coming rapper Doechii, as they open on select dates of her 24-date run. The Scarlet Tour kicks off on Halloween night in San Francisco and runs through December 13, with a final show scheduled in Chicago.

The tour will hit most major cities in the US as well as Toronto.

The announcement arrives a week after Doja Cat released a new single, a fiery rap titled "Attention" that negotiates her relationship with online commentary from fans and critics alike.

Doja Cat first found mainstream fame when her 2018 single, "MOO!," went viral. Since then, she's been nominated for many Grammys, including for her No. 1 single "Say So" and most recent album, 2021's "Planet Her." In 2022, she won the Grammy for best pop duo performance for her collaboration with SZA, "Kiss Me More."

In an effort to bypass bots and scalpers, The Scarlet Tour tickets will be available to fans if they register in advance at Ticketmaster through Sunday, June 25 at 10 p.m. Pacific. After that, some fans will receive a presale code. A limited number of tickets will become available to the public on Friday, June 30. (AP)

DENVER: A brief but fierce storm pummeled concertgoers with golf ball-sized hail as they scrambled for cover at the famed Red Rocks Amphitheater near Denver, injuring dozens and forcing the cancellation of the show's headliner, former One Direction member Louis Tomlinson.

As many as 90 people were treated for injuries from Wednesday night's storm at the outdoor venue in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains and seven people were taken to a hospital, West Fire Rescue said. Some were hurt by hail and others had broken bones, bruises and cuts while seeking shelter, but no injuries were life threatening, fire rescue spokesperson Ronda Scholting said.

Hail piled up like snow in some spots in the amphitheater, which was carved out of a sedimentary rock formation. The show was initially delayed because of the weather, with fans told to take cover in their vehicles, according to tweets from the venue. The concert was subsequently canceled.

Sprinkles of hail began falling as Nicole Criner 28, and her sister were making their way to the car to escape the intensifying storm. Before they could make it, larger hail stones began pelting them, and they grabbed a small plastic sign at the venue's

entrance to cover their heads.

Criner said the sign kept their heads partly covered, but their hands, backs and shoulders were pelted by stinging hail. Criner's glasses fell from her head and were swept away in a river of hail flooding nearby.

Criner shared a video of the moment to Twitter where concertgoers can be seen running as her sister screamed in pain from the hail striking them. Others sought hiding places under trees and in bushes.

"We were hiding under this like plastic

sign, but it was super windy, and we were trying to hold it above us on our heads but then our hands were getting hit with the hail," she said. "We weren't completely sheltered so we got hit on our shoulders and our back."

Criner and her sister escaped the hail when a car drove up and the driver called them inside along with others who couldn't find anywhere else to hide. Bleeding with a bump on her head, Criner and her sister were able to reconnect with their father and

his girlfriend they had lost in the chaos. A day later, she said, she was still sore and bruised.

"I still have an egg bump on my head," she said Thursday, when another round of thunderstorms dropped large hail in parts of the Denver area.

Beth Nabi, 44, had flown in from Dublin, Ireland, to watch one of her favorite musicians perform at the Colorado venue. At around 7:15 p.m. on Wednesday, she said, she could see lightning and thunder approaching in the distance.

As the weather deteriorated, concertgoers were encouraged to seek shelter.

But not wanting to give up hope on seeing Tomlinson, Nabi stuck around. She said the hail started falling while she was in a bathroom and that the bathroom quickly filled up with other concertgoers trying to escape the hailstorm.

"I came out of the bathroom stall to a bathroom filled with as many people who could cram in there, all seeking shelter," she said.

The storm lasted about 10 minutes before she could leave the bathroom and see all the hail covering the ground.

"The hailstorm was just crazy. It was apocalyptic. It was fast," she said.

To cap things off, she returned to her rental car to find its windshield cracked in several places and the hood dented. Nabi said she is anxiously waiting to hear on when the concert will be rescheduled.

"I am gutted it didn't go on," she said. "I'm hoping we get some news on when it can be rescheduled, and I hope I can make it because I was so looking forward for the experience at that venue."

Tomlinson tweeted that he was "devastated" about the cancellation and promised to return. (AP)



Christopher Reid, (left), and Christopher Martin, of Kid N' Play, perform 'Gittin' Funky' at the BET Awards on Sunday, June 25, at the Microsoft Theater in Los Angeles. (AP)

Climate

Flash floods risk

Himalayan glaciers may lose 80% of ice

BENGALURU, India, June 26, (AP): Glaciers are melting at unprecedented rates across the Hindu Kush Himalayan mountain ranges and could lose up to 80% of their volume this century if greenhouse gas emissions aren't sharply reduced, according to a report.

The report from Kathmandu-based International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development warned that flash floods and avalanches would grow more likely in coming years, and that the availability of fresh water could be curtailed for nearly 2 billion people who live downstream of 12 rivers that originate in the mountains.

Ice and snow in the Hindu Kush Himalayan ranges are an important source of water for those rivers, which flow through 16 countries in Asia and provide fresh water to 240 million people in the mountains and another 1.65 billion downstream.

"The people living in these mountains who have contributed next to nothing to global warming are at high risk due to climate change," said **Amina Maharjan**, a migration specialist and one of the report's authors. "Current adaptation efforts are wholly insufficient, and we are extremely concerned that without greater support, these communities will be unable to cope."

Various earlier reports have found that the cryosphere - regions on Earth covered by snow and ice - are among the worst affected by climate change. Recent research found that Mount Everest's glaciers, for example, have lost 2,000 years of ice in just the past 30 years.

"We map out for the first time the linkages between cryosphere change with water, ecosystems and society in this mountain region," Maharjan said.

Among the key findings from Tuesday's report are that the Himalayan glaciers disappeared 65% faster since 2010 than in the previous decade, and that reducing snow cover due to global warming will result in reduced fresh water for people living downstream. The study found that 200 glacier lakes across these mountains are deemed dangerous, and the region could see a significant spike in glacial lake outburst floods by the end of the century.

Irreversible

The study found that communities in the mountain regions are being affected by climate change far more than many other parts of the world. It says changes to the glaciers, snow and permafrost of the Hindu Kush Himalayan region driven by global warming are "unprecedented and largely irreversible."

Effects of climate change are already felt by Himalayan communities, sometimes acutely. Earlier this year the Indian mountain town of Joshimath began sinking and residents had to be relocated within days.

"Once ice melts in these regions, it's very difficult to put it back to its frozen form," said Pam Pearson, director of the International Cryosphere Climate Initiative, who was not involved with the report.

She added, "It's like a big ship in the ocean. Once the ice starts going, it's very hard to stop. So, with glaciers, especially the big glaciers in the Himalayas, once they start losing mass, that's going to continue for a really long time before it can stabilize."

Pearson said it is extremely important for Earth's snow, permafrost and ice to limit warming to the 1.5 degrees Celsius agreed to at the 2015 Paris climate conference.

"I get the sense that most policymakers don't take the goal seriously but, in the cryosphere, irreversible changes are already happening," she said.

Wildfires: Spain must do more to prepare for increasingly virulent wildfires stoked by climate change, a large group of the country's leading wildfire prevention experts said recently.

A declaration backed by 60 experts and institutions said the "increasingly intense fires ... are producing unprecedented ecological and social consequences."

The experts concluded that Spanish society must come to terms with the emergencies that it will likely face, given that wildfires in increasingly hot and dry conditions in the Iberian Peninsula are often "beyond the capability (of firefighters) to extinguish" with their own means.

The declaration was the outcome of a two-day meeting in Madrid in March organized by the Pau Costa Foundation, a nonprofit group based in Barcelona that works for fire prevention awareness. That meeting included wildlife and forestry experts drawn from government, academia, NGOs such as Greenpeace and the WWF, and firefighting services.

They urge Spain to increase its management of wooded areas to compensate for the abandonment of traditional forest industries and to quadruple its budget for prevention.

Resources

Only about 78,000 hectares (192,000 acres), or 0.3% of Spain's woods, are currently managed, the foundation estimates. The declaration calls for that to be increased to 1%, some 260,000 hectares (642,000 acres) and for Spanish authorities to dedicate the necessary resources.

The report sets a recommended figure of 1 billion euros (\$1.09 billion) that Spain should be spending on forest management, to help compensate for the abandonment of traditional uses of wooded areas by local communities, such as taking timber or firewood.

The declaration was presented Thursday simultaneously in Barcelona and Madrid.

"This declaration is born from the need to create a consensus and bring together voices from different regions to send a powerful message and increase awareness so we can act and prepare for the wildfires of the future," **Miriam Piqué**, head of Sustainable Forest Management Unit in the Forest Science Center of Catalonia, said in a wooded area near Barcelona.

In Spain, each region is charged with managing its forests and fighting wildfires. That has led to considerable differences in the firefighting muscle of poorer and less populated regions like Castilla y León, where one fire fighter died last year in massive blazes, compared to wealthier ones like Madrid's central region or northeast Catalonia.

The emergency firefighting brigades of Spain's army are often deployed to help put out the worst fires.

Some 267,000 hectares (666,000 acres) burned last year in Spain, making 2022 its worst year of fire destruction since 1994, government statistics said. That was three times the national average for the past decade of 94,000 hectares (232,000 acres). According to the European Union's Copernicus satellite observation service, Spain accounted for 35% of all burned land in European wildfires last year.

After a record hot 2022, Spain saw the arrival of forest fires earlier than usual this year. Recent rains have provided some relief despite a record-hot spring, but summer is typically dry and authorities are on guard for another difficult season.



Maharjan



Registered nurse Erika Obrietan administers the third dose of an experimental breast cancer vaccine to patient Kathleen Jade at University of Washington Medical Center - Montlake, Tuesday, May 30, 2023, in Seattle. Jade, 50, learned she had breast cancer in late February. She's getting the vaccine to see if it will shrink her tumor before surgery. 'Even if that chance is a little bit, I felt like it's worth it,' said Jade, who is also getting standard treatment. (AP)

Health

Shots to shrink tumors, stop cancer relapse

Vaccine next big advance in cancer

SEATTLE, June 26, (AP): The next big advance in cancer treatment could be a vaccine.

After decades of limited success, scientists say research has reached a turning point, with many predicting more vaccines will be out in five years.

These aren't traditional vaccines that prevent disease, but shots to shrink tumors and stop cancer from coming back. Targets for these experimental treatments include breast and lung cancer, with gains reported this year for deadly skin cancer melanoma and pancreatic cancer.

"We're getting something to work. Now we need to get it to work better," said Dr. James Gulley, who helps lead a center at the National Cancer Institute that develops immune therapies, including cancer treatment vaccines.

More than ever, scientists understand how cancer hides from the body's immune system. Cancer vaccines, like other immunotherapies, boost the immune system to find and kill cancer cells. And some new ones use mRNA, which was developed for cancer but first used for COVID-19 vaccines.

For a vaccine to work, it needs to teach the immune system's T cells to recognize cancer as dangerous, said Dr. Nora Disis of UW Medicine's Cancer Vaccine Institute in Seattle. Once trained, T cells can travel anywhere in the body to hunt down danger.

"If you saw an activated T cell, it almost has feet," she said. "You can see it crawling through the blood vessel to get out into the tissues."

Patient volunteers are crucial to the research.

Kathleen Jade, 50, learned she had breast cancer in late February, just weeks before she and her husband were to depart Seattle for an around-the-world adventure. Instead of sailing their 46-foot boat, Shadowfax, through the Great Lakes toward the St. Lawrence Seaway, she was sitting on a hospital bed awaiting her third dose of an experimental vaccine. She's getting the vaccine to see if it will shrink her tumor before surgery.

"Even if that chance is a little bit, I felt like it's worth it," said Jade, who is

also getting standard treatment.

Progress on treatment vaccines has been challenging. The first, Provenge, was approved in the U.S. in 2010 to treat prostate cancer that had spread. It requires processing a patient's own immune cells in a lab and giving them back through IV. There are also treatment vaccines for early bladder cancer and advanced melanoma.

Early cancer vaccine research faltered as cancer outwitted and outlasted patients' weak immune systems, said Olja Finn, a vaccine researcher at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine.

"All of these trials that failed allowed us to learn so much," Finn said.

As a result, she's now focused on patients with earlier disease since the experimental vaccines didn't help with more advanced patients. Her group is planning a vaccine study in women with a low-risk, noninvasive breast cancer called ductal carcinoma in situ.

Prevent

More vaccines that prevent cancer may be ahead too. Decades-old hepatitis B vaccines prevent liver cancer and HPV vaccines, introduced in 2006, prevent cervical cancer.

In Philadelphia, Dr. Susan Domchek, director of the Basser Center at Penn Medicine, is recruiting 28 healthy people with BRCA mutations for a vaccine test. Those mutations increase the risk of breast and ovarian cancer. The idea is to kill very early abnormal cells, before they cause problems. She likens it to periodically weeding a garden or erasing a whiteboard.

Others are developing vaccines to prevent cancer in people with precancerous lung nodules and other inherited conditions that raise cancer risk.

"Vaccines are probably the next big thing" in the quest to reduce cancer deaths, said Dr. Steve Lipkin, a medical geneticist at New York's Weill Cornell Medicine, who is leading one effort funded by the National Cancer Institute. "We're dedicating our lives to that."

People with the inherited condition Lynch syndrome have a 60% to 80% lifetime risk of developing cancer. Re-

cruting them for cancer vaccine trials has been remarkably easy, said Dr. Eduardo Vilar-Sanchez of MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, who is leading two government-funded studies on vaccines for Lynch-related cancers.

"Patients are jumping on this in a surprising and positive way," he said.

Drugmakers Moderna and Merck are jointly developing a personalized mRNA vaccine for patients with melanoma, with a large study to begin this year. The vaccines are customized to each patient, based on the numerous mutations in their cancer tissue. A vaccine personalized in this way can train the immune system to hunt for the cancer's mutation fingerprint and kill those cells.

But such vaccines will be expensive. "You basically have to make every vaccine from scratch. If this wasn't personalized, the vaccine could probably be made for pennies, just like the COVID vaccine," said Dr. Patrick Ott of Dana-Farber Cancer Institute in Boston.

The vaccines under development at UW Medicine are designed to work for many patients, not just a single patient. Tests are underway in early and advanced breast cancer, lung cancer and ovarian cancer. Some results may come as soon as next year.

Todd Pieper, 56, from suburban Seattle, is participating in testing for a vaccine intended to shrink lung cancer tumors. His cancer spread to his brain, but he's hoping to live long enough to see his daughter graduate from nursing school next year.

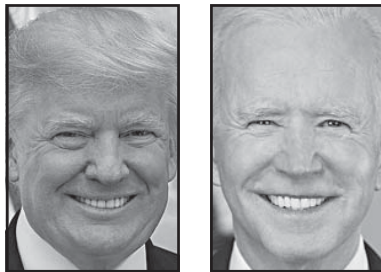
"I have nothing to lose and everything to gain, either for me or for other people down the road," Pieper said of his decision to volunteer.

One of the first to receive the ovarian cancer vaccine in a safety study 11 years ago was Jamie Crase of nearby Mercer Island. Diagnosed with advanced ovarian cancer when she was 34, Crase thought she would die young and had made a will that bequeathed a favorite necklace to her best friend. Now 50, she has no sign of cancer and she still wears the necklace.

She doesn't know for sure if the vaccine helped, "But I'm still here."



A power transformer sits in the street in Moss Point, Miss., after a tornado struck the area, Monday, June 19. (AP)



Trump

Biden

Discovery

Team monitors escalating melt: It is a sight in decline across Switzerland: glaciers sprawled across the Alps, formed over centuries of snow and sediment packed into a crystalline mass.

With the glaciers now dwindling at an alarming rate because of human-caused climate change, team members of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology monitor what's left in an attempt to slow their demise.

Glaciologist Matthias Huss and his team use measuring and monitoring equipment to keep tabs on how much they've shrunk and desperately try to maintain their mass.

At the Rhone Glacier, one of the biggest in the Alps, workers prepare huge sheets to cover the ice like blankets in a bid to shield it from the warmth of the summer months.

Some stretches of mountain once covered with the grayish blue of glaciers are now mostly shrouded by white covers. Chunks of ice floating in a nearby lake are also conserved. The sheets are effective locally but are just a small-scale solution.

Alpine glaciers are still expected to vanish by the end of the century.

In the short term, glacier melt has meant more water, filling Alpine lakes and the flows for many of Europe's major rivers, giving some relief to those that rely on them amid Europe's drought woes.

But there's also fear that the melting is causing glacier chunks to detach, sparking deadly avalanches.

In the longer term, the glaciers' disappearance would only add to the continent's water concerns.

Swiss glaciers experienced record melting last year, losing more than 6% of their volume and alarming scientists who say a loss of 2% would once have been considered extreme.

At the Aletsch glacier, the longest and deepest in the Alps and popular with tourists, small blue pools form where the snow has melted from the June heat. Water covers the tunnel that leads hikers to it.

But for those who travel to Aletsch, there's still enough of the glacier - for now - to make the journey worthwhile. (AP)

Protecting endangered species: The Biden administration proposed new rules for protecting imperiled plants and animals as officials moved to reverse changes under former president Donald Trump that weakened the Endangered Species Act.

The US Fish and Wildlife Service said it would reinstate a decades-old regulation that mandates blanket protections for species newly classified as threatened.

That provision was dropped three years ago as part of a suite of changes to the application of the species law that was encouraged by industry even as extinctions accel-

erate globally due to habitat loss and other pressures.

Under the proposal, officials also would no longer consider economic impacts when deciding if animals and plants need protection. Another change would expand requirements for federal agencies to consult with the wildlife service or the National Marine Fisheries Service before taking actions that could affect threatened or endangered species.

Details on the proposed rules, which will take months to finalize, were obtained by The Associated Press in advance of their public release. They'll face strong pushback from Republican lawmakers, who say President Joe Biden's Democratic administration has hampered oil, gas and coal development, and favors conservation over development.

"These proposed rules take us in the



A bird flies with Mount Everest seen in the background from Namche Bajar, Solukhumbu district, Nepal, May 27, 2019. A new report Tuesday, June 20, from a Nepal-based research organization finds that water security for nearly 2 billion people living downstream of rivers that originate in the Himalayan ranges will likely be threatened by the end of this century due to rapid glacier melt if global warming is not controlled. (AP)

wrong direction and are entirely unnecessary given the proven track record of success from private conservationists and state and local land managers," said House Natural Resources Committee Chairman Bruce Westerman, a Republican from Arkansas.

Industry groups have long viewed the 1973 Endangered Species Act as an impediment. Under Trump they successfully lobbied to weaken the law's regulations as part of a broad dismantling of environmental safeguards. Trump officials rolled back endangered species rules and protections for the northern spotted owl, gray wolves and other species.

Restoring those rules could speed up protections and the designation of critical habitat for threatened species, including salmon in the Pacific Northwest.

The spotted owl decision was reversed in 2021 after career wildlife officials said Trump's political appointees used faulty science to justify opening millions of acres of West Coast forest to potential logging. Protections for wolves across most of the US were restored by a federal court last year and the Biden administration has said it will decide by next February if they should remain in place.

Many of the changes under Trump were finalized during his last weeks in office, giving the Republican administration little time to put them into action.

Biden administration officials say they are trying to bring the endangered species law into alignment with its original intent and purpose. US Fish and Wildlife Service Director Martha Williams said in a statement that the changes "reaffirm our commitment to conserving America's wildlife and ensuring the Endangered Species Act works for both species and people." (AP)



Winners of Summer Karting Championship display their trophies on the podium.

Summer Karting Championship concludes successfully

The Summer Karting Championship for all age groups, organized by the Kuwait Karting Club, concluded successfully at the Al-Kout Circuit, with the participation of 100 players, both boys and girls.

The tournament witnessed strong competition between the

contestants until the final rounds, and the results were as follows:

In the adult youth category, Fawaz Youssef won first place, Abdul Rahman Al Dhafiri came second, and Abdul Majeed Shaaban came third. In the senior girls category, Iman Shams Al-Din clinched

the title, and Fatima Al-Shuwai'i and Sharifa Baqer ranked second and third, respectively.

In the category of young men, Yaqoub Al-Zanki won the first place, the second was Hussein Al-Shammari, and the third was Mishaal Al-Shaalan. Finally, in the

category of young girls, Alaa Faisal won the title, and the runner-up went to Zahraa Hassan, while Janan Hamid Bushehri ranked third.

After the conclusion, the winners of the first three places in each category were crowned. For his part, Chairman of the Board of Direc-

tors of the Kuwaiti Karting Club, Dr. Hamid Bushehri, congratulated the first winners, wishing success to the rest of the contestants in the upcoming championships.

He said, "The summer karting championship came at its right time, especially since it was held at the

beginning of the summer vacation, which is the time our sons and daughters desperately need to fill their free time." Boushahri stressed that the Kuwaiti Karting Club continues to organize more tournaments to create an atmosphere of honest competition in the hearts of our athletes.

Mexico make winning Gold Cup start

Haiti edge invited guests Qatar

HOUSTON, June 26, (AP): Mexico won its first game under interim coach Jaime Lozano, opening the CONCACAF Gold Cup with a 4-0 victory over Honduras on Sunday night.

Luis Romo beat goalkeeper Luis López with an 18-yard left foot shot about 50 seconds in, Mexico's fastest Gold Cup goal. He doubled the



Qatar's Yusuf Abdurisag (11) is fouled by Haiti's Alex Junior Christian during the first half of a CONCACAF Gold Cup soccer match in Houston. (AP)

lead in the 23rd minute with his third international goal, a close-range header after Jesús Gallardo nodded a corner kick in front of the net.

Orbelín Pineda scored in the 52nd minute, dribbling just into the penalty area before scoring his eighth international goal, and Luis Chávez added his second international in the 64th from near the penalty spot.

Diego Cocca was fired as Mexico coach after the CONCACAF Nations League, where Mexico lost to the U.S. 3-0 in a semifinal before

SOCCER

beating Panama 1-0 for third place.

In the first game of the Group B doubleheader, Haiti beat invited guest Qatar 2-1 after Frantzzy Pierrot poked in a centering pass in the seventh minute of second-half stoppage time. Yusuf Abdurisag put Qatar ahead in the 20th minute and Duckens Nazon tied the score in the first minute of first-half stoppage time.

In Group A at Fort Lauderdale, Florida, Trinidad and Tobago defeated St. Kitts and Nevis 3-0 on goals by Alvin Jones in the 43rd and Ajani Fortune in the 65th plus an own goal by Jameel Ible in the 73rd.

Much will be expected from fans of 'Nadeshiko'

Japan in search of 'new history' at Women's World Cup

TOKYO, June 26, (AP): Futoshi Ikeda guided Japan to the Women's Under-20 World Cup title in 2018, and last year his team was the runner-up to Spain - reversing the outcome from the final four years earlier.

Ikeda has moved up to coach Japan in this year's Women's World Cup in Australia and New Zealand and, of course, some of his younger players are joining him on the big stage.

Much will be expected from fans of a team known as "Nadeshiko Japan." The term derives from "Yamato Nadeshiko," which has been used to describe Japanese feminine beauty.

Japan won the World Cup in 2011, was second in 2015 - both finals against the United States - but had a

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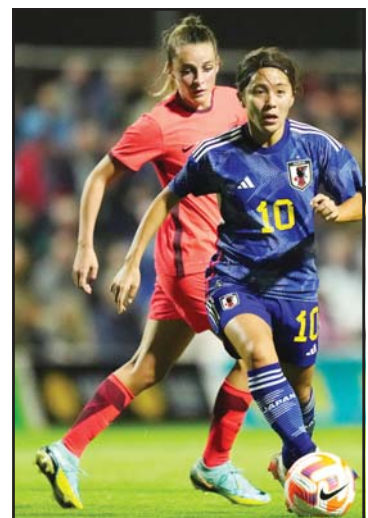
disappointing exit in the round of 16 four years ago.

"I told the players that they should fight hard in each and every game in front of them," Ikeda said in an interview with The Associated Press. "But rather than feeling the pressure of having won the title 12 years ago, they should feel the joy of making new history on their own again and use that as motivation."

At least three players from last year's Under-20 squad will be keys this time: defender Rion Ishikawa, and forwards 19-year-old forwards Aoba Fujino and Maika Hamano, who signed with Chelsea in January. About a dozen players on the squad were on the 2018 team or 2022 team and have followed Ikeda to the big time.

The backbone will be anchored by captain Saki Kumagai, who is playing in her fourth World Cup. And leading the midfield will be Manchester City's Yui Hasegawa.

Kumagai scored the winning penal-



In this Friday, Nov. 11, 2022 file photo, Japan's Mana Iwabuchi in action during the Women's International soccer match between England and Japan in Murcia, Spain. (AP)

ty in a shootout when Japan beat the Americans 12 years ago for the title. She is the only player remaining from the 2011 squad, and the 32-year-old recently joined AS Roma from Bayern Munich.

Almost half of the 23-woman squad is made up of players competing in leagues in Europe or North America. The rest are playing at home in Japan's WE League. Clearly Japan - a traditional leader in women's soccer - is trying to keep up as the game keeps expanding and improving.

"I believe that the speed of growth of women's football in the world, including various environmental aspects, is developing at a tremendous momentum right now," Ikeda said.

In addition to Hasegawa, some of the scoring punch is also likely to come from overseas-based players

LEBANON, Tenn., June 26, (AP): Ross Chastain has been criticized as reckless and too aggressive, a driver seen as giving no respect and not deserving any from competitors.

His hard-driving style paid off Sun-

Ross earns 3rd NASCAR Cup Series victory

Chastain holds off Martin to win at Nashville

day night as Chastain held off Martin Truex Jr. to win the Ally 400 at Nashville Superspeedway, his first win in over a year and the third NASCAR Cup Series victory of his career.

Chastain said everyone has to deal with criticism. His approach? Just keep working.

"I got to tell you, a lot of self-reflection through all this, but I had a group that believed in me and they didn't let me get down," Chastain said. "And they bring rocket ships, and I just try to point them to victory lane." This was Chastain's first win since Talladega in April 2022, and he drove his Trackhouse Racing Chevrolet to the team's first victory this year at its home track. Chastain had started on the pole for the first time in his career.

CAR RACING

Trackhouse owner Justin Marks said he talked with Rick Hendrick and Roger Penske for advice on handling a hard-charging driver after Chastain's late crash off a restart at Darlington took both him and Hendrick star Kyle Larson out of contention as they raced for the lead.

Marks compared Chastain's learning curve to that of Brad Keselowski, Kevin Harvick and Tony Stewart - aggressive drivers who had to learn how to compete at the Cup level. Marks called this a "huge win" for Trackhouse and a big moment for Chastain, who went three-wide during a critical four-lap stretch.

"It says we have an opportunity to win

so many races and compete and win ... championships in the series and such a bright future ahead of us," Marks said. "And we're all just like super motivated and inspired for the future." Chastain entered fourth in the season points race and wound up leading a race-high 100 laps at the 1.33-mile, D-shaped concrete oval. That included the final 34 laps as the 30-year-old had to weave by some slower traffic to hold off Truex by 0.789 seconds.

The driver known as "Melon Man" celebrated clinching a playoff berth with a burnout before smashing a watermelon onto the start-finish line. Chastain shared some of the watermelon with fans, keeping a piece on top of his car and bringing it into the media center with him.

Truex led 50 laps as the season points leader tried to string together back-to-back wins. He won at Sonoma going into NASCAR's lone break in the 38-race season.

"Just that close again," said Truex, who notched his sixth top-five finish and extended his points lead. "We keep doing that, we'll be OK." Truex finished ahead of Joe Gibbs Racing teammate Denny Hamlin, both in Toyotas. Chase Elliott was fourth and Hendrick Motorsports teammate Kyle Larson was fifth.

Hamlin led 81 laps and said he thought he had a third-place car with Truex a little better. "The 1 (Chastain) obviously came on strong there at the end," Hamlin said. "We gave ourselves a chance, just didn't have quite a fast enough car to go up and contend." Tyler Reddick started beside Chastain on the front row and won the first stage.



Ross Chastain celebrates after winning a NASCAR Cup Series auto race in Lebanon, Tenn. (AP)

Marta 'struggling'

Brazil aiming high at Women's World Cup

SAO PAULO, June 26, (AP): Marta has won the world player of the year award six times but has never won the Women's World Cup in five previous attempts with Brazil.

That's something she and the team want to change.

Marta has been recovering from a knee injury but the 37-year-old striker is expected to play a role in Brazil's bid for the title at the tournament co-hosted by Australia and New Zealand.

Brazil will playing under a European coach for the first time, with 63-year-old Pia Sundhage of Sweden in charge.

Sundhage, who led the United States to two Olympic gold medals, called Marta up for friendlies against England and Germany in April but the forward remained in Florida to recover from a muscle injury in her left leg.

She later declared she was 100% ready to play, although the doubts over her fitness have persisted.

Marta had surgery to a repair a torn anterior cruciate ligament last year after injuring her left knee during a club game in the United States. She was sidelined from the national team for 11

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months, only returning to play for Brazil in a friendly against Japan in February.

Regardless of Marta's level of fitness, Sundhage believes Brazil is among a group of 10 teams that could win the title.

The coach also insists her team has improved since the penalty shootout loss in the quarterfinals to eventual champion Canada at the Tokyo Olympics, a result that cast doubt on the team rebuilding job started in 2019.

Brazil, one of the three South American teams in the tournament, is expected to advance to the knockout stage in Group F. The group also includes France, the team that eliminated the Brazilians four years ago in the round of 16, Jamaica and Panama.

Only eight players involved in Brazil's last Women's World Cup campaign are expected to go to Australia for the group games - goalkeeper Leticia; defenders Kathellen, Rafaelle and Tamires; and forwards Bia Zaneratto, Debinha, Geysse and Marta.

Brazil performed well in the two latest friendlies despite Marta's absence, holding European champion England to a 1-1 draw before losing the Finalissima on penalties at Wembley Stadium on April 6. Days later, Brazil beat second-ranked Germany 2-1 in Nuremberg.

Sundhage said the win over Germany was among Brazil's best performances since she took over.

"And we did that playing against one of the best teams in Europe," Sundhage said after the match, saying it gave the team more confidence for the World Cup "including confidence for myself."

The 30-year-old Andressa Alves is expected to combine with Marta in Brazil's attack. She scored 14 goals in 35 matches for Roma during the season, although she'd been likely to be on the bench for Brazil until Atletico Madrid striker Ludmila sustained an ACL injury that should rule her out.

SPORTS

Cardinals top Cubs to split series in London

Freeman gets 2,000th, Dodgers lose to Astros

LONDON, June 26, (AP): Paul Goldschmidt hit a go-ahead RBI single that chased Chicago starter Marcus Stroman in the fourth inning and the St. Louis Cardinals beat the Cubs 7-5 on Sunday to earn a split of their weekend series at London Stadium.

The Cubs missed a chance to get back to .500 after Stroman (9-5) left with a blister on his right index finger, and the Cardinals ended a two-game skid after an error-filled first inning handed the Cubs a 4-0 lead.



Goldschmidt

The Cubs (37-39) won 9-1 in the first game, but had their winning streak halted at four games. They haven't been at .500 since May 12, though they've still won 11 of their past 14 games.

Jordan Hicks, who sat out Saturday because of illness, got the final three outs to record his fourth save — all in the past eight days. He struck out two and gave up a sacrifice fly to Nico Hoerner with one out.

Jake Woodford (2-2) came in for spot starter Matthew Liberatore in the third and pitched 2 1/3 innings.

Astros 6, Dodgers 5, 11 innings

In Houston, Alex Bregman drove in the winning run in the 11th inning and Houston beat Los Angeles despite squandering a three-run lead on the night the Dodgers' Freddie Freeman got his 2,000th hit.

Bregman's leadoff single to left field scored Mauricio Dubón from second. Ryan Pressly (2-2) got the win and Houston avoided a three-game sweep. Jeremy Peña and José Abreu hit two-run homers.

BASEBALL

Freeman had two doubles to reach the hits milestone and Mookie Betts led off the bottom of the first with a home run, but the Dodgers couldn't rally for the second straight game. Will Smith also homered for Los Angeles. Yency Almonte (3-1) took the loss.

Blue Jays 12, Athletics 1

In Toronto, George Springer moved into second place on baseball's career list with his 55th leadoff home run, Yusei Kikuchi (7-2) pitched a season-high seven innings and Toronto routed Oakland.

Tony Kemp hit a solo home run, his third, but Oakland lost for the 10th time in 11 games following a seven-game winning streak. The Athletics are 40 games below .500 at 20-60.

Springer went 2 for 3 with a walk and two RBIs, including a sacrifice fly. His game-opening drive broke a tie with Alfonso Soriano and gave the 2017 World Series MVP sole possession of second place on baseball's all-time list. Hall of Famer Rickey Hen-



Arizona Diamondbacks center fielder Alek Thomas catches a ball hit by San Francisco Giants' Thairo Estrada (39) during the fifth inning of a baseball game in San Francisco. (AP)

erson leads with 81 leadoff homers.

Cavan Biggio hit a three-run homer for the Blue Jays, who won for the 10th time in their past 12 home meetings with the Athletics.

Luis Medina (1-7) allowed four runs, three earned, and four hits with a career-worst seven walks in five innings.

Braves 7, Reds 6

In Cincinnati, Matt Olson hit a go-ahead three-run homer in the sixth inning and Atlanta held on for another wild victory over Cincinnati.

The Braves, who snapped the Reds' longest winning streak in 66 years with a 7-6 win on Saturday, have won 17 of their last 20. Charlie Morton (7-6) needed 103 pitches to get through five innings, but left with the score tied.

The Reds had runners on first and third in the ninth when Raisel Iglesias got Kevin Newman to roll into a game-ending double play. It was Iglesias' 11th save.

Cincinnati lost despite a big day from Matt McLain, who went 4 for 5 with three doubles, a homer and five RBIs. McLain is the first Reds rookie to have four extra-base hits in a game since Chris Sabo in 1988.

Randy Wynne (0-1) lost his job in his major league debut. Wynne, 30, spent three seasons pitching in independent leagues and was working in a lumberyard when he was signed as a minor league free agent in 2019.

Rockies 4, Angels 3

In Denver, Ezequiel Tovar had two hits and two RBIs, Austin Gomber earned his first win in more than a

month, and Colorado edged Los Angeles, less than 24 hours after being routed 25-1.

The Rockies entered the series mired in a season-worst eight-game losing streak, but took two of three from the Angels, who had a 32-12 scoring advantage.

Los Angeles lost for the fourth time in five games after winning 10 of its previous 13 games.

Gomber (5-7) gave up five hits, a walk and two runs, with three strikeouts, through five innings. In the ninth, Justin Lawrence forced Luis Rengifo into a groundout with the tying run on second and the go-ahead run on first and picked up his fourth save.

Angels starter Tyler Anderson (4-2), a former Rockies first-round pick in 2011 who went on to play four seasons for the club, took the loss after giving up three runs in six innings while striking out a season-high nine.

Rays 3, Royals 1

In St. Petersburg, Jose Siri homered, Wander Franco had a sacrifice fly in a two-run seventh, and MLB-leading Tampa Bay beat Kansas City for a split of a four-game series against the lowly Royals.

The Rays (54-27) are 6-7 over their last 13 games, including a four-game split with Oakland, which has the worst record in the majors. Kansas City dropped to 22-56.

The game was delayed approximately 15 minutes in the fifth when plate umpire and crew chief Mark Wegner took a hard foul tip by Tampa Bay's Randy Arozarena off the mask.

After being checked out behind the plate, Wegner walked off with a Rays trainer.

Siri opened the seventh inning by drawing a walk from Taylor Clarke (1-2). Yandy Díaz got his fourth hit of the game on an infield single that deflected off the Royals reliever to shortstop Bobby Witt Jr., who was charged with an error for an errant throw to first that put runners on second and third. Siri scored on Clarke's wild pitch before Franco's sacrifice fly made it 3-1.

After Colin Poche (5-2) worked a scoreless eighth, Pete Fairbanks got three outs in the ninth to earn his eighth save.

Phillies 7, Mets 6

In Philadelphia, New York reliever Jeff Brigham (0-2) hit Kyle Schwarber and Trea Turner with pitches with the bases loaded in the eighth inning to force in the tying and go-ahead runs after third baseman Brett Baty committed a key throwing error in Philadelphia's comeback win.

Trailing 6-3 in the eighth, the Phillies scored four times against the bullpen and rebounded to take two of three against their division rivals. Philadelphia walked three times, were hit twice, reached on an error and had just one hit in the four-run inning.

The Mets seemed poised to win their first series since they completed a three-game sweep of the Phillies on June 1. Pete Alonso hit his 24th home run and had three RBIs, Francisco Lindor homered and the Phillies wasted chances to blow the game open.

Jeff Hoffman (1-1) tossed a scoreless eighth for the win and Craig Kimbrel struck out two in the ninth for his 11th save.

Orioles 3, Mariners 2

In Baltimore, Anthony Santander robbed Julio Rodríguez with a super catch in right field in the first, then homered two innings later to help Baltimore edge Seattle.

Kyle Bradish (4-3) allowed two hits in seven innings, and the Orioles took the final two games of the series after dropping Friday's opener 13-1.

Santander homered for the fifth time in six games and made an early contribution with his glove. Rodríguez, the game's second batter, hit a drive to right, but Santander reached above the fence to make the catch.

Cal Raleigh hit a two-run homer in the second for Seattle, but that was the last hit allowed by Bradish, who struck

out seven with two walks. Danny Coulombe pitched a perfect eighth, and Félix Bautista struck out three for his 21st save.

George Kirby (6-7) allowed two earned runs and six hits in 6 1/3 innings.

Yankees 5, Rangers 3

In New York, Harrison Bader hit a go-ahead two-run double in the eighth inning and New York overcame Gerrit Cole's shortest start of the season and rallied past Texas.

The Yankees won for the third time in 30 games when trailing after seven innings after entering the eighth with one hit since the second inning.

Rookie Anthony Volpe sparked the comeback with a double off John King (1-1) and Jose Trevino followed with an infield single. Bader gave the Yankees the lead with his double off Yerry Rodríguez. Giancarlo Stanton followed an intentional walk to Anthony Rizzo with a base hit for a 5-3 lead.

Ron Marinaccio (4-3) stranded a runner in the top half of the eighth before Bader and Stanton came through. Michael King pitched a 1-2-3 ninth, striking out Adolis García to secure his fifth save.

Twins 6, Tigers 3, 10 Innings

In Detroit, Royce Lewis scored the tying run in the eighth inning and drove in the go-ahead run in the 10th as Minnesota rallied to beat Detroit and win the three-game series.

Donovan Solano homered for Minnesota, which trailed 3-2 going into the eighth. But Lewis walked with two outs, advanced to second on Ryan Jeffers' pinch-hit single and scored when third baseman Nick Maton threw away Willi Castro's grounder.

Lewis led off the 10th with a single off Tigers reliever Brendan White (1-1) that bounced off Maton's glove, allowing Correa to score the go-ahead run. After a sacrifice bunt, Castro's RBI single put the Twins up 5-3. Christian Vázquez's base hit made it 6-3.

Twins reliever Griffin Jax (4-6) got the win. Joao Duran pitched the 10th for his 11th save.

Brewers 5, Guardians 4, 10 innings

In Cleveland, Owen Miller hit a tie-breaking double in the 10th against his former team, lifting Milwaukee over Cleveland.

Miller's one-out double against Trevor Stephan (3-3) hit high off the left-field wall and scored automatic runner Joey Wiemer from second base. Miller, acquired by Milwaukee from Cleveland in December for cash, dived headfirst into second base and pointed to the Brewers' dugout in celebration.

Devin Williams (4-1) pitched the ninth for the Brewers. Elvis Peguero recorded his first save, striking out José Ramírez and Josh Naylor before

MLB Results/Standings

WASHINGTON, June 26, (AP): Results and standings from the MLB games on Sunday.

Minnesota	6	Detroit 10	3
Baltimore	3	Seattle	2
Toronto	12	Oakland	1
Tampa Bay	3	Kansas City	1
NY Yankees	5	Texas	3
Milwaukee	5	Cleveland 10	4
Chicago W. Sox	4	Boston	3
Colorado	4	LA Angels	3
Houston	6	LA Dodgers 11	5
St. Louis	7	Chicago Cubs	5
Miami	2	Pittsburgh	0
Philadelphia	7	NY Mets	6
Atlanta	7	Cincinnati	6
Arizona	5	San Francisco	2
Washington	8	San Diego	3

American League

East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Tampa Bay	54	27	.667	—
Baltimore	47	29	.618	4-1/2
New York	43	35	.551	9-1/2
Toronto	43	36	.544	10
Boston	40	39	.506	13

Central Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Minnesota	40	39	.506	—
Cleveland	37	40	.481	2
Detroit	33	43	.434	5-1/2
Chicago	34	45	.430	6
Kansas City	22	56	.282	17-1/2

West Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Texas	47	30	.610	—
Houston	42	36	.538	5-1/2
Los Angeles	42	37	.532	6
Seattle	37	39	.487	9-1/2
Oakland	20	60	.250	28-1/2

National League

East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Atlanta	50	27	.649	—
Miami	45	34	.570	6
Philadelphia	40	37	.519	10
New York	35	42	.455	15
Washington	30	47	.390	20

Central Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Cincinnati	41	37	.526	—
Milwaukee	40	37	.519	-1/2
Chicago	37	39	.487	3
Pittsburgh	35	42	.455	5-1/2
St. Louis	32	45	.416	8-1/2

West Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Arizona	47	32	.595	—
San Francisco	44	34	.564	2-1/2
Los Angeles	43	34	.558	3
San Diego	37	41	.474	9-1/2
Colorado	31	49	.388	16-1/2

hitting Andrés Giménez with a pitch. But he retired Myles Straw on a foul popout to end it.

Marlins 2, Pirates 0

In Miami, rookie Eury Pérez scattered four hits and struck out nine in six dominant innings to lead Miami past Pittsburgh.

Jonathan Davis homered, Bryan De La Cruz had three hits and Yuli Gurriel drove in the game's second run for the Marlins, who improved to 11 games over .500 at 45-34. Luis Arraez went 1 for 4 and his major league-leading batting average slipped to .399.

The 20-year-old Pérez (5-1) extended his scoreless string to 21 innings. The right-hander has allowed one run over 28 innings in five starts in June. Two days after blowing a one-run lead in the second game of the series, A.J. Puk closed with a perfect ninth for his 11th save.

Andrew McCutchen had two hits for the Pirates, who have lost 12 of 13. Johan Oviedo (3-8) allowed one run and six hits and struck out six in seven innings. Winless since May 19, Oviedo dropped his fifth straight decision.

White Sox 4, Red Sox 1

In Chicago, Luis Robert Jr. had two home runs among his three hits to lead Chicago over Boston.

Andrew Benintendi added two hits and Robert homered for the second straight game, raising his season total to 21 as the White Sox won their first series in four attempts. Chicago had lost nine of its last 13 games.

Chicago's Jesse Scholtens (1-2) threw four scoreless innings to earn the win. Keynan Middleton pitched a 1-2-3 ninth for his second save.

Adam Duvall had two doubles for the Red Sox, who had won seven of 10. Robert hit a two-run drive in the fourth and a solo shot in the sixth off Kutter Crawford (2-4), who gave up four runs in six innings.

Diamondbacks 5, Giants 2

In San Francisco, Ryne Nelson struck out six in seven innings in his strongest start of the season. Ketel Marte added two hits and homered for the second consecutive game and Arizona avoided a series sweep.

Christian Walker extended his career-high hitting streak to 10 games with an RBI double for Arizona. Alek Thomas had three hits for the Diamondbacks, whose lead in the NL West had been trimmed to 1 1/2 games over the Giants after San Francisco won the first two games of the series.

Arizona set a franchise record with its 79th consecutive game without being shut out.

Nelson (4-4) allowed three hits and one run, and retired 14 straight after giving up a double and walk to back-to-back batters in the first. Scott McGough earned his sixth save.

Anthony DeSclafani (4-7) gave up two runs and five hits in six innings. He had three strikeouts, but is winless since May 29.

Nationals 8, Padres 3

In San Diego, MacKenzie Gore pitched five strong innings against his former team. Jeimer Candelario homered and drove in three runs and Washington took advantage of San Diego's bullpen meltdown to take two of three.

The Nationals blew open a tied game by chasing Seth Lugo (3-4) with two runs in the sixth and then scoring five unearned runs in the seventh, when reliever Tim Hill committed two throwing errors and hit a batter.

Gore (4-6), who went to Washington in the trade for Juan Soto on Aug. 2, held the Padres to one run and five hits. He struck out nine and walked two.

San Diego's Kim Ha-Seong homered in the seventh.

'Difficult decision'

Wembanyama says he won't play at this yr's WC

SAN ANTONIO, June 26, (AP): Victor Wembanyama has some bad news for France.

The No. 1 draft pick told L'Equipe newspaper he won't play with his national basketball team at this year's World Cup in order to protect his still developing body, and will instead take that time to continue preparing for his rookie season with the San Antonio Spurs.

Wembanyama said it was a difficult decision to make, adding that it is irrevocable.

"I've decided to dedicate this summer to preparing my body for the many events awaiting it in the coming years," he said. "This meant skipping the World Cup. It was a difficult decision, and one that required the advice of many people. But I sincerely believe it's the best one for the French team and myself."

The top pick in this year's NBA draft had previously said he wanted to play in the tournament, which runs from Aug. 25 through Sept. 10 and will have France among the medal favorites. But both he and the Spurs suggested in recent days that his participation was no longer certain.

Wembanyama said he consulted with close friends and his medical team. He told the France coach and other players from the team about his decision over the weekend, L'Equipe reported on Monday.

Wembanyama said he was not pressured by the Spurs in any way.

"They know what's at stake," he said. "But they would have supported me whatever my choice. In the past, as soon as I could go to international competitions, I did. I've never been able to enjoy a summer with several months of development for my body. For this new phase of my life, it's essential. The Spurs staff are ready to make this summer profitable. We can't afford for it to be wasted time."

If Wembanyama sticks with his decision, it will mean that he won't be playing with France at a major tournament until next year's Paris Olympics. The Spurs chose the 19-year-old prodigy, who arrives with enormous expectations to become basketball's

newest sensation.

Wembanyama comes with far more height and hype than most No. 1 picks. Listed at 7-foot-4, he dominated the French league in his final season, leading all players in scoring, rebounding and blocked shots.

Wembanyama said he hesitated a lot and pointed to the need to preserve his body, which he already put to the test during a long season with his Boulogne-Levallois Metropolitans 92 club, which reached the finals in the French league.

He said after that stretch, taking part in the World Cup and then playing with the Spurs and following up the NBA season with the Olympics would have been too much to take.

"My body is like a prototype," he said. "I can't base myself on people who look like me. So you need specific preparation, personalized anticipation. You can't leave anything to chance. There's a real risk of overload, and therefore of injury, which could have an impact on what happens next."

BASKETBALL

Wembanyama played in 48 games, including the playoffs and two exhibitions near Las Vegas last fall, in his recently completed season for Boulogne-Levallois - a team coached by Vincent Collet, who also coaches the French national team. The French season for Wembanyama stretched from September through a league finals appearance earlier this month.

The NBA season is 82 games, not including preseason and possibly postseason contests. If he played at the World Cup, Wembanyama wouldn't have given his body much of a break to rest and prepare for the far more demanding rigors of an NBA schedule.

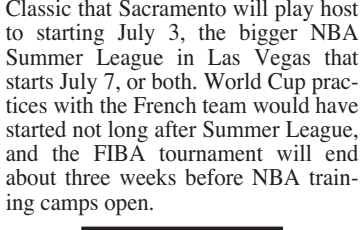
"It would be unrealistic in terms of development and unwise in terms of health," Wembanyama said.

And it's clear that, at least for this summer, he's decided that his focus will fully be on the Spurs.

"I'm trying to learn and be as objective as I can to become the

best," Wembanyama said over the weekend, when he visited his new home arena for the first time. "But I'm also trying to be myself and not let anyone change the way I want to play. And I think this is really the way to become the best version of myself I can be as a player."

Wembanyama is expected to play in Summer League with the Spurs in the coming weeks; it remains unclear if he'll participate in the California Classic that Sacramento will play host to starting July 3, the bigger NBA Summer League in Las Vegas that starts July 7, or both. World Cup practices with the French team would have started not long after Summer League, and the FIBA tournament will end about three weeks before NBA training camps open.



Houston Astros' Jose Abreu (79) hits a home run during the fourth inning of a baseball game against the Los Angeles Dodgers in Los Angeles. (AP)





Italy's Lorenzo Pirola (right), challenges for the ball with Switzerland's Dan Ndoye during the Euro 2023 U21 Championship soccer match between Switzerland and Italy at the Cluj Arena stadium in Cluj, Romania. Italy won 3-2. (AP)

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Left: Mansour Al-Mansour celebrates with the national flag on the podium, Right: Abdulaziz Al-Raish displays his silver medal after the awarding ceremony. KUNA photos

Al-Mansour wins historic gold for Kuwait

Bradley wins home game at Travelers

Yin becomes 2nd woman from China with major title

SPRINGFIELD, N.J., June 26, (AP) — Ruoning Yin made a birdie putt from about 10 feet on the final hole and became the second woman from China to win a major, beating Yuka Saso by one shot in the Women's PGA Championship on Sunday.

After Saso made birdie ahead of her on the par-5 18th hole at Baltusrol to move into a tie for the lead, Yin found the rough with her tee shot, then hit her third shot into an ideal spot and curled in the right-to-left breaking putt, pumping her fist after it dropped.

The 20-year-old Yin closed with a 4-under 67, finished at 8-under 276 and joined Shanshan Feng as Chinese winners of women's majors. Feng won this event - then known as the LPGA Championship - in 2012 and is currently the Chinese national team coach.

Rose Zhang, who won in her professional debut three weeks ago, also in New Jersey, made a charge with a final-round 67 and finished in a tie for eighth, three shots back.

Saso, the U.S. Women's Open champion in 2021, shot 66. The championship had a mid-round delay of nearly two hours because of severe weather.



Keegan Bradley hits the 14th fairway during the final round of the Travelers Championship golf tournament at TPC River Highlands, Sunday, June 25, 2023, in Cromwell, Conn. (AP)

cord from 2009. He finished three shots ahead of Zac Blair (62) and Brian Harman (64).

Bradley had only made one bogey for the week before dropping three shots in his final six holes. He won for the second time this season and sixth time in his career.

He became the first New Englander to win the title since Connecticut's J.J. Henry in 2006.

Blair had his best finish on tour. The 32-year-old from Utah has been playing on a major medical exemption after missing almost two full years with a torn labrum.

Scottie Scheffler (65) tied for fourth with Patrick Cantlay (67). Scheffler, the No. 1 player in the world, has finished no worse than 12th in his last 17 starts on the PGA Tour.

Rory McIlroy shot 64 and tied for seventh. Asked about the eight rounds of 62 or lower this week, McIlroy said technology has "passed this course by."

Padraig Harrington played his final seven holes in 7-under par, a stunning finish for a 9-under 63 to successfully defend his title in the Dick's Sporting Goods Open with a one-shot victory on Sunday.

Harrington was going nowhere at the

En-Joie Golf Club with a pair of three-putt bogeys and another three-putt par. But he made a bold par save on the 11th that sent the Irishman on his way to his first PGA Tour Champions title this year.

Harrington birdied the next four holes, made eagle on the reachable par-4 16th, followed with a 6-foot birdie on the 17th and then finished with a par to hold off Joe Durant (66). Ernie Els (68) finished third.

Harrington became the first back-to-back winner since the tournament became part of the PGA Tour Champions schedule in 2007. Brad Faxon won back-to-back in 1999 and 2000 when it was the B.C. Open on the PGA Tour.

Next up for Harrington are hopes for another repeat - he defends his title next week in the U.S. Senior Open at SentryWorld in Wisconsin.

Thriston Lawrence closed with a 3-under 69 to overtake a faltering Joost Luiten and win the BMW International Open by one stroke Sunday for his fourth European tour title.

Lawrence started the final round four strokes back and made up ground on Luiten, who shot 74. Luiten fell back with a bogey on the 17th and could only manage a par at the last.

Lawrence has won all four of his European tour titles in just over a year-and-a-half since his first at the Joburg Open in November 2021.

Poland's Adrian Meronk (68), who is chasing a Ryder Cup spot, was one of four who tied for third along with Daniel Hillier (71), Rikuya Hoshino (69) and Maximilian Kieffer (68).

The trio another shot behind included Rasmus Neergaard-Petersen (69), who made his European tour debut on a sponsor exemption after recently finishing his college golf career at Oklahoma State.

Jimmy Stanger birdied the par-5 18th on Sunday for a 6-under 66 and a one-shot victory in the inaugural Compliance Solutions Championship, all but assuring him a spot on the PGA Tour next year.

His first victory since graduating from Virginia in 2017 moved Stanger to No. 5 on the Korn Ferry Tour points list. The leading 30 players earn PGA Tour cards for 2024.

Al-Raish wins silver at Finswimming Championship

CAIRO, June 26, (KUNA): Kuwait's Mansour Al-Mansour won Monday the gold medal in the 50 meters underwater race in the World Junior and Masters Finswimming Championships, held in Cairo, with the participation of 36 countries.

In remarks to KUNA, the head of the Kuwaiti delegation and head of the technical committee in the Kuwaiti Diving Federation, Hani Bin Hussain, affirmed that this medal is the first international gold medal for Kuwait in this sport for the age group between 34-39 years.

Bin Hussain dedicated this victory to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown



In this Tuesday, June 20, 2023 file photo, Colombia's Jhon Lucumi leaps to head the ball over Germany's Ilkay Gundogan during an international friendly soccer match between Germany and Colombia at Veltins-Arena in Gelsenkirchen, Germany. (AP)

Koulibaly joins Al-Hilal

Gundogan 'agrees' to join Barcelona on free transfer

BARCELONA, Spain, June 26, (AP) — Ilkay Gundogan ended his trophy-laden seven-year stay with Manchester City by agreeing to join Barcelona on a free transfer on Monday. The Germany midfielder's last act as a City player - and as the team's captain - was to lift the Champions League trophy, which completed a treble of major titles for the English club.

Now, he is heading to Spain on a two-year contract for a new experience, even though Pep Guardiola wanted to keep the 32-year-old Gundogan - the first signing of the City manager's era from 2016.

"This club made me realize all my dreams and I will forever be thankful for this opportunity," Gundogan said. "I will carry City always in my heart. Once a blue, always a blue."

Having missed out on securing the return of Lionel Messi, Barcelona made the signing of Gundogan a priority to add some experience to a midfield already containing youngsters Pedri González and Gavi Pérez, two of its pillars going forward, but no longer including veteran leader Sergi Busquets, who is leaving the club.

Freddie de Jong also played an important role last season for Barcelona coach Xavi Hernández, despite efforts by the club to sell him in the offseason of 2022.

Barcelona has set Gundogan's buyout clause at 400 million euros (about \$435 million). In a statement, the Spanish champions described their latest signing as a player "who reads the game to perfection" and "one of the world's best midfielders of the last decade or so."

Gundogan's arrival comes while debt-ridden Barcelona is still struggling to meet the Spanish league's financial rules. Only recently was it able to find a way to officially register Gavi as a first-team player. It is widely expected that the club will need to sell players to reduce its expenses, and the addition of Gundogan will only add to that burden

unless compensated by exits. While Barcelona sold off part of its future television revenues and other assets to have the cash necessary to sign Robert Lewandowski and other players last year, its financial problems have increasingly forced the club to find free agents who want to come to Spain. Last year, the team picked up current players Andreas Christensen, Marcos Alonso and Franck Kessie on free transfers, while other free agents like Memphis Depay have come and gone in recent years.

City was reportedly only offering Gundogan a one-year deal, whereas he wanted a longer contract for some security for his family.

He will go down as a City great, not just for being the team's captain in its greatest ever season but because of some of the crucial goals he

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scored and performances he delivered in the midfield, where he could play box-to-box, as an anchorman or - in his favored role - as a player supporting the striker.

Kalidou Koulibaly became the latest soccer star to head to Saudi Arabia on Sunday after joining Al-Hilal from Chelsea on a three-year contract.

The Senegal international has followed in the footsteps of Cristiano Ronaldo, Karim Benzema and N'Golo Kante by opting to play in the lucrative Saudi Pro League.

Al-Hilal, Saudi's most successful team, this week also signed Portugal international Ruben Neves from Wolverhampton. Financial details were not revealed.

The 32-year-old center back only spent a year at Chelsea - after signing from Napoli on a four-year contract last summer - and played 32 games for the club in all competitions. He is part of a raft of expected departures from Chelsea to various destinations, including Kai Havertz, Mason Mount, Hakim Ziyech, Edouard Mendy, Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang and Romelu Lukaku.

GOLF

Xiyu Lin, who either led or shared the lead during most of her back nine, found the water with her drive on the 18th and made bogey to shoot 67 and finish two shots back alongside Carlota Ciganda (64), Anna Nordqvist (65), Megan Khang (67) and Stephanie Meadow (70).

Leona Maguire, who won last week and led after the second and third rounds, shot 74, ending a run of eight straight rounds in the 60s. She finished four shots back.

Keegan Bradley built a big enough lead in front of adoring New England fans that he broke the tournament record at the Travelers Championship despite a shaky closing stretch, closing with a 2-under 68 for a three-shot victory on Sunday.

Bradley, who went 62-63-64 in the first three rounds, finished at 23-under 257 at TPC River Highlands, one shot better than Kenny Perry's previous re-



Ruoning Yin, of China, holds the trophy after winning the Women's PGA Championship golf tournament in Springfield, N.J. (AP)