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Opinion

Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

Nations are led by rulers whose sword is used for justice and reform

NO ONE denies that several Arab and Gulf countries have suffered from administrative failures that opened the door to widespread corruption, so much so that citizens have been exploited to serve the interests of their leaders rather than contributing to the development of their homelands.

This is what happened in countries like Lebanon, Iraq, Syria, Yemen, and others, where rulers were isolated in ivory towers, and the groans of their people were not heard. In such environments, only the leader's voice is heard, drowning out all others. Over time, this fostered corruption among the people, leading citizens to focus solely on their personal interests.

Nearly seven centuries ago, the Arab intellectual Abd al-Rahman Ibn Khaldun warned of the grave consequences that result from a state's lack of strategic vision, how it can collapse into ruin, and how it can rise again.

In my last article, I mentioned that some Gulf states had fallen victim to widespread corruption, pushing them to the brink of bankruptcy and even fragmentation. Then came a historic turning point when God granted them responsible leadership, concerned for the nation and its people, and managed to steer the state back onto the right path and restore its leading role.

We must openly acknowledge that the democratic chaos that prevailed over the past three decades nearly brought Kuwait to the brink of collapse. It was a period marked by the unchecked spread of obscenity, where its voice often overpowered that of responsibility.

During that time, Kuwait embodied what Ibn Khaldun described in his analysis of the decline of states. Corruption had infiltrated nearly every institution, coming dangerously close to the judiciary, the only bulwark of any nation. As former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill famously said during World War II, "Britain will be fine as long as the judiciary is fine."

In recent years, Kuwait has witnessed a troubling expansion of influence, with parliamentary interference extending even into traffic operations such as preventing the issuance of tickets to certain individuals. This absence of strict accountability has contributed to the spread of drugs, the normalization of administrative corruption, and a general breakdown in oversight.

Kuwait has also witnessed systematic crimes in-

volving the theft of public funds and their transfer abroad, while unqualified individuals have been appointed to senior leadership positions. Such a situation was what led to the collapse of the Umayyad state, as described by one of its own princes, who said, "We entrusted major affairs to the unqualified, and left minor matters to the most capable."

Advisors cannot be absolved of responsibility for what transpired, as some used to tailor their advice to serve personal interests, or to benefit their tribe or sect. The logical and legal principle stipulates that those who rush toward something often lose it entirely; but sadly, that principle was not upheld at the time.

To speak plainly, had that situation continued until today, especially amid the sweeping regional crises and tensions, Kuwait would have become the weakest link in the Gulf Cooperation Council. It might have turned into a breeding ground for evil, given the unchecked freedom of reckless voices inciting tribal and sectarian discord, threatening to destroy the national fabric.

This is why Kuwaitis came to see cauterization, as the last resort. Yet no one heeded the people's cries. So, when the opportunity finally arose to appoint a leader whose sole concern was the unity and well-being of his people, the establishment of justice, and the restoration of Kuwait's lost leadership role, he raised the sword of reform without favoritism, fear, or hesitation, and personally followed up on everything happening in the country, down to the smallest details.

He is a leader who is deeply aware of his society's conditions, gifted with foresight, and able to carefully evaluate all matters brought before him. He is committed to ensuring that no one is wronged, and is firm with oppressors, firmly believing that even the smallest injustice can open the door to the collapse of the state. He understands that neglecting minor issues can lead to major crises. For this reason, citizens accept the high-level princely actions taken, even when some were strict.

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HH the Amir reads the invitation letter from Qatar's Amir for the Social Development summit. Amiri Diwan photo

Amir receives invitation to Doha summit

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace Tuesday a written letter from Qatar's Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani,

delivered by Qatari Ambassador to Kuwait Ali bin Abdullah Al-Mahmoud.

The letter included an invitation to His Highness Sheikh Meshal to participate in the

Second World Summit for Social Development, to be held in Doha, Qatar, on November 4-6, 2025.

Senior officials attended the meeting. (KUNA)

47kg pot seized in Kuwait sting

High-speed chase ends drug bust

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 8: Security authorities have foiled an attempt to smuggle 47 kilograms of marijuana into the country through a shipment labeled as 'decorations' that arrived via air freight from the United States.

In a press statement, the Ministry of Interior revealed that through the coordinated efforts of the Drug Control General Department (DCGD) in the Criminal Security Sector and Kuwait General Administration of Customs (KGAC); the drugs were intercepted during routine inspection at the air car-

go customs.

After discovering the contraband, the anti-narcotics officers immediately headed to the headquarters of the shipping company to track down those involved in the drug smuggling attempt. One of the suspects was arrested upon completion of procedures to receive the shipment; while the other -- who has a criminal record for drug trafficking -- was apprehended after a police chase on the streets of Jahra Industrial Area. He resisted arrest and collided with patrol vehicles, endangering lives before being subdued.

Both suspects were referred to DGCD for investigation and other legal measures, pending their referral to the Narcotics Prosecution.

The ministry reaffirmed its commitment to combat the drug trade, vowing to continue pursuing those who threaten public safety and national security.

Dashti's unique collection sheds light on UK-Kuwait ties

Documentary exhibit celebrates British Council legacy

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 8: The National Library of Kuwait on Tuesday hosted a documentary exhibition by British affairs researcher Issa Dashti, marking the 70th anniversary of the British Council in Kuwait and the 250th anniversary of Kuwaiti-British relations.

Sheikha Hala Al-Bader Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah, British Ambassador to Kuwait Belinda Lewis and Director General of the library Siham Al-Azmi attended the event.

In a statement on the sidelines of the event, Sheikha Hala Al-Bader expressed her appreciation for the British Council and its pioneering role since its founding in the 1950s. She pointed out that "relations between Kuwait and



Photo by Mohammad Morsi
British Ambassador Belinda Lewis listens attentively to Issa Dashti during the documentary exhibition at the National Library of Kuwait.

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8 KFH launches its annual initiative to enhance customer experience



9 ABK organizes exclusive event for customers at Mercedes-Benz showroom

Q8 boosts European presence with two Luxembourg stations

KUWAIT CITY, July 8, (KUNA): Kuwait Petroleum International (Q8) commenced Tuesday operations in two of Europe's largest fuel stations located on a highway in Luxembourg's Berchem.

In a statement to KUNA, Q8 recalled winning the bid for operating the stations earlier this year, calling it a "milestone" for the company.

The dual operation took the number of stations run by Q8 to 40 throughout Luxembourg.

This reinforces the company's commitment to providing comprehensive and eco-friendly services across the European continent.

Q8's CEO, Shafy Al-Ajmy, referred to it as a focal step to accomplishing strategy goals, and expanding global presence through innovative solutions that meet customer demand.

The company, with full operational control over the stations, is setting out to enhance and modernize work, in reflection of Q8's identity, Al-Ajmy noted.

They are equipped with innovative



KUNA photo
Q8 fuel stations located on a highway in Luxembourg's Berchem.

solutions, improved infrastructure for electric vehicle charging stations, as well as renewable diesel for heavy vehicles.

Earlier today, an opening ceremony

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Newswatch

CAIRO: Extraordinary talks bringing together the heads of customs departments across the wider Arab region in the Egyptian capital Cairo approved on Monday the formation of a pan-Arab council for customs affairs.

The formation of this council is a major step forward towards greater customs cooperation between Arab countries, Kuwait's acting customs chief Fatma Al-Qallaf told KUNA after the talks, citing the move as instrumental in keeping joint coordination steady on customs-related matters, she said.

The Kuwaiti official went on to attribute the formation of the new council to the efforts of customs departments across the region, while the measure will now be referred to the Arab League's social and economic council, pending its approval. (KUNA)

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CAIRO: Egyptian officials said Tuesday a fire that engulfed a main telecom company building in downtown Cairo a day earlier left four people dead and over two dozen injured.

The large blaze, which broke out at the landmark 10-story Telecom Egypt building and lasted for hours, began in one of the halls on the floor housing telecom operators and spread to other floors due to its intensity, authorities said.

The four dead were company employees who had been inside the burning building, according to their workers union.

A total of 27 people had been hospitalized as of Tuesday afternoon, the health ministry said in an update, although some have since been discharged. The ministry confirmed that four bodies were recovered from the site. (AP)

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CAIRO: The Secretary General of the Arab League, Ahmad Abul-Gheit emphasized on Tuesday the urgent need to combat and prevent the growing phenomenon of Islamophobia.

Speaking at the International Conference on Combating Hatred against Islam, Abul-Gheit warned that Islamophobia is a dangerous and escalating issue that undermines values of coexistence and mutual respect. (KUNA)

Day by Day

WHY don't we mandate school uniforms for students in Kuwait's schools, and universities as well, if possible? What's stopping this?

I remember a time when students in our schools all wore uniforms. I still remember an Indian tailor named Bhasin. Back then, students looked neat and comfortable, and no one showed off fancy clothes like they do today. Everyone was fine with wearing the official uniform.

... Yet tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar



A man prepares tea for customers at Dalalwa Cafe in Kuwait City, July 7, 2025. Located in the old Al-Mubarakiya market in Kuwait City, Dalalwa Cafe is a century-old teahouse known for its authentic atmosphere. It offers a nostalgic experience with vintage decor and a strong sense of local community. (Xinhua)

Case back in parliament

Iraq steps back from Khor Abdullah treaty challenge

BAGHDAD, July 8, (KUNA): Iraqi President Abdulatif Rashid and Prime Minister Mohammad Al-Soudani decided on Tuesday to withdraw their appeals against a decision revoking Khor Abdullah treaty and submitted the case to parliament.

The decision was taken during a meeting that grouped the president, the prime minister and parliament speaker Mahmoud Mashhadani at Baghdad Palace.

An official statement said the three leaders discussed the treaty on regulating navigation at Khor Abdullah, endorsed by the parliament according to Law 42/2013. The supreme federal court had later declared as unconstitu-

tional the treaty legislation according to lawsuit 105 and the affiliate 194 (2023).

The leaders agreed that the parliament must resolve the required legislative measure in line with the federal court rule that called for re-legislation of the endorsement law.

They decided that the president and prime minister would take back the two petitions that had been addressed to the federal court, affirmed Iraq's adherence to the relevant international conventions, UN charters and UN Security Council resolutions.

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Prayer Timings			
~~~~ Fajr ...	03:20	Asr .....	15:27
Sunrise ...	04:55	Maghrib ..	18:51
Zohr .....	11:53	Isha .....	20:22

# Local

**Expected weather for next 24 hrs:**  
**By Day:** Very hot with light to moderate northwesterly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 08-32 km/h.  
**By Night:** Hot to rather hot with light to moderate northwesterly

Weather			
wind to light southwesterly wind, with speeds of 10-32 km/h.			
Station	Max Exp	Min Rec	
Kuwait City	45	35	
Kuwait Airport	45	30	
Abdaly	46	30	
Jahra	46	31	
Salmiyah	43	34	
Ahmadi	41	30	
Nuwaisib	45	32	
Wafra	44	31	
Salmy	44	27	
Managish	46	30	

## Ministry of Justice

# Capital and Hawally top in family disputes cases, say official statistics

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 8: Official statistics issued by the Ministry of Justice revealed that family courts handled 13,706 family cases in the first quarter of this year and adjudicated 9,243 of these cases; thereby, achieving 67.4 percent completion rate.

The newspaper obtained a copy of the statistics; indicating that 3,233 sessions were postponed and 4,432 cases remained pending at the end of the first quarter.

The cases under consideration included personal status, Ja'fari and civil status cases for non-Muslims; in addition to urgent cases and disputes related to alimony, custody, parentage and other family-related cases.

Following are the completion rates by type of case:

■ Personal status (general family): 4,665 out of 7,838 cases were resolved -- a com-

pletion rate of 59.5 percent

■ Ja'fari: the resolution rate reached 73.5 percent, with 1,025 rulings issued out of 1,396 cases

■ Urgent: 336 cases were registered and 285 of which were resolved -- a completion rate of 84.8 percent, which is among the highest in terms of completion

■ Personal status (non-Muslims): 56 out of 94 cases were resolved -- a completion rate of 59.5 percent

■ Custody, alimony and parentage: a completion rate of almost 100 percent, reflecting the courts' commitment to expedite adjudication

Following is the distribution of cases by court:

■ Hawally Court recorded the highest number of rulings with 1,989 out of 2,886 cases -- a completion rate of 68.9 percent

■ Farwaniya Court resolved 1,789 out of 2,495 cases -- a completion rate of 71.7

percent

■ Jahra Court issued 1,468 rulings out of 2,125 cases -- a completion rate of 69.1 percent

■ Capital Court resolved 1,783 out of



Al-Qattan

2,643 cases -- a completion rate of 67.5 percent

■ Ahmadi Court recorded 1,375 rulings out of 2,294 cases -- a completion rate of



Enam Haider

59.9 percent

■ Mubarak Al-Kabeer Court was the least active, with 839 rulings out of 1,263 cases

Meanwhile, data from the Electronic Advertisements Department of the family courts indicated that these courts received 11,507 electronic notifications in the first quarter and 11,230 of which were executed -- 97.6 percent completion rate. The Capital Court topped the list with 2,514 notifications; followed by the Hawally and Farwaniya courts.

Moreover, Attorney **Abdul Mohsen Al-Qattan** said that these figures show increasing pressure on family courts, particularly in the Capital and Farwaniya; calling for an increase in the number of judicial circuits to expedite adjudication, especially in alimony and custody cases. He added that the Hawally Court superiority in the number of rulings indicates "procedural discipline and

quality of organization." He recommended redistribution of cases to ease the burden on overcrowded courts.

Attorney Enaam Haider pointed out that "adjudicating more than 9,000 cases within three months is an achievement credited to the Kuwaiti judiciary," but she was quick to point out that "the rate of postponement remains high, possibly due to a lack of staff or the absence of opponents from sessions." She also stressed the need to review enforcement mechanisms after rulings are issued, specifically in custody and alimony cases, which are often not implemented as required.

Attorney Ali Matar Al-Wawan praised the shift to online notifications, stressing that "this development has contributed to reducing case delays." He called for the implementation of more remote litigation services to reduce congestion in court-rooms.

# Islamic Affairs begins face recognition for its workers

Internal transfers, secondments suspended

By Mohammad Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, July 8: The Ministry of Islamic Affairs has suspended internal transfers and secondments between its departments and sectors, except those holding supervisory positions, in an effort to streamline work procedures and link them with the integrated systems of the Civil Service Commission (CSC).**

Reliable sources informed the newspaper that the issuance of the decision coincides with the work of the committee tasked to fol-

low up the process of full electronic assimilation with the integrated systems of the CSC. They indicated that the suspension of transfers and secondments will continue until the committee completes its work.

Meanwhile, the ministry begins the facial recognition registration for its employees in Hall No. 12 on the ground floor of its main building on Wednesday. The process will continue until July 17.

The newspaper obtained a copy of the administrative decision, stating that the ministry allotted a certain day for the employees on each floor of the building to ensure smooth flow and avoid congestion.

Sources added the ministry has been preparing the system since early March, when it launched a tender to purchase licenses for the

human resources automation mechanism and the fingerprint program using mobile devices -- a move aimed at enhancing control over attendance and reducing reliance on traditional systems. They confirmed that the ministry invited companies specialized in this field and registered with the Tenders Department to participate in the tender, noting that a date and location were set for opening the envelopes, in the presence of qualified companies. They also indicated that the human resources automation project and the activation of facial recognition are among the most important steps taken by the ministry to modernize its administrative structure, in line with the national vision for digital transformation and enhancing the efficiency of the government sector.



Photo by Rizk Tawfiq

Turkish Ambassador to Kuwait Tuba Nur Sönmez talks to the Abdullah Al-Salem Healthy City volunteers at the sorting of waste collected from the area.

## Need to cut waste, recycle: Sönmez

# 'Kuwait deeply concerned, wants clean environment'

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 8: Turkish Ambassador to Kuwait Tuba Nur Sönmez has underscored the importance of being an active and responsible part of the community in which one lives; affirming that Kuwait is a valuable and responsible society, where neighbors, associations and even housewives are deeply concerned about the environment.

Sönmez made the statement when she attended a recycling event organized by the Abdullah Al-Salem Healthy City, in cooperation with the Capital Governorate and the Healthy Cities Alliance. She affirmed that the Turkish Embassy is keen on supporting those who care for the environment, while expressing her gratitude for the introduction of this important facility for collecting recyclable materials on a monthly basis.

In a statement to reporters, she pointed out that "responsible people come to your locations and take what you have collected, but recycling begins at an earlier stage. What we are trying to do first is reduce what we consume and reduce waste such as plastic, glass, metals and paper. Then we reuse these materials before we reach the third step, which is recycling, especially plastic bags, which take up a lot of space in Kuwait. Therefore, we must be truly responsible toward our environment for the sake of future generations and for the sake of our society as well."

She revealed that "in Türkiye, we were raised and educated to be responsible and to care for the environment. This also falls within our foreign policy. The First Lady of Türkiye adopted a zero-waste policy, which led to the United Nations declaring March 30 as World Zero Waste Day. We apply this in our personal lives, but we also promote it internationally as a

foreign policy tool."

She added that the Turkish Embassy in Kuwait "sorts waste and searches for suitable locations for proper disposal. We are happy and fortunate to meet with these responsible individuals monthly. We will continue to contribute what we can to reduce our waste. Every embassy and every foreigner living in Kuwait should be part of this responsible movement."

Regarding her assessment of the level of environmental awareness in Abdullah Al-Salem suburb, she said "unfortunately, I only learned about this facility very recently. I have been in Kuwait for about three years and I was unaware of it."

On the other hand, Dr. Iman Abahus-sain, General Coordinator of Abdullah Al-Salem Suburb Healthy City and Head of the City Office, confirmed that the environmental initiative to sort waste at source has been ongoing since 2022; following the city's global accreditation as a healthy city. She said waste sorting is one of the basic criteria in this regard.

She disclosed that "residents of the suburb have begun sorting waste from their homes -- glass, plastic, paper or used oil. The area leads Kuwait in collecting plastic through the designated containers. Sites have also been allocated for collecting paper and oil, in cooperation with the Suburb and Mansouriya Cooperative Society and the Friends of the Environment Company, with a fixed monthly schedule -- on the first Monday of each month."

Wafaa Al-Bakr, head of the Education Committee in Abdullah Al-Salem Suburb Health City, explained that the monthly gathering aims to spread health and environmental awareness among residents and reduce the effects of dumping hazardous waste. She emphasized that "the hot weather in Kuwait increases the risk of this waste to public health and safety."

## Other Voices

# 'Souk-Al-Manakh' victims

By Ahmad alsarraf

THE amended Bankruptcy Law, issued in 2020, introduced significant measures that go beyond merely liquidating debtors' assets. It emphasizes preventive settlement and restructuring procedures as alternatives before declaring bankruptcy, thereby increasing the chances for struggling economic projects.

The important provisions of the law include the establishment of a specialized bankruptcy court and the creation of a bankruptcy administration. This administration, affiliated with the court, handles various administrative and technical tasks related to bankruptcy cases, such as receiving applications, supervising procedures, forming bankruptcy committees, proposing public policies, and developing operational guidelines.

The new law also enables debtors experiencing financial difficulties, but who have not yet stopped payments, to request a preventive settlement by reaching an agreement with creditors, without needing to declare bankruptcy.

If the debtor stops paying debts or if the preventive settlement proves ineffective, restructuring procedures may be initiated. These procedures aim to help the debtor continue their business through a carefully designed plan to reorganize their financial and administrative affairs under the supervision of a bankruptcy judge.

Should insolvency persist and settlements fail, the debtor is formally declared bankrupt, and barred from managing or disposing of their assets. At this stage, a bankruptcy trustee is appointed, and all individual lawsuits and proceedings against the debtor are suspended.

When comparing the current and previous bankruptcy laws, particularly in how they handle debtors, it becomes clear how deeply unjust the treatment of 668 citizens involved in the 'Manakh



alsarraf

Markets' case had been. These individuals, including heirs and partners, some deceased and others still living, suffered huge losses. The value of their assets dropped to KD 500 million, while their debts ballooned to four times that amount.

This dramatic decline occurred largely due to mismanagement by an inexperienced government employee entrusted with handling their assets. Allegations have long circulated that some assets were sold at suspiciously low prices.

Over the span of more than three decades, their debt accumulated astronomical interest at an unsustainable rate of 15 percent, as though they were being subjected to a lifelong penalty. On top of their financial burden, they were banned from traveling except in urgent cases and only with the approval of a bankruptcy judge, who is often unavailable, especially during weekends and official holidays.

These conditions have imposed not only financial hardship but also severe psychological distress and social embarrassment.

The law also prohibits them from opening bank accounts or obtaining bank cards or ATMs. They are stripped of many basic rights that, in some cases, even convicted criminals are not denied.

We sincerely hope that His Excellency the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Al-Sabah, who is known for his commitment to reform and restoring justice, will give this issue the attention it deserves. Meeting with some of those affected could offer valuable insight into the reality of their long-standing suffering, the continuation of which defies reason or fairness. It is time for these individuals to return to a normal life, especially as many of them are now in the later stages of life, with little time left.

On a personal note, I extend my heartfelt thanks to everyone who congratulated me on being named the most widely followed and influential writer in Kuwait. I am also deeply grateful to all who participated in the survey and shared their views.

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# MoCI, PAFN join forces to manage food supply

KUWAIT CITY, July 8: As part of its ongoing efforts to guarantee the safety and quality of food commodities available to consumers, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry convened a high-level coordination meeting to discuss mechanisms for streamlining the entry of food products -- particularly fresh fish -- into the local market, reports Al-Anba daily.

Director of the Commercial Control Department at the ministry Faisal Al-Ansari presided over the meeting, which was held in cooperation with Kuwait General Administration of Customs (KGAC) and the Public Authority for Food and Nutrition (PAFN).

Several senior officials attended the meeting including Deputy Director General of the Control and Inspection Sector at PAFN Dr. Saud Al-Jalal, Director of the Capital Governorate Department at the authority Ali Hashem Al-Kandari, PAFN representative Mohammdd Saad Al-Dosari, Inspector of Doha Port and Failaka Island from KGAC Naif Al-Otaibi, and Legal Researcher in the Commercial Control Department Nouf Al-Enezi.

Discussions focused on enhancing regulatory cooperation among the relevant agencies to simplify procedures at borders, while maintaining stringent inspection and auditing standards to guarantee product safety. This is an urgent matter in light of the seasonal surge in demand for fish and seafood products.

During the meeting, Al-Ansari underscored the importance of striking a balance between the quick clearance and entry of food products into the market and the need to ensure their safety and compliance with all applicable standards. He affirmed that the ministry maintains continuous coordination with its regulatory partners to achieve this objective and boost consumer confidence in food quality.

# Stay on your jobs until reshuffle is over: MoE

By Abdulrahman Al-Shammari

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 8: Minister of Education Sayed Jalal Al-Tabtabaei on Tuesday issued a decision stipulating in its first article that those occupying supervisory positions will continue to perform their duties until all employees are assigned to the new organizational units, in accordance with the integrated civil service systems.

The decision aims to ensure that work continues and that performance in various sectors of the ministry is not affected during the administrative transition period.

Article Two of the decision states that it shall take effect from the date of issuance, and that the concerned departments are mandated to implement it.

Copies of the decision were sent to the offices of the assistant undersecretaries, directors general, directors of central departments, employment affairs supervisors at the CSC and State Audit Bureau (SAB), and the concerned financial entities in the ministry.

# Father held in escape of two sons in police bust up

KUWAIT CITY, July 8: An elderly man was arrested and police are looking for his two sons as they allegedly destroyed two patrol cars and attempted to run over a first lieutenant in Al-Mutlaa, reports Al-Anba daily.

A citizen, in his 60s, was detained for helping his two sons escape. The brothers were also placed on

the wanted list for charges related to damaging State property and attempting to run over a police officer.

A security source told the daily that a police patrol from Al-Mutlaa Security Directorate stopped the car of the brothers during an inspection campaign in the area. When asked for the identification document of the driver, he refused, saying, "I

am wanted and I won't give you my ID." He then sped off, crashing into a police patrol car. When the other patrol car attempted to stop him, he also collided with it, causing damages. The two men then headed home, where the father helped them escape; using inappropriate language toward the police officer.



diwaniya

حيوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

Divorce rates in Kuwaiti homes high ... gov't is watching

“IN an interview, when popular Egyptian singer Fatima Eid spoke about her roles as a wife, mother, and home-maker, the host was surprised that an artist would describe her relationship with her husband that way, despite her worldwide fame.” Kuwaiti journalist **Hassan Ali Karam** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“Fatima Eid is a simple woman. She is a loyal wife, devoted to her husband “Mr. Sayyid”. Her fame didn’t stop her from calling her husband “my father, brother, and master”. She stressed she is not ashamed to wash his feet and prepare his dinner, saying, “Yes, so what? He is my husband, my master, and my love”.

“Fatima’s words caught the host off guard, who was visibly shocked to hear a famous Egyptian singer speak about her husband in such a way.

“In many Arab countries, common reasons for divorce include the wife’s sharp tongue, loud voice, and shouting. Unfortunately, this unhealthy behavior has spread to the Gulf, especially Kuwait. The teachers, doctors, nurses, and workers who have lived in Kuwait since the 1960s brought this bad habit from their home countries to the Kuwaiti women they worked with.

“Arab films, especially those from the 1960s during the Nasser era, further corrupted Arab societies, creating “disasters” across the Arab world.

“I would argue that before oil, modernization, openness, Arab cinema, and theater, Kuwaiti women were not accustomed to dealing with their husbands on an equal footing. A woman going out to work, shop, or travel without a husband or mahram (male guardian) was seen as a calamity that threatened the marital home and family.

“Perhaps three-quarters of divorce cases in Kuwait, the Gulf, and other Arab countries stem from the wife’s failure to fulfill her duties toward her husband.

“The Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) said to a woman who came to him complaining, “The greatest jihad for a wife is to be submissive to her husband.” How many Arab Muslim wives, and Kuwaiti women in particular, are truly submissive to their husbands today?

“In many Asian societies, you often see a wife walking respectfully behind her husband in public, even if she is a doctor, a university professor, a manager, or holds a high-ranking position.

“In contrast, many of the reasons for divorce in Arab and Gulf societies stem from a distorted understanding of modernity. Some wives equate civilization with sitting cross-legged while being served by a dozen maids, a driver, and household staff.

“What if we could turn back time? No oil, no money,



Hassan Ali Karam

no luxury cars, no cell phones, no servants, no malls, no fashion trends, no brand-name handbags...

“Kuwaiti and Gulf women must return to the values instilled in them by their mothers, aunts, and grandmothers. The world is constantly changing... what you see today may not be what you see tomorrow. The wealth, oil, and excessive luxury we enjoy now are not guaranteed. Who can promise they will last? No soul knows what it will earn tomorrow, and no soul knows in what land it will die.

“Life shifts with time. I believe that governments, above all, should prioritize moral education and proper upbringing. Courts, too, should avoid rushing into divorce rulings. There are always alternative solutions that can protect the continuity of marriage and preserve the family unit.

“The divorce rate in Kuwait is high relative to its population. It is the government’s responsibility to step in and promote family harmony by encouraging a culture that values substance over materialism.”

**Also:**

“Time and again, we hear of Arab expatriates embezzling from the government or the companies they work for, only to flee to their home countries immediately after their crimes are uncovered. What is the point of a Kuwaiti court convicting them after they have already escaped?” columnist **Dawas Al-Ahmad** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“In 2022, several Indian expatriates took out loans from banks and then fled. Some went back to India, where they bought property in Kerala, and others relocated to countries like the UK, Canada, the U.S., and Australia.

“In August 2024, local newspapers reported that two Arab expatriate employees of the Ministry of Defense Cooperative Society were sentenced to five years in prison and fined KD 149,000. They had seized goods, sold them for personal gain, and fled Kuwait before they could be caught.

“The repeated occurrence of such crimes, and the ease with which perpetrators escape justice, only encourages others to follow suit. Will that Arab country enforce Kuwaiti court rulings against those two individuals who had fled with stolen funds?

“Have we ever heard of a criminal being extradited back to Kuwait after fleeing, even in the case of something as serious as murder?

“In 2018, a Lebanese man fled to his country after he and his wife murdered an Asian maid. While Lebanese authorities did arrest him, Lebanese law prohibits the extradition of its citizens to face punishment for crimes committed outside Lebanon.

“I understand that Kuwait cooperates with Interpol, but why don’t we see the enforcement of binding extradition agreements with other countries for criminals, embezzlers, and thieves?

“I propose a solution to help monitor such individuals. No accountant or resident employee should be allowed to travel without first providing a six-month bank statement detailing their financial transactions. In addition, exchange offices should be required to cooperate with the Public Prosecution to flag any suspicious transfers.

“Since its independence, Kuwait has extended aid to Arab and other nations alike. Yet when Kuwait seeks justice, it often finds no one willing to respond to its requests.

“The Ministry of Foreign Affairs must push for binding agreements that require other countries to arrest and extradite criminals or thieves who flee there and seek refuge. If such cooperation is denied, Kuwait should have the right to take firm measures to protect its legal and financial interests.

“This calls for greater firmness, as some countries fail to show Kuwait the respect it deserves, viewing it merely as a source of aid and financial support.”

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“There is growing unrest among employees of the Qur’anic Affairs Department, as complaints mount and frustration spreads following their exclusion from the recent summer vacation decision,” Kuwaiti writer **Nayef Abdulhadi Al-Qahtani** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“While the decision granted time off to employees of the Islamic Studies Department, it overlooked the Qur’anic Affairs Department staff, despite the similar nature of their work and the fact that they had been granted summer leave in previous years.

“As Kuwaiti families eagerly await the announcement of official holidays, viewing summer vacation as a chance to unwind, travel, or enjoy time with loved ones, this joy is dampened for a group of employees who feel unjustly singled out and treated unfairly compared to their colleagues in the education sector and Islamic Studies Department.

“Employees of the Qur’anic Affairs Department work with dedication to serve the Book of God. They organize Quranic competitions, oversee memorization centers, and carry out other vital tasks that require commitment, time, and effort.

“Despite the nature of their work being no different from that of others included in the summer vacation decision, they remain excluded. Yet, they are an integral part of the educational sector within the Ministry of Islamic Affairs and deserve the same rights and privileges as their peers.

“One employee stated, “We work year-round in service of the Holy Qur’an, doing our duties wholeheartedly. We simply expect to be treated like other employees and to receive our rightful summer break to rest and spend time with our families. We feel we are making many sacrifices without being acknowledged.”

— Compiled by **Mahmoud Attiyeh/Simi K. Kutty**



KFF photo  
Lt. Col. Abdullah Yasser Ibrahim delivers an awareness lecture on the dangers of fire.

KFF holds awareness lecture on fire safety

KUWAIT CITY, July 8: The Public Relations and Media Department of the Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) held an awareness lecture under the title “National Preparedness” at the Community Development Center in Abdullah Al-Mubarak on Monday morning, as part of ongoing cooperation between KFF and public benefit associations.

According to a press release issued by KFF, the event was attended by the Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah.

Lt. Col. Abdullah Yasser Ibrahim delivered an awareness lecture on the dangers of fires, prevention methods, safe evacuation procedures, and proper emergency response.

Governor Sheikh Athbi Al-Nasser affirmed the importance of spreading preventive awareness among citizens and residents. He also praised the efforts of KFF in promoting a culture of community safety.

Divorce, cash comp for wife beaten by husband

**By Jaber Al-Hamoud**  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 8: The Personal Status Court granted a divorce to a Kuwaiti woman after it was established that she had suffered physical abuse from her husband.

The abuse was confirmed by medical reports, surveillance footage, and the testimony of a housemaid.

The woman’s legal counsel, Lawyer Mohammad Safar, explained that the court was convinced by the evidence presented, which proved that the husband had severely beaten his wife, and violated her physical and psychological dignity.

The court also ordered the husband to pay KD 8,000 in compensation for the physical and psychological harm inflicted on his wife.



Al-Seyassah photo  
A candidate is interviewed.

Officer cadets

Mol begins interviews for course applicants

KUWAIT CITY, July 8: The Ministry of Interior has officially commenced personal interviews for candidates applying to officer cadet programs at the Saad Al-Abdullah Academy for Security Sciences, as well as police academies across Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

These interviews are being held at the academy’s headquarters and are overseen by Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior, Major General Ali Misfer Al-Adwani. Also present are Brigadier General Ali Jassim Al-Wahib, Director-General of the Academy, along with a specialized committee comprising representatives from various sectors of the Ministry. This multidisciplinary team reflects the Ministry’s comprehensive approach and commitment to selecting top-tier candidates.

The selection committee follows a strict and methodical evaluation process designed to identify exceptional applicants who can uphold the highest standards of professionalism and discipline within the security forces.

Key criteria assessed during the interviews include:

- Overall appearance and attire
- Personal presence and demeanor
- Clarity of speech and language use
- Communication skills and self-confidence
- Awareness of national and security issues
- Psychological and physical preparedness for the demands of military life

Verdict on July 14

Death penalty eyed in kid kidnap, rape

**By Jaber Al-Hamoud**  
Al-Seyassah/Arab times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 8 : The Criminal Court on Monday adjourned the case of a citizen accused of kidnapping and sexually assaulting a nine-year-old Syrian in Maidan Hawally on the morning of the first day of Eid Al-Fitr. The verdict will be announced on July 14.

The trial session witnessed a moving plea by Attorney Alaa Al-Saedi -- the victim’s representative, as she demanded the maximum penalty be imposed on the accused in accordance with Article 180 of the Penal Code; which stipulates the death penalty for anyone who kidnaps a person using force, threat or deception with the intent to rape or compel the latter to engage in prostitution.

Al-Saedi revealed that the accused is a habitual offender and has a criminal record dating back to 2003, including kidnapping and assault on minors -- under the age of 18. She explained that the crime occurred while the child was on his way to perform Eid prayers; indicating the perpetrator lured him to his apartment, beat him, sexually assaulted him, and then left him on the street.

She confirmed that the forensic evidence report proved that the child was assaulted, which strengthened the proof of the crime. She then stressed the need not to be lenient with the accused, reiterating that he has a criminal record.

Travel ban on ‘royals’ lifted

Ex-MP’s hearing set for July 20

**By Jaber Al-Hamoud**  
Al-Seyassah/Arab times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, July 8: The Ministers Court has lifted the travel ban imposed on Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad and Sheikh Mubarak Al-Hamoud -- defendants in the high-profile ‘secret expenses’ case related to the Ministry of Defense.**

The court took this decision after the defendants paid the amounts owed in the case.

The decision was announced in a court session held to review a request submitted by the defense lawyer. The defendants affirmed their commitment to fulfill their financial obligations, prompting the court to conclude that the legal grounds for maintaining the travel ban no longer exist.

The case has witnessed successive developments, as it is still examining the facts. Court proceedings have been adjourned until Sept 8, when a number of defense witnesses are scheduled to be summoned for testimony and pleadings.

The decision to lift the travel ban was taken amid the ongoing trial being heard by the Ministers Court -- the court in charge of adjudicating cases in which the accused hold high positions, in accordance with Law No. 88/1995 on the trial of ministers.

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**Jail terms suspended:** The Court of Appeals has ordered the suspension of the prison sentences previously imposed on the president of Kuwait Fencing Federation and the owner of a travel agency, who were sentenced to four and three years in prison respectively.

The court also ordered their release pending the final verdict, which is scheduled for July 14.

This decision followed a defense plea submitted by Attorney Mohammad Al-Yabsi, who challenged the evidence used by the Criminal Court and presented new documents supporting his clients’ innocence. He requested that his clients be acquitted of all charges.

The Criminal Court had earlier convicted both defendants. However, the Court of Appeals chose to suspend the sentences until a final ruling is issued.

The Public Prosecution charged one of the defendants of laundering KD1,181,529; fully aware that the funds were obtained through forged official documents and fraudulent activities. Investigations revealed that he deposited KD 1,053,516 -- received via checks from the federation -- into his account at the National Bank of Kuwait. He also used two other accounts at the same bank to receive checks totaling KD128,013, which were then converted into cash and transferred to his account. These actions were allegedly aimed at concealing the illicit origin of the funds.

The prosecution indicated that the defendant colluded with a public sector employee -- acting in good faith -- to forge official documents, specifically trust settlement forms issued by the Public Authority for Sports, in a way that made them appear authentic.

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**Hearing set for July 20:** The Court of Cassation set a session for July 20 to deliberate on the appeal filed by former MP Majed Al-Mutairi against the ruling of the Court of Appeals; which sentenced him to two years in prison with hard labor for vote-buying during the National Assembly elections, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

The Public Prosecution charged Al-Mutairi with offering money to voters in exchange for their votes -- a crime that the Court of Appeals deemed a blatant violation of the integrity of the electoral process. The Court of Appeals convicted him after the incident was proven through evidence and testimonies.

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**Acquitted in drugs case:** The Criminal Court acquitted a Kuwaiti citizen of charges of drug possession and use after Lawyer Enaam Haidar highlighted critical flaws in the arrest and search procedures.

According to the case file, security personnel had stopped the defendant on the street based on suspicions and proceeded to search him without a warrant or any legal justification. A substance suspected to be narcotic was found in his possession, and he was referred to the Public Prosecution, which charged him with drug possession and use.

However, Lawyer Haidar argued that the search was arbitrary and unlawful, as it was not based on a warrant issued by the Public Prosecution, rendering all subsequent procedures legally invalid.

She emphasized that her client had been subjected to a clear violation of his constitutional rights, stating, “Not everyone under suspicion is necessarily guilty.”

Players beckoned via Snapchat

Gambling kingpin arrested

KUWAIT CITY, July 8: The Ministry of Interior announced that the Criminal Security Sector arrested a citizen accused of promoting gambling activities on social media, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

According to a statement from the ministry, the Cybercrime Combating General Department monitored two Snapchat accounts involved in promoting and participating in illegal gambling.

The accused, a citizen, was exploiting the platform to invite followers to join private groups he managed, urging them to pay sums of money to participate in gambling activities, falsely claiming guaranteed profits, whether inside gambling halls abroad or online.

The ministry affirmed that such activities are criminalized under Kuwaiti law and constitute suspicion of electronic fraud. Investigations led to the identification and arrest of the accused, pending legal action and referral to the competent authorities.

The ministry highlighted its commitment to combating illegal practices on social media and urged the public to avoid involvement in such prohibited activities.

It also called on everyone to promptly report any suspicious accounts or activities to help preserve the security and safety of society.

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# MoHE holds orientation for scholarship students

‘Guide Me’ campaign enters final phase

**By Abdulrahman Al-Shammari**  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, July 8:** Assistant Undersecretary for the Scholarships, Equivalencies and Cultural Relations Sector at the Ministry of Higher Education Ghaida Madhkur congratulated the students accepted into the external scholarship plan for the 2025/2026 academic year, wishing them success in their future academic journey and praising the efforts they exerted to obtain the scholarship.

In a press statement on Tuesday, Madhkur revealed the ministry is organizing an orientation for students accepted into the annual scholarship plan on July 8-10 at the Kuwait University Conference Center in Shadadiya. She pointed out that the orientation aims

to prepare students for the next academic stage and provide them with all the necessary information and guidance before starting their educational journey abroad.

She said the orientation is part of the third and final phase of the ‘Guide Me’ campaign, launched by the ministry this year to provide guidance and academic support to students.

She added the orientation includes guidance from ministry officials and cultural offices, as well as representatives from the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Islamic Affairs who respond to the inquiries of the students and clarify administrative, legal and religious procedures relevant to students during their studies abroad.

She affirmed the ministry’s commitment to provide all forms of support to students; so they can present the best image of Kuwait abroad, armed with knowledge, education and national values.

## AI investments and digital leadership hailed

### DCO Sec-Gen lauds Kuwait’s tech vision

RIYADH, July 8, (KUNA): Secretary-General of the Digital Cooperation Organization (DCO), Deemah Al-Yahya, on Monday praised Kuwait’s pioneering role and commitment to harnessing technology as a force for sustainable growth. This came in a post by Al-Yahya on her social media account following the presentation of credentials by Kuwaiti Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Sheikh Sabah Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, earlier today as Kuwait’s Permanent Representative to the organization.

Al-Yahya stated that Kuwait’s presidency of the DCO Council for 2025 is not merely a leadership role, but rather a reflection of a strategic vision and a genuine commitment to leveraging technology and the digital economy as drivers of justice and sustainable growth both within and beyond Kuwait.

She added that Kuwait’s digital indicators reflect its leading position, noting that internet usage in Kuwait exceeds 99 percent, and over 85 percent of the population uses digital government services. She also highlighted



KUNA photo  
Secretary-General of the Digital Cooperation Organization, Deemah Al-Yahya, and Sheikh Sabah Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Ambassador of the State of Kuwait to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Kuwait’s “strategic and ambitious” investments in artificial intelligence and cloud infrastructure.

Al-Yahya expressed her best wishes to Ambassador Sheikh Sabah Al-Nasser for success in representing the State of Kuwait in the organization and voiced her eagerness to work closely with him to advance digital cooperation that serves humanity and achieves digital prosperity for all.

Ambassador of the State of Kuwait to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Sheikh Sabah Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, presented his credentials on Monday as Kuwait’s Permanent Representative to the Digital Cooperation Organization (DCO) during his meeting with the Secretary-General, Deemah Al-Yahya, in Riyadh.

## Kuwait Communications Minister discusses co-op with Kenyan, Tanzanian counterparts

GENEVA, July 8, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Minister of State for Communications Affairs and Chairman of the Digital Cooperation Organization Council for the current session Omar Al-Omar on Tuesday held meetings with Kenyan Minister of Information, Communications and the Digital Economy William Kabogo Gitau and Tanzanian Minister for Information, Communication and Information Technology Jerry William Silaa.

The meetings took place in the headquarters of the Kuwaiti Mission to the United Nations and International Organizations in Geneva, on the sidelines of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS). During the meetings, the ministers discussed ways of enhancing cooperation, subjects of common interest and reinforcing the efforts between member states of the Digital Cooperation Organization Council.

In February, Kuwait have assumed



Minister of State for Communications Affairs and Chairman of the Digital Cooperation Organization Council for the current session 2025, Omar Al-Omar, and Minister of Communications and Information Technology of the sisterly Republic of Tanzania, Jerry William Silaa.



KUNA photos  
Omar Al Omar, Minister of State for Telecommunications Affairs and Chairman of the Digital Cooperation Organization Council for the current session 2025, and William Kabogo Gitau, Minister of Information, Communications and Digital Economy of the friendly Republic of Kenya.

responsibility for the Digital Cooperation Organization Council for the year 2025 after the Kingdom of Jordan.

The Digital Cooperation Organization is a multilateral international organization that aims to enable digital prosperity for all by accelerating the inclusive and sustainable growth of the global digital economy.

### MoCI appoints Basma Al-Jassim to lead SME Development Fund

KUWAIT CITY, July 8: Minister of Commerce and Industry Khalifa Al-Ajeel has issued a decision to appoint Basma Al-Jassim as the new Director of the National Fund for Small and Medium Enterprise Development,

Al-Seyassah photo  
Basma Al-Jassim

succeeding Hiba Al-Rifai, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Al-Jassim had previously served as the Director of the Engineering Affairs Department at the National Fund for Small and Medium Enterprise Development.

## MoHE opens appeal window for 2025/2026 scholarship program

**By Abdulrahman Al-Shammari**  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 8: The Ministry of Higher Education has announced that it is now accepting appeals to the Grievance Committee from students who were not accepted into the external scholarship program for the 2025/2026 academic year.

Those wishing to submit a grievance or inquiry may do so by emailing [plancomp@mohe.edu.kw](mailto:plancomp@mohe.edu.kw) from Monday through Saturday, July 12. Appeals will be reviewed in accordance with the ministry’s established procedures.

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Event runs until July 17 at Khaldiya campus

## Abdullah Al Salem University opens Admissions Fair to future students

**By Abdulrahman Al-Shammari**  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 8: Abdullah Al Salem University has launched the 2025/2026 University Admissions Fair, which will continue until July 17.

The exhibition, which is held daily from 9:30 am to 1:30 pm in Building 14 at the Khaldiya campus, aims to support students by responding to their queries about the colleges and academic programs offered by the university in order to help them make informed decisions regarding their academic and professional paths.

Acting Chairman of the Founding Board of Directors of the university Dr. Adel Al-Hussainan explained that the exhibition is part of the commitment of the university to empower students to make informed decisions in choosing specializations in line with their interests and ambitions.

He said the university administration decided to open the exhibition for students to take a closer look at the colleges, programs and courses, as well as to obtain information and answers to their queries; thereby, enabling them to apply for distinguished seats at the university.

He confirmed the participation of a large number of public and private entities like banks and the Civil Service Commission (CSC) in the exhibition. He pointed out that such participation contributes to painting a comprehensive picture of the academic and professional future of students, in addition to the graduate programs at the university.

He revealed the application for admission started on Monday and will continue until July 17 through the official website of the university. He urged the students to register through the electronic system, which allows them to obtain the required documents from official authorities without the need for personal attendance.

On the other hand, acting Dean of Admissions and Registration Dr. Ahmed Al-Mutawa disclosed that the exhibition coincides with the application period. He affirmed that the Admissions and Registration Team is available to respond to inquiries and provide all the necessary support to ensure smooth procedures for applicants.

It is worth noting that the CSC is participating in the exhibition in view of joint efforts to link academic specializations with job opportunities available in the labor market and guide students toward specializations that the nation prioritizes.



AASU photos  
Part of its ongoing efforts to introduce prospective students to its academic offerings and support during the admission period at Abdullah AlSalem University.

## Ministry of Education wraps up supervisory promotion exams

KUWAIT CITY, July 8: The Ministry of Education announced that the Development and Training Department at the Educational Development and Activities Sector has concluded the promotion tests for supervisory positions in the Director and Assistant Director categories for the current year. A total of 740 employees participated in the Director category, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The ministry stated that training for educational cadres seeking supervisory roles began on April 20, 2025, and will continue through August 2025. The training includes promotion courses for the Teacher and Department Head categories as well.

Head of the Educational Training Department Sabaika Al-Gharib explained that these efforts are being carried out in cooperation with the Kuwait Teachers Society. The initiative aims to enhance the professional and educational levels of teaching staff and prepare them to assume supervisory positions in line with the regulations and requirements set by the Ministry of Education and the Civil Service Commission (CSC).



# Kuwait renews commitment to strengthening media role

Protecting journalists in conflict zones

KUWAIT CITY, July 8, (KUNA): Assistant Foreign Minister for Human Rights Affairs, Ambassador Sheikhha Jawaher Ibrahim Duaij Al-Sabah affirmed Kuwait’s continued commitment to strengthening media’s role in disseminating the principles of international humanitarian law.

This came in a statement to KUNA by Sheikhha Jawaher Al-Sabah on Tuesday, on the sidelines of a workshop organized by the Permanent National Committee for International Humanitarian Law, in coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, represented by the



KUNA photo  
Ambassador Sheikhha Jawaher Ibrahim Duaij Al-Sabah, Assistant FM for Human Rights Affairs.

Human Rights’ Affairs Department. The workshop, titled “Media and In-

ternational Humanitarian Law,” is held in cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Kuwait Institute for Judicial and Legal Studies, and would continue until Wednesday.

Sheikha Jawaher Al-Sabah said that empowering media professionals with the necessary legal knowledge is a fundamental pillar for ensuring their professional and responsible work, particularly with regard to their protection on duty in conflict zones.

She explained that the workshop reflects Kuwait’s unwavering commitment to supporting human rights and international law through awareness-raising and capacity-building programs, as well as through exchanging of expertise and knowledge.



PM Diwan photo  
His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah chairs the weekly Cabinet meeting on Tuesday.



CEO of Jazeera Airways with H.E. Arsen Arakelyan, Ambassador of Armenia to Kuwait at Zvartnots International Airport.

## Jazeera Airways debuts first direct flight from Kuwait to Yerevan

KUWAIT CITY, July 8: Jazeera Airways has officially commenced its direct service between Kuwait and Yerevan, Armenia, opening new opportunities for tourism, business, and cultural exchange.

The inaugural flight with Barathan Pasupathi, CEO of Jazeera Airways, and H.E. Arsen Arakelyan, Ambassador of Armenia to Kuwait on-board, received a warm welcome at Zvartnots International Airport,

with support from Armenia International Airports CJSC.

Known for its scenic beauty, rich history, and warm hospitality, Yerevan is now just a short flight away. The new twice-weekly service offers visa-free access for Kuwaiti nationals and GCC residents.

Travelers can book their flights through the Jazeera Airways website [jazeeraairways.com](http://jazeeraairways.com), app or call center - 177.

Continued from Page 1

## Nations are led

What matters most is that these measures are used for the nation’s benefit by officials who prioritize the country’s interests above all else. They must be prepared to admit and correct their mistakes, especially under the watchful eye of a vigilant leader who closely follows their performance. They are bound by the constitutional oath they have taken, which has great weight and responsibility.

## Documentary exhibit

the United Kingdom are not only political; but also extend to social, economic and cultural dimensions.”

She revealed that “the British Council, in its early days, enjoyed widespread interest among Kuwaitis keen on learning English, at a time Kuwaitis were fluent in multiple languages due to their travels and openness to the world.” She confirmed that “the exhibition reflects this passion through photographs and documents chronicling historic visits by members of the British royal family, such as Prince Charles when he was Crown Prince, and Princess Anne.”

Meanwhile, Al-Azmi emphasized that the exhibition is in line with the commitment of the library to document historical milestones that reflect the depth of cultural relations between Kuwait and friendly countries.

Al-Azmi stressed that “celebrating the 70th anniversary of the British Council is a platinum occasion that is part of the strategy of the library to enrich its archive of historical documents and photographs. Culture, art and literature are bridges that strengthen the presence of Kuwait on the Arab cultural map. We appreciate the role of the British Council in this context for more than seven decades.”

Through the exhibition, Dashti showcased his personal collection of original photographs and artifacts documenting the

British Council’s activities since the 1950s; including educational materials, books and study aids that were distributed to council members to facilitate learning English. He highlighted the vital role of the council in supporting reading, traditional architecture and the arts, which contributed to strengthening ties between the two friendly peoples.

## Iraq steps back

The federal court annulled the treaty law on September 4, 2023 deeming it unconstitutional and contradicts provision 61 of the constitution that stipulates that international treaties and agreements are approved by two thirds of the parliament’s members -- This had not been attained with respect of Khor Abdullah law.

The court had several times annulled the two leaders’ appeals and it was expected to look into them by July 30 -- however the two have decided to withdraw them.

A few days ago, the head of the court Judge Jassem Al-Omairi resigned for health reasons and justice Munther Ibrahim was named as the new chief judge of the tribunal.

## Q8 boosts

was held in attendance of various top officials, including Minister of Economy, SMEs, Energy and Tourism, Lex Delles, trade partners, company management and Kuwaiti Ambassador to Belgium and Luxembourg, Nawaf Al-Enezi.

Kuwait Petroleum International was established in 1983 as a subsidiary to Kuwait Petroleum Corporation. It manages a wide network of more than 4,800 fuel station and road services in Europe.

Q8 also supplies more than 82 airports with jet fuel, in addition to manufacturing one of the highest quality engine fuels globally.

## MoCI logs 891 June violations

KUWAIT CITY, July 8: The Commercial Inspection Department at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry recorded 891 violations from June 1-30, 2025, reports Al-Anba daily.

The daily obtained a copy of the ministry’s statistics; showing that inspectors carried out 757 inspection tours in markets, malls and the central vegetable market, in addition to addressing 31 complaints submitted by consumers.

The intensified oversight aimed to curb malpractices ranging from commercial fraud to violations affecting public safety and moral standards. The recorded violations included the sale of prohibited goods, such as items bearing Quranic verses inappropriately, materials that contravene public morals, and fireworks that are banned for safety reasons.

## Friendship reinforced in 2025 strategic talks

# Rt Hon David Lammy MP’s visit to Kuwait underscores deep ties, future partnership

The United Kingdom’s commitment to its longstanding friendship with the State of Kuwait was reaffirmed this week during an official visit by the UK Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development affairs the Rt Hon David Lammy MP, who was honoured to meet with senior Kuwaiti leadership for the 2025 UK-Kuwait Strategic Dialogue.

The UK Foreign Secretary was received by His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and Foreign Minister HE Abdullah Ali Al-Yahya. Discussions reflected the strength of the historic relationship between Kuwait and the United Kingdom that spans over 250 years and touched on a wide range of shared interests including regional affairs, defence cooperation, trade and investment, and international development partnerships.

As part of the visit, two MoUs were signed between the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office and Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development, on providing joint emergency humanitarian assistance to vulnerable populations affected by conflicts in Somalia and Sudan. Both parties will provide a total contribution of five million dollars to support ICRC’s humanitarian work in Somalia and a total of 10 million dollars to support UNICEF’s work in sustaining vital primary healthcare, nutrition and child protection services in Sudan. These agreements represent an important step in continuing to build the UK-Kuwait international development partnership following the success of the first joint project in September 2024, which provided aid to Gaza and Yemen.

The visit also included a meeting with H.E. the Minister of



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, receives UK Foreign Secretary.

Finance & Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investment, Noora Al-Fassam, where discussions focused on bilateral trade now totalling £6.1 billion per year and investment, advancements on UK-GCC Free Trade Agreement negotiations and UK’s interest in Kuwait’s Vision 2035.

During the visit, the Foreign Secretary visited the Commercial Bank of Kuwait to meet with Chairman Sheikh Ahmad Duaij Jaber Al-Sabah and one of several British Kuwaiti joint venture businesses contributing to Kuwait’s economic development – Kuwait British Renewables. The meeting underlined the UK’s ongoing commitment to supporting private sector collaboration, knowledge exchange and innovation between the two countries.

A special meeting was also held with young Kuwaiti diplomats and professionals at Saud Al-Nasser Al-Sabah Kuwait Diplomatic Institute hosted by Deputy Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. The Foreign Secretary commended

their passion, talent and global outlook, and welcomed their role in shaping the future of Kuwait-UK relations.

**The UK Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development affairs Rt Hon David Lammy MP, commented on the bilateral relationship stating:**

“Kuwait and the United Kingdom have an enduring, close, deep friendship bounded by people-to-people and strong cultural links, a strong defence and security partnership, we’ve been trading for over 250 years and out first bilateral relations go back to 1899 of course supplemented by the relationship between our two royal families. I am in Kuwait to conduct a strategic dialogue, an important strategic dialogue that sets up the next era of our relations.

There’s more we can do on trade, and business, and investment, there’s more that we can do on security and defence at this challenging time for global security and peace particularly here in the Middle East.”

**Reflecting on the visit, Brit-**

ish Ambassador Belinda Lewis, stated:

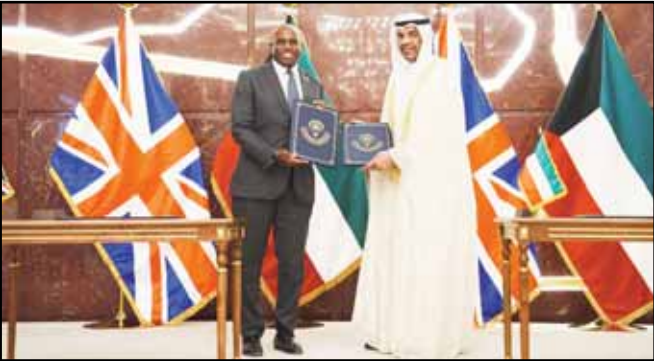
“This visit marks another chapter in over 125 years of close friendship between Kuwait and the United Kingdom. It comes at a time of deepening cooperation across numerous sectors including trade, humanitarian development and cultural exchange. The British Embassy in Kuwait looks forward to building on the momentum of this important visit and continuing to work in partnership with Kuwaiti institutions for the benefit of both our peoples.”

**Head of ICRC GCC Regional Delegation, Mamadou Sow stated:**

“This joint commitment by the Kuwait Fund and the UK’s Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office sends a strong signal of solidarity with the people of Somalia. With their support, we’re able to deliver essential health and water services in areas where needs are urgent and often invisible. It’s a testament to the power of principled humanitarian action and to the leadership of Kuwait and the UK in placing humanity at the heart of international cooperation.”

**UNICEF Gulf Area Office Representative, Eltayeb Adam noted:**

“This generous joint contribution from the UK Foreign Commonwealth & Development Office and the Kuwait Fund comes at a critical time for children in Sudan. It is more than financial support; it is a lifeline. This partnership shows what’s possible when long-standing partners unite with a shared purpose: to protect children’s rights, restore essential services, and bring hope to those affected by crisis. UNICEF deeply values this growing humanitarian collaboration, which is helping build a more resilient future for Sudan’s most vulnerable children.”



UK Foreign Secretary with Foreign Minister HE Abdullah Ali Al-Yahya.



UK Foreign Secretary with the Minister of Finance Noora Al-Fassam.

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**Debt List Announcement**  
**Sunny Side Up Restaurant Company**

In execution of the decision issued by His Excellency, the bankruptcy judge, in application No. 2/2024 for restructuring, and in accordance with the provisions of Article (110) of the Bankruptcy Law, Mr. Sabah Al-Jalawi (in his capacity as the Restructuring Trustee) announces the following :

*First: Accepted Debts List and Details, The details of the accepted debts are as follows:*

Creditor Name	Amount Due	Type of Debt
Al-Sayer Facilitation Company	333,271.00	Ordinary Debt
The National Bank of Kuwait	155,925.00	Ordinary Debt
Baytna Real Estate Company	18,242.77	Ordinary Debt
Commercial Real Estate Company	11,912.00	Ordinary Debt
Al-Abduljaleel Travel Agency	7,253.00	Ordinary Debt
Eastern Construction Company for General Trading & Contracting	4,480.00	Ordinary Debt
Public Authority for Social Security	3,800.00	Ordinary Debt
Ayaan Car Rental Company	3,111.04	Ordinary Debt
Coca-Cola Commercial Beverages Company	2,488.32	Ordinary Debt
Al-Sabah Wedding & Travel Services	2,452.53	Ordinary Debt
Berlin Construction Company (Building & City Cleaning)	1,936.00	Ordinary Debt
Saber Mohamed Al-Shahat Mutawalli	1,875.31	Ordinary Debt

*Second: Excluded Debts List with Reasons for Exclusion, The details of the excluded debts are as follows:*

Creditor Name	Debt Amount	Reason for Exclusion
Al-Rai Real Estate Company	52,000.00	Personal Debt – Ongoing Legal Dispute
Farouk Abdullah Mohamed Al-Nouri	15,742.88	Personal Debt
Kuwait Finance House	1,300.00	Paid and Debt Settled
Amex Middle East Company	913.00	Personal Debt – Paid and Debt Settled
Gulf Bank	78,609.70	Personal Debt
Al-Mulla Car Rental & Vehicle Leasing	2,000.00	Personal Debt - Paid and Debt Settled

**This announcement is issued in compliance with the relevant bankruptcy law regulations**



What I saw in the park today looked like a city under siege: Bass

## Troops and federal agents briefly descend on LA’s park in immigrant neighborhood

LOS ANGELES, July 8, (AP): Federal officers and National Guard troops fanned out around a mostly empty Los Angeles park in a largely immigrant neighborhood on foot, horseback and military vehicles on Monday for about an hour before abruptly leaving, an operation that local officials said seemed designed to sow fear.

The Department of Homeland Security wouldn’t say whether anyone had been arrested during the brief operation at MacArthur Park. Federal officials did not respond to requests for comment about why the park was targeted or why the raid ended abruptly.

About 90 members of the California National Guard were present to protect immigration officers, defense officials said.

“What I saw in the park today looked like a city under siege, under armed occupation,” said Mayor Karen Bass, who showed up at the park alongside activists.

She said there were children attending a day camp in the park who were quickly ushered inside to avoid seeing the troops. Still, Bass said an 8-year-old boy told her that “he was fearful of ICE.”

The operation occurred at a park in a neighborhood with large Mexican, Central American and other immigrant populations and is lined by businesses with signs in Spanish and other languages that has been dubbed by local officials as the “Ellis Island of the West Coast.”

Sprawling MacArthur Park has a murky lake ringed by palm trees, an amphitheater that hosts summer concerts and sports fields where immigrant families line up to play soccer in the evenings and on weekends. A thoroughfare on the east side is often crammed with food stands selling tacos and other delicacies, along with vendors speaking multiple languages and hawking T-shirts, toys, knick-knacks and household items.

Among those who spoke with Bass were health care outreach workers who were working with homeless residents Monday when troops pointed guns at them and told them to get out of the park.

Photos show federal officers riding on horseback toward a mostly empty soccer field. Other heavily armed au-



Federal agents stage at MacArthur Park Monday on July 7, in Los Angeles. (AP)

thorities stood guard around the area alongside armored vehicles.

“The world needs to see the troop formation on horses walking through

the park, in search of what? In search of what? They’re walking through the area where the children play,” Bass said.

Eunisses Hernandez, a council member whose district includes MacArthur Park said “it was chosen as this administration’s latest target precisely because of who lives there and what it represents.”

The operation in the large park about 2 miles (3.2 km) west of downtown LA included 17 Humvees, four tactical vehicles, two ambulances and the armed soldiers, defense officials said. It came after President Donald Trump deployed thousands of Guard members and active duty Marines to the city last month following protests over previous immigration raids.

Trump has stepped up efforts to realize his campaign pledge of deporting millions of immigrants in the United States illegally and shown a willingness to use the nation’s military might in ways other U.S. presidents have typically avoided.

In response to questions about the operation in MacArthur Park, the De-

partment of Homeland Security said in an email that the agency would not comment on “ongoing enforcement operations.”

More than 4,000 California National Guard and hundreds of U.S. Marines have been deployed in Los Angeles since June - against the wishes of California Gov. Gavin Newsom. Last week, the military announced about 200 of those troops would be returned to their units to fight wildfires.

Newsom called the events at the park “a spectacle.”

Two defense officials told reporters that what happened at MacArthur Park on Monday was not a military operation but acknowledged that the size and scope of the Guard’s participation could make it look like one to the public. That is why the officials spoke on condition of anonymity to provide details about the raid that were not announced publicly. The primary role of the service members would be to protect the immigration enforcement officers in case a hostile crowd gathered, one of the officials said.

## Flooding from Chantal’s remnants forces dozens to flee homes in North Carolina

CHAPEL HILL, NC, July 8, (Agencies): Floodwaters from the remnants of Tropical Storm Chantal swept a woman in her car from a rural road and forced dozens of people to flee their homes, officials in North Carolina said Monday.

Parts of central North Carolina experienced hazardous conditions overnight including 3 to 8 inches (8 to 20 centimeters) of rain, according to North Carolina Emergency Management. Multiple water rescues were conducted in Alamance, Orange, Chatham and Durham counties overnight, and several areas have declared local states of emergency, officials said.

About 120 roads were closed Monday across the state, but several major roads had reopened, including parts of Interstate 40 and 85 in Alamance County, according to Gov. Josh Stein’s office.

An 83-year-old woman from Pittsboro was killed when her car was swept off a rural Chatham County road by floodwaters Sunday night, according to the North Carolina State Highway Patrol. Responding troopers found the submerged vehicle about 100 feet (31 meters) from the road, and the woman was found dead inside, officials said.

The Chapel Hill Fire Department and neighboring agencies completed more than 50 water rescues, many of them in areas where floodwaters entered or threatened to enter apartments, officials said. More than 60



Dozens of cars were towed from a parking lot at University Place shopping center after they were flooded out during tropical storm Chantal on July 7, in Chapel Hill, NC. (AP)

people were displaced. After helping with rescues in Chapel Hill, the Durham Fire Department said in a social media post that its crews performed more than 80 more rescues in the Old Farm area.

**Also:**

**HOUSTON:** US Democrats are pushing for an investigation into the staff cuts to the National Weather Service (NWS) as the death toll from flash flooding in central Texas has reached 104.

US Senate Democratic Leader



Britain’s King Charles III, Queen Camilla, (center left), French President Emmanuel Macron, (center right), and his wife Brigitte Macron attend a welcome ceremony, in Windsor, England on July 8, on the first day of a three-day state visit to Britain. (AP)

### Conservative politician Tebbit dies

## UK royals welcome Macron for state visit

LONDON, July 8, (AP): French President Emmanuel Macron arrived in Britain on Tuesday for a state visit mixing royal pageantry with thorny political talks about stopping migrants from crossing the English Channel in small boats.

Macron and Prime Minister Keir Starmer will also try to advance plans for a post-ceasefire security force for Ukraine, despite apparent US indifference to the idea and Russia’s refusal to halt the onslaught on its neighbor.

Macron’s three-day visit, at the invitation of King Charles III, is the first state visit to the U.K. by a European Union head of state since Brexit, and a symbol of the British government’s desire to reset relations with the bloc that the UK acrimoniously left in 2020.

Macron said the visit was an “important moment for our two nations.”

“The United Kingdom is a strategic partner, an ally, a friend,” Macron wrote on X, in a marked change of tone from the years of wrangling over Brexit. “Our bond is longstanding, forged by history and strengthened by trust.”

The president and his wife, Brigitte Macron, were greeted on a red carpet laid over the tarmac at London’s RAF Northolt air base by Prince William and his wife Catherine, who was wearing a dress by French design house Christian Dior.

They were met in Windsor, west of London, by King Charles and Queen Camilla. A military band played the French and British national anthems as all four set out for the royal residence of Windsor Castle in horse-drawn carriages, through streets bedecked in Union Jacks and French tricolor flags.

Later the king and queen will host a state banquet for their guests. The British royals made a state visit to France in September 2023.

The monarch is expected to steer clear of politics, but Charles will make a broad appeal to international cooperation at the banquet, saying that Britain and France “face a multitude of complex threats” that “know no borders” - and that “no fortress can protect us against them.”

Macron also will address both houses of Britain’s Parliament in the building’s fabulously ornate Royal Gallery before sitting down for talks with Starmer on migration, defense and investment.

At a UK-France summit on Thursday, senior government officials from the two countries will discuss small-boat crossings, a thorny issue for successive governments on both sides of the English Channel.

Britain receives fewer asylum-seekers than Mediterranean European countries, but thousands of migrants each year use northern France as a

launching point to reach the U.K., either by stowing away in trucks or - after a clampdown on that route - in small boats across one of the world’s busiest shipping lanes.

The UK has struck a series of deals with France over the years to increase patrols of beaches and share intelligence in an attempt to disrupt the smuggling gangs.

**Also:**

**LONDON:** Conservative politician **Norman Tebbit**, a key ally of Prime Minister **Margaret Thatcher** in her free-market transformation of Britain, has died at the age of 94, his family said Tuesday.

Tebbit’s son **William** said he died peacefully at home late Monday. No cause was given.

Tebbit was known for his role tackling the power of Britain’s trade unions during the 1980s, and for his socially conservative and free-market views.

He was famed for suggesting the unemployed should get on their bikes to look for work, and for what became known as Tebbit’s “cricket test” - his 1990 assertion that immigrants could not truly be **British** until they cheered for **England** at cricket, rather than **India, Pakistan or the West Indies**.

Current Conservative Party leader **Kemi Badenoch** said Tebbit was “an icon in British politics.”

## Biden’s former doctor asks to delay testimony to House panel

WASHINGTON, July 8, (AP): Former US president Joe Biden’s physician has asked to delay his testimony before the House oversight committee this week, citing the need for an agreement that will respect doctor-patient confidentiality rules as part of the investigation into Biden’s health in office.

Dr. Kevin O’Connor, who served as Biden’s physician at the White House, requested a delay until the end of July or early August “to reach an accommodation that will protect the very substantial privilege and confidentiality interests of Dr. O’Connor and former President Biden,” according to a letter from his lawyer sent to Rep. James Comer of Kentucky on Saturday. The Associated Press obtained a copy of the letter.

A spokesperson for Oversight Republicans said the committee will follow the House’s deposition guidelines, which allow for witnesses to assert privilege on a question-by-question basis, with the committee chair ruling on each claim. But O’Connor is not allowed, in the committee’s view, to delay or decline a congressional subpoena due to concerns over questions about potentially privileged information.

The back-and-forth is part of a broader struggle over the scope of the House Republican inquiry into Biden’s age and mental fit-



US Rep Jamie Comer, looks on during a House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform hearing on June 12, at the US Capitol in Washington. (AP)

ness, with serious implications for both politics and policy. Republicans have also claimed that some policies carried out by the White House “autopen” may be invalid if it is proven that Biden was mentally incapacitated for some part of his term.

Biden has strongly denied claims that he was not in a right state of mind at any point while in office, calling the claims “ridiculous and false.”

The House Oversight Committee first requested O’Connor testify

before the committee last July, but the Biden White House blocked his testimony. Comer renewed his request in May and later subpoenaed the doctor in June.

David Schertler, the attorney for O’Connor, in the letter said the committee is refusing to “accommodate to any degree Dr. O’Connor’s objections” over protecting privilege. He said the committee’s decision was “unprecedented” and “alarming” and warned that it threatened broader principles around medical privacy.

## US must send more weapons to Ukraine: Trump

WASHINGTON, July 8, (AP): US President Donald Trump said Monday the US will have to send more weapons to Ukraine, just days after ordering a pause in critical weapons deliveries to Kyiv.

The comments by Trump appeared to be an abrupt change in posture after the Pentagon announced last week that it would hold back delivering to Ukraine some air defense missiles, precision-guided artillery and other weapons because of what US officials said were concerns that stockpiles have declined too much.

“We have to,” Trump said. “They have to be able to defend themselves. They’re getting hit very hard now. We’re going to send some more weapons - defensive weapons primarily.”

The pause had come at a difficult moment for Ukraine, which has faced increasing - and more complex - air barrages from Russia during the more than three-year-long war. Russian attacks on Ukraine killed at least 11 civilians and injured more than 80 others, including seven children, officials said Monday.

The move last week to abruptly pause shipments of Patriot missiles, precision-guided GMLRS, Hellfire



US President Donald Trump, (left), speaks with reporters as Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick listens before boarding Air Force One at Morristown Municipal Airport in Morristown, NJ on July 6, en route to Washington. (AP)

missiles and Howitzer rounds and weaponry took Ukrainian officials and other allies by surprise.

The Pentagon affirmed late Monday that at Trump’s direction, it would resume weapons shipments to Ukraine “to ensure the Ukrainians can defend

themselves while we work to secure a lasting peace and ensure the killing stops.” Still, spokesman Sean Pennell added that its framework for Trump to evaluate military shipments worldwide continues as part of “America First” defense priorities.

## Storms and fires hit Balkan countries following period of extreme heat

BELGRADE, Serbia, July 8, (AP): A severe hail storm ripped trees and roofs in Croatia on Tuesday while hundreds of fires raged in neighboring Serbia following a period of extremely hot weather in parts of the Balkan region.

A brief but powerful storm hit Croatia’s Adriatic Sea port of Split during the morning on Tuesday. High winds and hail damaged the roof of the city’s soccer stadium and caused a ferry to slip its moorings at the port which then hit two other vessels, one of which sank.

At least three people were injured in the storm, and material damage across the city was huge. Photos carried by Croatian media showed downed trees and flooded streets.

The Index news portal said that offices and the pitch itself at Split’s Poljud stadium were damaged as well as the roof. The report quoted the Split meteorological service as saying that “such storms are usual after a long period of heat with extremely hot days.”

Previously, Croatia and the rest of the Balkans experienced a heat wave with temperatures reaching 40 degrees Celsius (104 Fahrenheit) and more. Meteorologists said the storms prefigured cooler days ahead with tempera-



A boat looks submerged in the harbor in Split, Croatia on July 8, following a powerful storm. (AP)

tures set to drop to around 20 degrees Celsius (68 Fahrenheit) in some areas.

The weather service in neighboring Slovenia said on Tuesday that snow fell at high altitudes in the Alps while the rest of the country has been pounded with heavy rain and hail.

In Serbia, firefighters battled more than 600 wild fires on Monday that injured six people. Serbia has been hit

by a severe drought this summer that has endangered crops and led to restrictions in supplies of drinking water throughout the country.

Serbian police late on Monday urged residents to be very cautious as dry and hot weather increases chances of wild fires. At least three municipalities in southern parts of the country declared emergency measures due to the fires.



# Monsoon floods sweep away 20 people and main bridge linking Nepal to China

KATHMANDU, Nepal, July 8, (Agencies): A mountain river flooded by monsoon rains swept away the main bridge connecting Nepal with China on Tuesday, leaving 20 people missing, Nepali authorities said.

Rescue efforts were underway and an army helicopter was able to lift people stranded by the flooding. Police said 95 rescuers were already at the area and more are expected to join in rescue efforts.

The flooding on the Bhotekoshi River destroyed the Friendship Bridge at Rasuwagadi, which is 120 kilometers (75 miles) north of the capital, Kathmandu. Several houses and trucks that were parked at the border for customs inspections also were swept away. Hundreds of electric vehicles imported from China had been parked at the border point.

The 18 missing are 12 Nepali citizens and six Chinese nationals, according to the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority.

The Chinese along with eight Nepalis were workers at a Chinese-assisted construction project on the Nepali side of the border, according to the Chinese Embassy in Nepal, quoted by state media.

The destruction of the bridge has halted all trade from China to Nepal through this route. The longer alternative is for goods to be shipped from China to India and then brought overland to Nepal.

Monsoon rains that begin in June and end in September often cause severe flooding in Nepal, disrupting infrastructure and endangering lives.

Inspector Krishna Dhital from Rasuwa district police told Xinhua earlier that the majority of the missing were working at a dry port close to the border.

A bridge at the Rasuwagadhi-Kerung border point was washed away, and several electric vehicles parked at the dry port were swept away, Dhital said.

Two bodies have been found in neighboring Dhading district, Subash Hamal, spokesperson for Dhading district police, told Xinhua.

Nepal suffers from floods, landslides and mudslides sparked by monsoon rains each year.

**Also:**

**KATHMANDU:** Fifteen children and 200 adults were killed in traffic accidents across Nepal between May 15 and June 14, the police said on Monday.

A total of 4,240 others were injured in 2,911 accidents involving 4,416 vehicles, with 580 of them in serious conditions, nepal Police said in a report.

Motorcycles were involved in most of the mishaps, followed by cars, noted the report.

“Overspeed, drunk driving and jaywalking are the major causes of accidents,” the report said, adding the police collected 94.13 million nepali rupees (689,519 U.S. dollars) in fines for violations of traffic rules during the period.



People watch the damage caused by flooding on the Bhotekoshi River 120 kilometers (75 miles) north of Kathmandu, Nepal on July 8. (AP)

Japanese Coast Guard ship arrives in Chennai, boosts maritime ties

## Japan Emperor Naruhito meets Mongolian president to boost ties

TAIPEI, Taiwan, July 8, (Agencies): Japan’s Emperor Naruhito met with Mongolia’s president Tuesday during a visit to the landlocked Asian nation that marks a step toward closer relations between the democracies in a region dominated by Russia and China.

Naruhito met with President Ukhnaa Khurelsukh following a welcoming ceremony in the capital Ulaanbaatar on the second day of a weeklong visit. Japan has made a priority of boosting trade with the sprawling nation of 3.5 million, whose resources of coal, copper and other minerals are largely exported to China.

In the afternoon, he plans to lay flowers at a cenotaph in honor of thousands of Japanese prisoners of World War II who were held under harsh conditions in the country. Naruhito’s visit marks the 80th anniversary of the end of the war.

Some historians say one of the first battles of the war was a clash in the summer of 1939 between invading Japanese troops and Soviet forces on the Mongolian frontier in which the Japanese were badly defeated.

In recent years, Naruhito has toured some of the places where the bloodiest battles and bombings of World War II occurred, including Iwo Jima, Okinawa and Hiroshima.

The emperor has said it’s part of his effort at atonement and remembrance of the tragedy of war fought in the name of his grandfather, Emperor Hirohito. While the vast majority of Japanese prisoners of war were taken to Siberia, around 12,000 to 14,000 ended up in Mongolia, which by war’s end was fighting alongside the Russians against Japan. For decades after the war, Mongolia was virtually a Soviet armed camp trained at China, with most of its people pursuing their traditional herding lifestyle.

Since throwing off Communist rule in 1989, Mongolia has built a resilient democracy, seeking to balance economic and political pressures from Beijing and Moscow with strong support from the U.S. and its allies in Asia, including Japan and South Korea.

**Also:**

**NEW DELHI:** Japan



Mongolia’s President Ukhnaa Khurelsukh, right, receives Japan’s Emperor Naruhito during a welcoming ceremony at the Sukhbaatar Square in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia on July 8. (AP)

## Indonesians wear masks as volcanic ash blankets villages near volcano

MAUMERE, Indonesia, July 8, (AP): Residents wore masks to protect themselves from thick volcanic ash that blanketed roads and green rice fields in villages in south-central Indonesia as rumbling Mount Lewotobi Laki Laki erupted Tuesday for a second straight day.

The eruption at dawn sent lava and clouds of ash up to 4 kilometers (2.4 miles) high. That followed an eruption around midday Monday that sent a column of volcanic materials up to 18 kilometers (11 miles) into the sky and an evening burst that spewed lava and send volcanic ash as high as 13 kilometers (8 miles) into the air.

Photos and videos circulating on social media showed terrified residents ran for their lives under the rain of ash and gravel and motorists struggled to drive motorbikes and cars in the reduced visibility as the ash clouds from Monday’s eruption expanded into a mushroom shape.

No casualties have been reported from the latest eruptions of the volcano that has been at the highest alert level since June 18 when its no-go zone was expanded to a 7-kilometer (4.3-mile) radius, said Abdul Muhari, the National Disaster Mitigation Agency spokesperson.

“People around the volcano have increasingly understood how to minimize the impact of disaster risks as eruptions



This photo provided by the Geological Agency of Indonesia’s Energy and Mineral Resources Ministry shows volcanic materials spewing from Mount Lewotobi Laki-Laki at East Flores regency in East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia, on July 7. (Xinhua)

## Mexico prez calls march against mass tourism ‘xenophobic’

MEXICO CITY, July 8, (AP): A fierce protest in Mexico City railing against gentrification and mass tourism was fueled by government failures and active promotion to attract digital nomads, according to experts, who said tension had been mounting for years.

The criticism comes after Mexican President **Claudia Sheinbaum** alleged that Friday’s protest was marked by xenophobia, reviving a debate over an influx of Americans in the city.

Many Mexicans say they’ve been priced out of their neighborhoods - in part because of a move made by Sheinbaum in 2022, when she was the Mexico City mayor and signed an agreement with Airbnb and UNESCO to boost tourism and attract digital nomads despite concern over the impact short-term rentals could have.

On Friday, that came to a head. A largely peaceful protest of hundreds of demonstrators marched through tourism centers of the city with signs reading “Gringo: Stop stealing our home” and “Housing regulations now!”

Near the end of the march, a group of protesters turned violent, breaking



Sheinbaum

the windows of storefronts and looting a number of businesses. In one case, a protester slammed a butter knife against the window of a restaurant where people were hiding, and another person painted “kill a gringo” on a nearby wall.

“The xenophobic displays seen at that protest have to be condemned. No one should be able to say ‘any nationality get out of our country’ even over a legitimate problem like gentrification,” Sheinbaum said Monday. “We’ve always been open, fraternal.”

The frustrations were built upon years of mass tourism and rising rent prices in large swathes of the city. The influx of foreigners began around 2020, when Americans flooded into the Mexico City to work remotely, dodge coronavirus restrictions and take advantage of cheaper living costs.

In the years since, choice neighborhoods like Roma and Condesa, lush central areas dotted with cafes and markets, have grown increasingly populated by foreign tourists and the remote workers known as digital nomads, and there are more temporary housing units rented through companies like Airbnb that cater to tourists.

As they have, rent and living prices have soared and English has been increasingly common on the streets of those areas. Some groups have described the phenomenon as a sort of “neo-colonialism.”

## Besigye launches new political party

KAMPALA, Uganda, July 8, (AP): The party of opposition figure **Kizza Besigye** was launched in the Ugandan capital, Kampala, on Tuesday, with its jailed leader behind bars for alleged treason.

Supporters at the event carried a framed portrait of Besigye, who was expected to address the launch of his People’s Front for Freedom, either by video conference or through a written message.

Besigye, a four-time presidential candidate, has been jailed since November on charges he plotted to overthrow the government of President Yoweri Museveni.

Prosecutors cite treason, a crime that carries the death penalty in the east African country. They say Besigye solicited military support overseas to destabilize national security. Besigye’s attorneys and followers say the charges are politically motivated, calculated to remove him from political contestation over Uganda’s future after Museveni, who is 80.



Besigye

## Colombia’s Petro backtracks on accusations against US officials in letter to Trump

BOGOTA, Colombia, July 8, (AP): Colombian President Gustavo Petro attempted to ease tensions with the United States in June by sending a letter to President Donald Trump saying he did not intend to accuse U.S. officials of trying to overthrow his government.

The confidential letter, dated June 23, was leaked to Colombian media outlets on Monday. Relations between the two countries are at their worst since the 1990s, when the U.S. stripped a Colombian president of his visa following allegations that his campaign was financed by drug traffickers.

In the June 23 letter, Petro appears to backtrack from comments made during a speech on June 11, where he accused Secretary of State Marco Rubio of leading a plot to overthrow his government. Petro had said in the speech that “a neighboring President” had told him that Rubio was leading a plot against him.

“I would like to clarify that any expression of mine, which may have been interpreted as a direct accusation about participation in a coup attempt in Colombia had no in intention of signaling anyone personally or questioning the role of the United States, without any proof,” Petro writes in the letter. He also



Colombia’s President Gustavo Petro raises a fist before signing a labor reform bill into law in Bogota, Colombia on June 25. (AP)

suggests that both Presidents should lead a U.S. - Latin America summit.

**Also:**

**BOGOTA, Colombia:** Former Colombian president **Alvaro Uribe** began his closing statement Monday in a high profile trial in which he is charged with bribery and witness tampering that could lead to a 12-year prison sentence.

Uribe was Colombia’s president

from 2002 to 2010 and is still one of the nation’s most influential politicians. He is accused of working with a lawyer to bribe and intimidate former members of paramilitary groups to change the statements they provided to left-wing Sen. Ivan Cepeda. Cepeda had accused the former president of forming a paramilitary group in the early 1990s and was leading an investigation. Uribe has long denied any ties to illegal armed groups.



An inflatable with text that reads in Portuguese, ‘Supreme Court tyrant,’ in reference to Supreme Court Justice Alexandre de Moraes, passes through a demonstration demanding amnesty for those arrested for 2023’s alleged coup attempt, in Sao Paulo on April 6. (AP)

## Trump accuses Brazilian authorities of ‘witch hunt’ against ex-prez Bolsonaro

SAO PAULO, July 8, (AP): US President Donald Trump on Monday criticized Brazilian authorities over what he called “a witch hunt” against former president Jair Bolsonaro and said he will be “closely monitoring” his trial.

The South American far-right leader, who governed between 2019 and 2022, is standing trial before the country’s Supreme Court for his role in an alleged coup attempt in January 2023. He is already ineligible for next year’s vote. The former president has repeatedly denied the allegations and said he is the target of political persecution.

In his first such comment since Bolsonaro’s trial began, Trump said in a social media post that Brazil “is doing

a terrible thing in their treatment” of his ally. He added that Bolsonaro “is not guilty of anything, except for having fought for the people,” and compared the Brazilian’s situation to his own.

“This happened to me, times 10,” the US president said. “I will be closely monitoring the witch hunt of Jair Bolsonaro, his family, and thousands of his supporters. Leave Bolsonaro alone!”

Bolsonaro responded by saying on social media that Trump’s “fight for peace, justice and liberty echoes worldwide,” and he thanked the US leader for “giving us a role model for faith and resilience.”

Bolsonaro has been declared ineligible to run for office until 2030 by Brazil’s electoral court for abuse of power during the 2022 election, when he narrowly lost to President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva.

Bolsonaro’s son Eduardo relocated to the US in March, and has said he would work to push for sanctions against Supreme Court Justice Alexandre de Moraes, who is leading several investigations into his father’s actions.

In May, Moraes ordered the opening of an investigation into Eduardo Bolsonaro following a request from the Prosecutor General’s Office, citing the possible crimes of obstruction of investigation and attempted violent abolition of the democratic rule of law in his push for sanctions.

### Subcontinent

**3 dead as train hits van in India:** At least three children were killed and six others injured after a passenger train hit a school van attempting to cross a manned level crossing in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu, police said.

The accident took place at Semmankuppam of Cuddalore district, about 204 km south of Chennai, the capital city of Tamil Nadu.

According to officials, the school van was badly mangled in the accident.

Reports said a bystander, identified as a 55-year-old man, was also injured at the spot after coming into contact with an electrical cable that snapped during the crash.

Preliminary investigations carried out by the police revealed that the van driver insisted on allowing his vehicle to cross the gate. (Xinhua)

**‘5 burnt alive in eastern India:** Five persons of a family were burnt alive in a village in India’s eastern state of Bihar on Monday over the doubt that the deceased were involved in witchcraft, or black magic, said the local police.

The incident was reported from Bihar’s Purnea district.

The local police recovered the dead bodies and detained at least three persons allegedly involved in the killings. It was believed that most residents of the village were involved, either directly or indirectly, in the gory crime which sent shock waves across the state. (Xinhua)

**28,000 vacancies in Sri Lanka police:** Sri Lanka’s police currently faces a shortage of 28,000 officers and recruitment is underway, said a minister on Tuesday.

Minister of Public Security and Parliamentary Affairs Ananda Wijepala told parliament that the government has already issued an official gazette notification to recruit 5000 policemen.

He added that 5,000 lower-ranking officers will also be promoted in the near future. (Xinhua)



Kuwait oil prices down 9 cents to USD 69.98 pb

KUWAIT CITY, July 8, (KUNA): The price of Kuwait oil went down 9 cents to USD 69.98 per barrel on Tuesday as opposed to USD 70.07 pb last Friday, as Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) stated on Tuesday.

The prices of Brent Crude went up USD 1.28 to reach USD 69.58 pb, and the prices of West Texas Intermediate went down 93 cents to reach USD 67.93 pb.

Business

Boursa ends flat with slight gains

KUWAIT CITY, July 8, (KUNA): Boursa Kuwait closed Tuesday's session with a slight uptick in its general index, which gained 7.32 points, or 0.09 percent, ending at 8,496.05. Trading remained active, as investors exchanged nearly 660 million shares in more than 31,000 transactions, with total turnover reaching 123.4 million Kuwaiti dinars (about 404.1 million US dollars).

The market's performance was mixed across its main indices. The main market index declined by 37.17 points, or 0.51 percent, to 7,310.96. This segment saw 401.1 million shares traded through over 20,000 transactions, generating 58.4 million dinars (approximately 191.2 million dollars) in value.

In contrast, the Premier Market Index advanced by 18.79 points, or 0.20 percent, closing at 9,211.57. Investors in this segment traded 258.8 million shares in more than 11,000 deals, with a turnover of 65 million dinars (about 212.8 million dollars).

KIB employees come together to support annual blood drive in partnership with Kuwait Central Blood Bank

KUWAIT CITY, July 8: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) concluded its annual blood donation campaign, launched in partnership with the Kuwait Central Blood Bank. Held under the meaningful slogan "Every Donation Saves Lives," the campaign was hosted at the Bank's headquarters and drew wide participation from employees who volunteered to donate blood in support of national healthcare efforts and humanitarian causes. This campaign aligns with KIB's long-standing commitment to corporate social responsibility and its integrated Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) framework.

Emphasizing the significance

of the campaign, Abdullah Al Khamees, Assistant Manager-Marketing Department and Corporate Communications Unit at KIB, said: "At KIB, we believe that the true strength of a corporate institution lies in its ability to give back to the community. Our commitment to the annual blood donation campaign is a reflection of this belief, and we are proud of the strong participation and dedicated support of our employees, driven by purpose and compassion. Their contribution goes far beyond the act of donating blood; it's an affirmation of our collective responsibility to support those in urgent medical need."



KIB's Abdullah Al Khamees

He added: "The campaign also seeks to assist the Central Blood

Bank in carrying out its essential mission of maintaining adequate blood reserves to meet the continuous demands of hospitals and healthcare facilities. Moreover, donating blood promotes better blood circulation and can help reduce the risk of certain health conditions. We view it as a key step toward encouraging a healthier lifestyle and enhancing the overall well-being of participants."

Al Khamees highlighted that "KIB deeply values its partnership with the Kuwait Central Blood Bank, whose dedication have helped make this campaign impactful year after year. As we look ahead, we remain committed

to embedding sustainability and social purpose into everything we do, from banking operations to various community outreach activations."

It is worth noting that KIB remains dedicated to launching and supporting impactful community initiatives that address the needs of society. In line with this commitment, the Bank continues to play an active role in promoting health awareness, well-being, and humanitarian values. Through these efforts, KIB reaffirms its pledge to make a positive and lasting impact on the lives of individuals and the wider community as a true 'Bank for Life'.

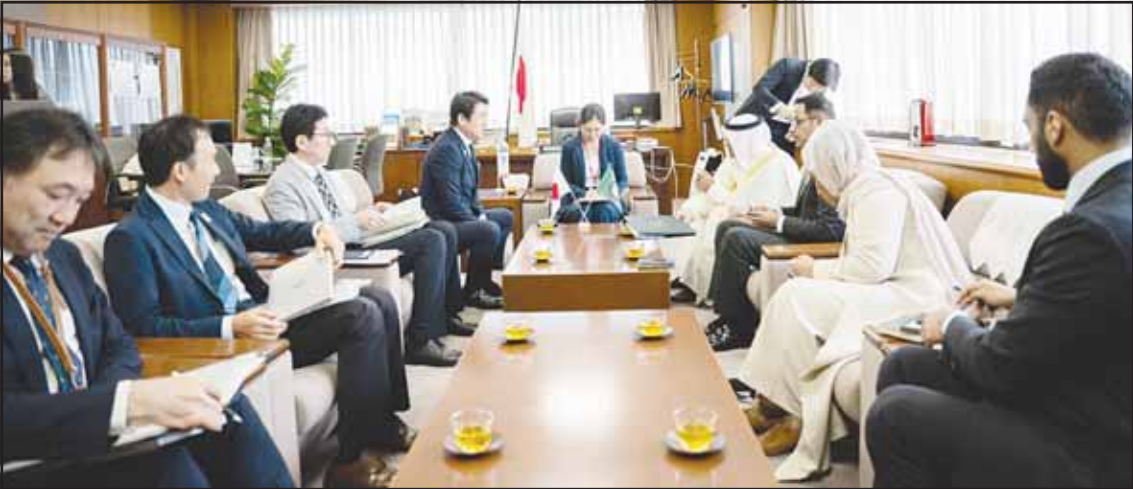


Photo during second round of negotiations on the GCC-Japan Free Trade Agreement.

FTA progress tops GCC-Japan agenda

Deal to unlock new trade opportunities

TOKYO, July 8, (KUNA): Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Jassem Al-Budaiwi, discussed with Japanese Vice Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry, Kato Akiyoshi the latest developments in the second round of negotiations on the GCC-Japan Free Trade Agreement.

The meeting was held on Monday within the framework of Al-Budaiwi's official visit to Japan.

During the meeting, they reviewed a number of topics related to investment and trade, as well as the latest developments concerning the second round of the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations, along with ways to advance them to enhance the economic partnership and serve mutual interests.

The two sides affirmed that the Free Trade Agreement between the GCC and Japan will represent a strategic step that will contribute to opening up broader horizons for trade exchange.

It will also strengthen economic ties, and consolidate joint cooperation on a firm and exceptional basis, thereby promoting mutual interests and serving both sides' aspirations for a sustainable economic partnership.



Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council Jassem Al-Budaiwi with Kato Akiyoshi, Japanese Vice Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry.

The Secretary-General reviewed a number of economic indicators and statistics from the GCC countries, noting that their outstanding economic performance, sustained growth and development across various sectors have contributed to strengthening their standing regionally and internationally, making them a focus of interest for many countries seeking to strengthen their economic and trade relations with them.



Kuwait Finance House employees in Türkiye.



Ten employees serve in Turkey during summer

KFH launches its annual initiative to enhance customer experience

KUWAIT CITY, July 8: In a move that highlights its leadership in offering an exceptional banking experience, Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has deployed a team of employees to Turkey to assist customers and facilitate their banking transactions during the summer holiday.

The initiative, which runs from the beginning of July until early September, aims to enhance direct engagement with customers, especially in light of the increasing number of travelers staying in Turkey during the summer, whether for tourism or to oversee investments and real estate.

A team of 10 employees has commenced their work across 10 branches of KFH-Turkey located in 6 key areas: Istanbul, Bursa, Izmit, Sapanca, Kusadasi and Trabzon. The deployed staff have undergone extensive training which encompassed understanding key services offered by KFH-Turkey and acquiring the skills and knowledge needed to provide the best customer service with the



Nehal Al-Musallam

highest level of efficiency.

Commenting on this initiative, KFH Deputy General Manager Products, Nehal Al-Musallam, stated that it reflects KFH's commitment to maintaining a strong presence alongside its customers, reaffirming its role at key customer touch points.

She explained that the summer initiative is being carried out through a well-structured plan, which includes the careful selection of qualified staff and their strategic deployment to ensure optimal coverage across all locations.

Al-Musallam added that the outcomes of this initiative and the positive customer engagement in previous years motivated KFH to enhance and expand its scope.

She pointed out that KFH has strengthened these efforts through the KFH-Turkey Service Center at the Khalidiya branch, which enables customers to carry out several KFH-Turkey transactions. These include account opening, app activation, and data updates. Additionally, the newly opened Group Service Center at the Mishref branch serves customers wishing to open accounts with KFH-Turkey and KFH-Egypt.

Al-Musallam further noted that customers can instantly transfer funds to their accounts in Turkey 24/7 without incurring any fees even during public holidays. "This complementary service enhances the flexibility of cross-border transactions and demonstrates the integration of KFH's digital and services and those offered at its branches," she remarked.

Sukuk issuance trends show resilience

By S&P Global Ratings

Lower local currency issuances in core Islamic finance countries caused global sukuk issuance to drop by almost 15% in the first half of 2025 to \$101.3 billion, from \$119.0 billion at midyear 2024. S&P Global Ratings expects local currency issuance to remain subdued mirroring the liquidity conditions in some core markets and lower financing needs due to good fiscal performance in other markets. In contrast, foreign currency issuance increased to \$41.4 billion from \$38.0 billion. Therefore, we continue to expect \$70 billion-\$80 billion in foreign currency denominated issuances in 2025.

Under our base-case scenario, we continue to exclude a protracted, full-scale regional war in the Middle East. Rather, we believe the conflict could result in a prolonged blockade of trade routes, maritime harassment, cyber or terrorist attacks, or international involvement, including the U.S. We assume oil prices will average \$60 for the remainder of 2025 and \$65 for 2026, and that the market's oversupply will continue to outweigh demand from 2025. We expect sukuk to contribute to the financing of core Islamic finance countries that rely heavily on oil revenue.

Further, the market will benefit from the Federal Reserve (the Fed) cutting its interest rates by 50 basis points in the last quarter of 2025.

Following the delay in implementing the Accounting and Auditing Organization for Islamic Financial Institutions' (AAOIFI's) Standard 62 and uncertainty about how it could affect the sukuk market once finalized, the need to issue prior to the adoption of the standard may decrease since issuers and investors no longer perceive the disruption as imminent.

**Foreign Currency Issuances Increase Despite International Market Volatility**

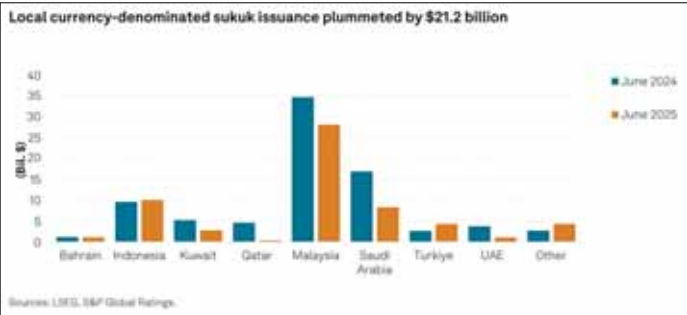
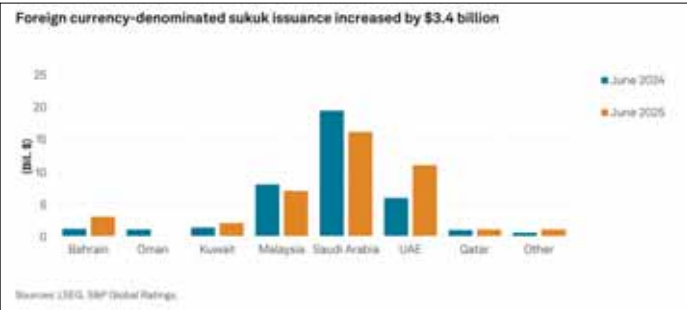
Foreign currency-denominated issuances increased by 9% in the first half of 2025. This was underpinned by strong issuances in the UAE, Bahrain, and Kuwait, while in Saudi Arabia we observed a small decline in issuance (see chart 1). This increase is despite the volatility in international capital markets that followed the announcement of tariffs by the U.S. government and slower-than-initially-expected monetary easing. Significant financing needs in core Islamic finance countries supported sukuk issuances, as well as lower oil prices and fiscal deficits.

In the first half of the year, issuers tapped into any window of opportunity to go to market. In Saudi Arabia, where issuers contributed 38.9% of market volume, we saw a lot of issuances from banks as they continue to support the financing of the government's Vision 2030 initiatives. Similarly, in the UAE, where we observed a significant increase in the volume of issuances, banks and corporates tapped the market to finance growth amid a still-supportive economy. In Malaysia, the International Islamic Liquidity Management Corp. continued to tap the market, providing the industry with much-needed liquidity management instruments and contributing to the bulk of the country's foreign currency issuances. We expect performance in the second half of the year to depend on the evolving geopolitical situation in the Middle East.

However, since we don't expect a full-scale regional war, we think the resilient foreign currency issuance trends observed in the first half will continue. It will also be supported by the Fed's expected reduction in interest rates. Therefore, we maintained our forecasts for foreign currency-denominated issuances to reach about \$70 billion-\$80 billion for the full year in 2025.

**Reopening Standard 62 Reignites Questions About Its Future Content**

In April 2025, the AAOIFI announced its Sharia board was in the process of amending the proposed Standard 62 following comments received from the industry. The AAOIFI did not specify which changes the board intended to introduce or the timeline for the project. The implementation process following the amendment is also uncertain. This means that it is now very difficult to determine the implications of adopting the new standard on market performance. The need to issue prior



served in the first half will continue. It will also be supported by the Fed's expected reduction in interest rates. Therefore, we maintained our forecasts for foreign currency-denominated issuances to reach about \$70 billion-\$80 billion for the full year in 2025.

Local currency-denominated issuances plummeted in the first half of 2025, reaching \$59.8 billion at midyear 2025 compared with \$81.0 billion a year earlier (see chart 2). This was neither directly related to U.S. tariffs and the ensuing volatility in global capital markets nor the sharp escalation in geopolitical risk in the Middle East. It was instead due to lower local currency issuances in some core Islamic finance countries, particularly Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). We expect this drop to continue, mirroring the liquidity conditions in some core markets and lower financing needs due to good fiscal performance in other markets. For example, we have observed a significant drop in local currency issuances in Saudi Arabia, where banks' liquidity is instead being channeled into financing Vision 2030. The drop was mainly underpinned by lower issuances from the government. We have also seen a lower volume of issuance in Malaysia, where the central bank not only reduced its issuances but also eased the reserve requirements to inject additional liquidity in the system. We think Bank Negara may continue to moderate its issuances as it shifts to a more accommodative stance, including ongoing support for liquidity conditions. The consolidation of the government's fiscal position may also reduce sukuk issuance in Malaysia. The Malaysian government has reduced its fiscal deficit meaningfully over the past three years, and borrowing needs are now likely to remain lower than during the 2021-2023 period, even as the pace of consolidation slows. We expect this trend to continue in the second half of the year, limiting the issuance volume of local currency sukuk compared with last year.

to the adoption of the standard may also abate since issuers and investors no longer perceive the disruption as imminent.

The key question remains whether Standard 62 will require asset ownership to effectively pass to investors, and if so, would this change sukuk holders' mechanisms of recourse in the event of default. We continue to believe that the appetite for sukuk with real transfer and full recourse to asset remains limited for now. One example is in Saudi Arabia, where the market for residential mortgage-backed sukuk is yet to emerge. We understand that investors continue to question banks' capacity to foreclose in a timely manner in the event of default, despite the regulatory and legal avenues in place to facilitate this. Another example is the recent Higher Sharia Authority ruling in the UAE, clarifying that it is not necessary to register the rights associated with certain assets in the names of the buyers or special purpose vehicles as long as registration is not legally required for the transfer of ownership. In our view, if sukuk holders are given the option to register the asset in their name, this could lead to a situation in which the sukuk might be considered a secured obligation, reducing the protection of other unsecured creditors. This could lower the creditworthiness of unsecured instruments and leave them at a disadvantage.

**Sustainable Sukuk's Solid Growth In Issuances**

The total volume of sustainable sukuk issuance increased by 27% in the first half of 2025, reaching \$9.3 billion compared with \$7.4 billion in 2024 (see chart 3). Banks, including the Islamic Development Bank (IDB), accounted for almost 50% of this performance, followed by some Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and Malaysian corporates. It is also worth noting that Saudi Arabian issuers accounted for more than 60% of sustainable sukuk issuances in the first half of the year. This trend can be explained by the alignment between Islamic finance and sustainability, the significant role of IDB in Islamic sustainable financing, along with the high financing needs of Saudi banks.

For banks, the use of Additional Tier 1 structures allows them to get the financing and at the same time support their capitalization. Given the strong performance in the first half of the year, we have slightly revised upward our forecasts of the volume of sustainable sukuk issuance for the full year to \$14 billion-\$16 billion. We expect issuance to increase further if we see an acceleration in the climate transition journey of GCC issuers, as well as regulators offering incentives to go down the sustainable route.



Such gatherings contribute to creating new offers that meet customer aspirations: Marafi

## ABK organizes exclusive event for customers at Mercedes-Benz showroom

KUWAIT CITY, July 8: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) recently held a special event for its affluent and private banking customers in collaboration with Al Mulla Automobiles the exclusive dealer for Mercedes-Benz in Kuwait at the company's showroom.

This initiative underscores the bank's commitment to delivering exceptional experiences and providing flexible financial solutions to meet customers needs. It aims to facilitate their acquisition of electric vehicles and keep pace with the latest innovations in this growing sector.

The event offered attendees the opportunity to explore prominent Mercedes-Benz electric models and their advanced features in design, technology, and performance. Exclusive offers and exceptional financing benefits were extended to ABK customers, including special discounts and flexible terms for car loans.

Commenting on the event, **Johair Marafi**, General Manager of Retail Banking at Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait, emphasized the importance of such initiatives in strengthening the bank's engagement with its customers and re-affirming its commitment to providing innovative financial solutions and competitive market advantages. She added "We are always keen to offer qualitative experiences to our clients that combine practical benefits with enjoyment, reflecting the bank's dedication to embracing sustainability and innovation concepts."

In addition, Al Mulla Automobiles' team provided a detailed explanation of the latest Mercedes-Benz electric models, showcasing their design features, smart technologies, and unique characteristics, which allowed attendees an exclusive and unique test-drive experience.

At the conclusion of the event, ABK staff highlighted their full readiness to provide necessary support to customers interested in taking advantage of the offered deals and to finalize all procedures related to obtaining suitable financing with ease and convenience.

Marafi affirmed that the bank will continue to organize exclusive events in the upcoming period, in line with its strategy of providing a renewed banking experience charac-



Knowledge session with the event participants, including bank employees and Mercedes-Benz officials.



Group photo during the event.



Learn about the brand's electric car features.



Explanation of Mercedes-Benz cars.



Special offers

terized by flexibility and based on a deep understanding of client needs, while continuing to offer innovative solutions that enhance the quality of its services.

Since its establishment in 1967, ABK has progressed to become one of the leading Kuwaiti banks in the region that offers a wide array of personal, corporate, and private banking products and services. ABK also provides a broad range of local, regional, and global investment solutions and services through its subsidiary, ABK Capital.

Across the region, the Bank offers individuals and corpo-

rates the convenience of comprehensive banking and financial services in the Egyptian market through ABK-Egypt's network of 46 branches.

This is in addition to ABK's three branches located in Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC) in the United Arab Emirates, servicing both Kuwaiti and Emirati individual and corporate clients.

ABK is a strong supporter of Central Bank of Kuwait and Kuwait Banking Association's 'Let's Be Aware' awareness campaign. Through its various initiatives, the Bank aims

to promote financial inclusion by educating Kuwaiti society about customer rights, responsibilities, and the different types of banking and special needs services. Additionally, ABK consistently provides strategic information on how to avoid banking and financial fraud, loan application requirements, digital services, and more.

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

### Pegasus-1 adds to region's export potential

## ExxonMobil and Qatar Energy find new natural gas deposit off Cyprus

NICOSIA, Cyprus, July 8, (AP): A consortium made up of ExxonMobil and partner Qatar Energy International has made a second natural gas discovery beneath the seabed south of Cyprus, the government said Monday, a find that bolsters the region's potential as an energy exporter.

New natural gas discoveries in the eastern Mediterranean could help Europe lessen its dependence on Russian hydrocarbons by diversifying its energy supply and help buttress a budding energy partnership between Cyprus, Greece and Israel, said John Stitilides, a senior fellow at the Foreign Policy Research Institute and geopolitical strategist at Trilogy Advisors in Washington.

"Washington and Brussels would be wise to support this hydrocarbon network to develop a greater measure of critical energy independence for Europe's hopeful re-industrialization," Stitilides said.

Cypriot government spokesman Konstantinos Letymbiotis said in a written statement that the ExxonMobil's vice president, John Ardill, briefed Cypriot President Nikos Christodoulides about the discovery at the Pegasus-1 well during a teleconference.

The well was discovered about 190 kilometers (118 miles) southwest of Cyprus at a depth of 1,921 meters (6,302 feet) of water. No estimates of the quantity of natural gas were given. The statement said more assessments will be conducted in the coming months to evaluate the results.

The ExxonMobil-Qatar Energy consortium holds exploration licenses for two areas - or blocks - inside Cyprus' exclusive economic zone. In 2019, the consortium discovered the Glaukos-1 well inside the same Block 10 where the Pegasus-1 well is located. Cypriot authorities say Glaukos-1 is estimated to contain 3.7 trillion cubic feet of gas.

Overall, Pegasus-1 is the sixth natural gas deposit to be discovered inside Cyprus' economic zone in the last 14



Cypriot President Nikos Christodoulides speaks with the media as he arrives for an EU summit at the European Council building in Brussels, Thursday, June 26, 2025. (AP)

years. Other deposits include the Zeus, Cronos and Calypso wells, which lie inside Block 6 that is operated by a consortium made up of Italy's Eni and Total of France. Cronos is estimated to hold 3.1 trillion cubic feet of gas and Zeus 2.5 trillion cubic feet. Calypso is still being evaluated.

The Eni-Total consortium holds exploration licenses for four blocks.

The earliest field to be discovered, Aphrodite, is estimated to hold 5.6 trillion cubic feet of gas. The field is inside Block 12, which is operated by a consortium made up of Chevron, NewMed Energy and Shell.

Agreements with Egypt foresee gas from the Cronos and Aphrodite fields to be sent to Egypt via a pipeline for either domestic use or to be processed at Egyptian facilities for export to Europe and other markets. Cyprus' Energy Minister George Panastasiou also said that ExxonMobil, Eni and Total could partner up to jointly develop their gas deposits found in close proximity to each other.

## Algeria's Sonatrach, Italy's Eni sign \$1.35 bln production sharing deal

ALGIERS, July 8, (KUNA): Algeria's state energy firm Sonatrach and Italy's Eni signed on Monday a USD 1.35 billion, 30-year production sharing deal for the Zemoul El Kbar site in the Berkine Basin.

A statement released by Sonatrach explained that the total investments allocated for exploration and development in this area are estimated at around USD 1.35 billion, including

USD 110 million dedicated to the exploration phase.

It further clarified that the work program under this agreement involves the use of innovative technologies, including the latest digital solutions for field development, as well as modern techniques to enhance production and recover reserves.

The expected yield is up to 415 million barrels of oil, including 9.3

billion cubic meters of natural gas.

Additionally, the two companies signed a gas marketing agreement to define terms related to the export of dry gas from the Zemoul El kbar, as well as, a framework agreement between Sonatrach and Eni Corporate University to develop the skills of Sonatrach employees and transfer knowledge through a training institution over a period of three years.

## Trump sets 25% tariffs on Japan, South Korea

New import taxes on 12 other nations

WASHINGTON, July 8, (AP): President Donald Trump on Monday set a 25% tax on goods imported from Japan and South Korea, as well as new tariff rates on a dozen other nations that would go into effect on Aug. 1.

Trump provided notice by posting letters on Truth Social that were addressed to the leaders of the various countries. The letters warned them to not retaliate by increasing their own import taxes, or else the Trump administration would further increase tariffs.

"If for any reason you decide to raise your Tariffs, then, whatever the number you choose to raise them by, will be added onto the 25% that we charge," Trump wrote in the letters to Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba and South Korean President Lee Jae Myung.

The letters were not the final word from Trump on tariffs, so much as another episode in a global economic drama in which he has placed himself at the center. His moves have raised fears that economic growth would slow to a trickle, if not make the U.S. and other nations more vulnerable to a recession. But Trump is confident that tariffs are necessary to bring back domestic manufacturing and fund the tax cuts he signed into law last Friday.

He mixed his sense of aggression with a willingness to still negotiate, signaling the likelihood that the drama and uncertainty would continue and that few things are ever final with Trump.

"It's all done," Trump told reporters Monday. "I told you we'll make some deals, but for the most part we're going to send a letter."

South Korea's Trade Ministry said early Tuesday that it will accelerate negotiations with the United States to achieve a mutually beneficial deal before the 25% tax on its exports goes into effect.

Imports from Myanmar and Laos would be taxed at 40%, Cambodia and Thailand at 36%, Serbia and Bangladesh at 35%, Indonesia at 32%, South Africa and Bosnia and Herzegovina at 30% and Kazakhstan, Malaysia and Tunisia at 25%.

Trump placed the word "only" before revealing the rate in his letters to the foreign leaders, implying that he was being generous with his tariffs. But the letters generally followed a standard format, so much so that the one to Bosnia and Herzegovina initially addressed its woman leader, Željka Cvijanović, as "Mr. President." Trump later posted a corrected letter.

White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said Trump, by setting the rates himself, was creating "tailor-made trade plans for each and every country on this planet and that's what this administration continues to be focused on."

Following a now well-worn pattern, Trump plans to continue sharing the letters sent to his counterparts on social media and then mailing them the documents, a stark departure from the



Trump

more formal practices of all his predecessors when negotiating trade agreements.

The letters are not agreed-to settlements but Trump's own choice on rates, a sign that the closed-door talks with foreign delegations failed to produce satisfactory results for either side.

Wendy Cutler, vice president of the Asia Society Policy Institute who formerly worked in the office of the U.S. Trade Representative, said the tariff hikes on Japan and South Korea were "unfortunate."

"Both have been close partners on economic security matters and have a lot to offer the United States on priority matters like shipbuilding, semiconductors, critical minerals and energy cooperation," Cutler said.

Trump still has outstanding differences on trade with the European Union and India, among other trading partners. Tougher talks with China are on a longer time horizon in which imports from that nation are being taxed at 55%.

The office of South African President Cyril Ramaphosa said in a statement that the tariff rates announced by Trump mischaracterized the trade relationship with the U.S., but it would "continue with its diplomatic efforts towards a more balanced and mutually beneficial trade relationship with the United States" after having proposed a trade framework on May 20.



Shoppers shop electric rice cookers imported from Japan and Korea at the H Mart in Niles, Ill., April 3, 2025. (AP)

### Partnership to increase digital resilience in Kuwait's business community

## Gulf Bank signs MoU with global cybersecurity leader CrowdStrike

KUWAIT CITY, July 8: As part of its ongoing commitment to enhancing cybersecurity in Kuwait, Gulf Bank has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with CrowdStrike, a global leader in cybersecurity. The partnership aims to boost cybersecurity awareness, increase digital resilience within the business community, and develop local Kuwaiti talent in this vital field.

The MoU was signed in Dubai in the presence of a Gulf Bank delegation including Mr. Sami Mahfouz, Deputy CEO; Mr. Abdulrahman Al-Saddah, Chief Risk Officer; and Ross McNaughton, Chief Information Security Officer at Gulf Bank.

Under this collaboration, the two parties will jointly implement educational initiatives, raising awareness among individuals and businesses, and advancing cybersecurity modernization throughout society.

The agreement also includes the launch of a new cybersecurity service



Gulf Bank signs a memorandum of understanding with CrowdStrike.

tailored for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), integrating advanced cybersecurity solutions into

Gulf Bank's offerings for this segment to help strengthen the business community's resilience against cyber



Abdulrahman Al-Saddah, Chief Risk Officer at Gulf Bank

threats.

This strategic initiative reflects the shared commitment of both organiza-

tions to develop Kuwait's cybersecurity capabilities and support national efforts to build a secure digital future.

Commenting on the partnership, Mr. Abdulrahman Al-Saddah, said: "With the rapid pace of digital transformation in Kuwait, it is essential that cybersecurity awareness becomes an integral part of protecting both individuals and businesses." He added, "Our partnership with CrowdStrike will help elevate awareness, nurture local talent, and equip SMEs with the necessary tools to counter increasing cyber threats, thereby supporting sustainability."

Mr. Rawad Sarieddine, Vice President of Sales for the Middle East, Turkey, and Africa at CrowdStrike, stated: "We are proud to partner with Gulf Bank in this important initiative to collaboratively build cybersecurity awareness and talent, enhancing long-term digital resilience in Kuwait. With the growing complexity of cyber threats and the rise of AI-powered attacks, it is critical that organizations have the knowledge and capabilities to effectively respond."



Trump’s SNAP changes rewrite America’s safety net

# Food aid rollback sparks fiscal fears



A shopper selects a carton of 18 Large Grade A eggs from a cooler in a Costco Warehouse in Cranberry, Pa., Tuesday, Jan. 28, 2025. (AP)

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

By Tracy Roof  
University of Richmond

‘And because states will soon have to take on more of the costs of the program, which totaled over \$100 billion in 2024, they may eventually further restrict who gets help due to their own budgetary constraints.’

The legislative package that US President Donald Trump signed into law on July 4, 2025, has several provisions that will shrink the safety net, including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, long known as food stamps. SNAP spending will decline by an estimated US\$186 billion through 2034 as a result of several changes Congress made to the program that today helps roughly 42 million people buy groceries - an almost 20% reduction.

In my research on the history of food stamps, I’ve found that the program was meant to be widely available to most low-income people. The SNAP changes break that tradition in two ways.

The Congressional Budget Office estimates that about 3 million people are likely to be dropped from the program and lose their benefits. This decline will occur in part because more people will face time limits if they don’t meet work

requirements. Even those who meet the requirements may lose benefits because of difficulty submitting the necessary documents.

And because states will soon have to take on more of the costs of the program, which totaled over \$100 billion in 2024, they may eventually further restrict who gets help due to their own budgetary constraints.

Inspired by the plight of unemployed coal miners whom John F. Kennedy met in Appalachia when he campaigned for the presidency in 1960, the early food stamps program was not limited to single parents with children, older people and people with disabilities, like many other safety net programs were at the time. It was supposed to help low-income people afford more and better food, regardless of their circumstances.

In response to national attention in the late 1960s to widespread hunger and malnutrition in other areas of the country, such as among tenant farmers in the rural South, a limited food stamps program was expanded. It reached every part of the country by 1974.

From the start, the states administered the program and covered some of its administrative costs and the federal government paid for the benefits in full.

This arrangement encouraged states to enroll everyone who needed help without fearing the budgetary consequences.

Who could qualify and how much help they could get were set by uniform national standards, so that even the residents of the poorest states would be able to afford a budget-conscious but nutritionally adequate diet.

The federal government’s responsibility for the cost of benefits also allowed spending to automatically grow during economic downturns, when more people need assistance. These federal dollars helped families, retailers and local economies weather tough times.

The changes to the SNAP program included in the legislative package that Congress approved by narrow margins and Trump signed into law, however, will make it harder for the program to serve its original goals.

Since the early 1970s, most so-called able-bodied adults who were not caring for a child or an adult with disabilities had to meet a work requirement to get food stamps. Welfare reform legislation in 1996 made that requirement stricter for such adults between the ages of 18 and 50 by imposing a three-month time limit if they didn’t log 20 hours or more of employment or another approved

activity, such as verified volunteering.

Budget legislation passed in 2023 expanded this rule to adults up to age 54. The 2025 law will further expand the time limit to adults up to age 64 and parents of children age 14 or over.

States can currently get permission from the federal government to waive work requirements in areas with insufficient jobs or unemployment above the national average. This flexibility to waive work requirements will now be significantly limited and available only where at least 1 in 10 workers are unemployed.

Concerned senators secured an exemption from the work requirements for most Native Americans and Native Alaskans, who are more likely to live in areas with limited job opportunities.

A 2023 budget deal exempted veterans, the homeless and young adults exiting the foster care system from work requirements because they can experience special challenges getting jobs. The 2025 law does not exempt them.

The new changes to SNAP policies will also deny benefits to many immigrants with authorization to be in the U.S., such as people granted political asylum or official refugee status. Immigrants without authorization to reside in the U.S. will continue to be ineligible

for SNAP benefits.

Critics of food stamps have long argued that states lack incentives to carefully administer the program because the federal government is on the hook for the cost of benefits.

In the 1970s, as the number of Americans on the food stamp rolls soared, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which oversees the program, developed a system for assessing if states were accurately determining whether applicants were eligible for benefits and how much they could get.

A state’s “payment error rate” estimates the share of benefits paid out that were more or less than an applicant was actually eligible for. The error rate was not then and is not today a measure of fraud. Typically, it just indicates the share of families who get a higher - or lower - amount of benefits than they are eligible for because of mistakes or confusion on the part of the applicant or the case worker who handles the application.

Congress tried to penalize states with error rates over 5% in the 1980s but ultimately suspended the effort under state pressure. After years of political wrangling, the USDA started to consistently enforce financial penalties on states with high error rates in the mid-1990s.

States responded by increasing their red tape. For example, they asked applicants to submit more documentation and made them go through more bureaucratic hoops, like having more frequent in-person interviews, to get - and continue receiving - SNAP benefits.

These demands hit low-wage workers hardest because their applications were more prone to mistakes. Low-income workers often don’t have consistent work hours and their pay can vary from week to week and month to month. The number of families getting benefits fell steeply.

The USDA tried to reverse this decline by offering states options to simplify the process for applying for and continuing to get SNAP benefits over the course of the presidencies of Bill Clinton, George W. Bush and Barack Obama. Enrollment grew steadily.

Since 2008, states with error rates over 6% have had to develop a detailed plan to lower them.

Despite this requirement, the national average error rate jumped from 7.4% before the pandemic, to a record high of 11.7% in 2023. Rates rose as states struggled with a surge of people applying for benefits, a shortage of staff in state welfare agencies and procedural changes.

Republican leaders in Congress have responded to that increase by calling for more accountability.

The big legislative package will increase states’ expenses in two ways.

It will reduce the federal government’s responsibility for half of the cost of administering the program to 25% beginning in the 2027 fiscal year.

And some states will have to pay a share of benefit costs for the first time in the program’s history, depending on their payment error rates. Beginning in the 2028 fiscal year, states with an error rate between 6-8% would be responsible for 5% of the cost of benefits. Those with an error rate between 8-10% would have to pay 10%, and states with an error rate over 10% would have to pay 15%. The federal government would continue to pay all benefits in states with error rates below 6%. (AP)

City eyes Vienna’s model to solve rent crisis

# Seattle tax fuels affordable housing push

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

By Susanne Schindler  
Harvard Kennedy School

‘The city has experienced record high rents and home prices over the past two decades, attributed in part to the high incomes and relatively low taxes paid by tech firms like Amazon.’

Seattle astounded housing advocates around the country in February 2025, when roughly two-thirds of voters approved a ballot initiative proposing a new 5% payroll tax on salaries in excess of US\$1 million.

The expected revenue - estimated to amount to \$52 million dollars annually - would go toward funding a public development authority named Seattle Social Housing, which would then build and maintain permanently affordable homes.

The city has experienced record high rents and home prices over the past two decades, attributed in part to the high incomes and relatively low taxes paid by tech firms like Amazon. Prior attempts to make these companies do their part to keep the city affordable have had mixed results.

So despite nationwide, bipartisan skepticism of government and tax increases, Seattle’s voters showed that in light of a severe affordability crisis, a new role for the public sector and a new, dedicated fiscal revenue stream for housing were not only necessary, but possible.

As a trained architect and urban historian, I study how capitalist societies have embraced - or rejected - housing that’s permanently shielded from market forces and what that means for architecture and urban design.

To me, Seattle’s social housing initiative shows that the country’s traditional, “either-or” housing model - of unregu-

lated, market-rate housing versus tightly regulated, income-restricted affordable housing - has reached its limits.

Social housing promises a different path forward.

After World War I, amid a similarly dire housing crisis, journalist Catherine Bauer traveled to Europe and learned about the continent’s social housing programs.

She publicized her findings in the 1934 book “Modern Housing,” in which she advocated for housing that would be permanently shielded from the private real estate market. High-quality design was central to her argument. (The book was reissued in 2020, reflecting a renewed hunger for her ideas.)

Early New Deal programs supported “limited-dividend,” or nonprofit, housing sponsored by civic organizations such as labor unions. The Carl Mackley Houses in Philadelphia exemplified this approach: The government provided low-interest loans to the American Federation of Full-Fashioned Hosiery Workers, which then constructed housing for its workers with rents set at affordable rates. The complex was built with community rooms and a swimming pool for its residents.

However, the 1937 U.S. Housing Act omitted this form of middle-income housing. Instead, the federal government chose to support public rental housing for low-income Americans and private homeownership, with little in between.

Historian Gail Radford has aptly termed this a “two-tiered system,” and it was problematic from the start.

Funding for public housing in the U.S. - as well as for its successor, private-sector-built affordable housing - has always been capped in ways that fall far short of demand, with access to the homes largely restricted to households with the lowest incomes. Private-sector-built affordable housing depends on dan-

gling tax credits for private investors, and rent restrictions can expire.

While the U.S. promoted this two-tiered system, cities like Vienna pursued a different path.

In Austria’s culturally vibrant capital, today half of all dwellings are permanently removed from the private market. Roughly 80% of households qualify to live in them. The buildings take a range of forms, are located in all neighborhoods, and are built and operated as rental or cooperative housing either by the city or by nonprofit developers.

Rents do not rise and fall according to household income, but are instead set to cover capital and operation expenses. These are kept low thanks to long-term, low-interest loans. These loans are funded through a nationwide 1% payroll tax, split evenly between employers and employees. Renters also make a down payment, priced in relation to the size and age of the apartment, which keeps monthly rents down. To guarantee access to low-cost land, the municipality has pursued an active land acquisition policy since the 1980s.

The inequities created by the two-tiered system - along with the absence of viable options for moderate- and middle-income households - are what social housing advocates in the U.S. are trying to address today.

In 2018, the think tank People’s Policy Project published what was likely the first 21st-century report advocating for social housing in the U.S., citing Vienna as a model.

Across the U.S., social housing is being used to describe a range of programs, from limited equity cooperatives and community land trusts to public housing.

They all share a few underlying principles, however.

First and foremost, social housing

calls for permanently shielding homes from the private real estate market, often referred to as “permanent affordability.” This usually means public investment in housing and public ownership of it.

Second, unlike the ways in which public housing has traditionally operated in the U.S., most social housing programs aim to serve households across a broader range of incomes. The goal is to create housing that is both financially sustainable and appealing to broad swaths of the electorate. Third, social housing aspires to give residents more control over the governance of their homes.

Social housing doesn’t all look the same. But thoughtful design is key to its success. It’s built to be owned and operated in the long-term, not for short-term financial gain. Construction quality matters, and developers realize it needs to be appealing to a range of tenants with different needs.

In recent years, there have been significant wins for the social housing movement at the state and local levels.

In 2023, Atlanta created a new quasi-public entity to co-develop mixed-income housing on city-owned land. In 2024, Rhode Island voters and the Massachusetts legislature funded pilot projects to test public investment in social housing. And 2025 has seen the passage of Chicago’s Green Social Housing ordinance.

Many of these programs were directly inspired by affordable housing initiatives in Montgomery County, Maryland.

Since 2021, the county’s housing authority has used a \$100 million housing fund to invest in new mixed-income developments. Through these investments, the county retains co-ownership and has been able to bring down the cost of development enough to offer 30% of homes at significantly below market rents, in perpetuity. If Vienna is the global paragon for social housing, Mont-

gomery County has become its domestic counterpart.

In Seattle, social housing will mean homes delivered and permanently owned by Seattle Social Housing, which is funded through the payroll tax on high incomes. The initiative envisions developments featuring a range of apartment sizes to meet the needs of different family sizes, built to high energy-efficiency standards. Homes will be available to households earning up to 120% of area median income, with residents paying no more than 30% of their income on rent. In Seattle, that means that a single-person household making up to \$120,000 will qualify.

Despite these successes, many Americans remain skeptical of social housing.

Sign up for a webinar on the topic, and you’ll hear participants question the term itself. Isn’t it far too “socialist” to be broadly adopted in the U.S.? And isn’t this just “old wine in new bottles”?

Join a housing task force, and established nonprofits will be the ones to push back, arguing that they already know how to build and manage housing, and that all they need is money.

Some housing activists also question whether using scarce public dollars to pay for mixed-income housing will yet again shortchange those who most need governmental assistance - namely, the poor. Others point to the need to provide more ways to build intergenerational wealth, especially for racial minorities, who have historically faced barriers to homeownership.

Urban planner Jonathan Tarleton has highlighted another important issue: the danger of social housing reverting over time to private ownership, as has been the case with some cooperatives in New York City. Tarleton stresses the need for “social maintenance” - the importance of telling and retelling the story of whom social housing is meant to serve. (AP)



## ‘A true powerhouse of a musician’

## Pearl Jam drummer Cameron leaving band after 27 years

LOS ANGELES, July 8, (AP): Pearl Jam drummer Matt Cameron said Monday that he’s leaving the band after nearly 30 years.

The 62-year-old Cameron announced his departure in a social media post.

“After 27 fantastic years, I have taken my final steps down the drum riser for the mighty Pearl Jam,” Cameron said. “Much love and respect to Jeff, Ed, Mike and Stone for inviting me into the band in 1998 and for giving me the opportunity of a lifetime, filled with friendships, artistry, challenges and laughter.”

“Matt Cameron has been a singular and true powerhouse of a musician and drummer. He has propelled the last 27 years of Pearl Jam live

shows and studio recordings. It was a deeply important chapter for our group and we wish him well always.” Pearl Jam members said in a statement posted to the band’s social media accounts.

## Replacement

They made no mention of a replacement.

Cameron, who played drums for Soundgarden for more than a decade before joining Pearl Jam, was not a founding member of the band and didn’t play drums for the early albums that made them rock superstars.

But he provided some much-needed stability at the drum kit after the band had gone through

four others since its inception. He first joined in 1998 as a temporary replacement for Jack Irons, playing on a long tour before making his studio debut with the group on 2000’s “Binaural.”

He just finished a yearlong tour with the band in support of its 12th studio album, “Dark Matter.”

Cameron was born and raised in San Diego before moving to Seattle shortly before its music scene became a global phenomenon. He played in proto-grunge band Skin Yard before joining Soundgarden. He did double duty with Pearl Jam and a reunited Soundgarden from 2010 to 2017.



Matt Cameron of Pearl Jam performs during BottleRock Napa Valley on Saturday, May 25, 2024, in Napa, Calif. (AP)

## Online post resurfaces

## Ortega exits ‘Love Island’ after racial slur backlash

LOS ANGELES, July 8, (AP): **Cierra Ortega**, a contestant of this summer’s “Love Island USA” left the villa just a week before the finale of the hit reality series is set to air on Peacock.

Her departure, announced Sunday, followed weeks of uproar from viewers after old posts from Ortega resurfaced that contained a racial slur against Asian people. The show’s narrator, Iain Stirling, announced Ortega had departed “due to a personal situation” early in Sunday’s episode.

Ortega becomes the second contestant this season to depart the show amid controversy due to past social media posts. Yulissa Escobar abruptly exited last month in the second episode after clips of her using racist language resurfaced online. Her departure was also not explained in the show.

A spokesperson for the show declined to comment Monday.

Ortega’s family posted to her Instagram story Sunday evening following the announcement of her departure, asking the public “for compassion. For patience. For basic human decency.

“While Cierra is not in the villa anymore, she is still away. She hasn’t had the chance to process any of this or speak for herself,” her family wrote. “But we know our daughter. We know her heart. And when she returns, we believe she’ll face this with honesty, growth, and grace.”

Her family said they, along with Ortega’s friends and online supporters, have received threats, attacks and cruel messages on social media, noting that “no one deserve that kind of hate, no matter what mistakes they’ve made.”

“Love Island USA” is an American spin-off of the original U.K. series and is airing its seventh season. The show airs daily except Wednesdays and brings young singles together in a remote villa in Fiji to explore connections with the ultimate goal of finding love.

Couples undergo challenges and are

encouraged test their romantic connections as new contestants are introduced. Islanders are routinely “dumped” from the villa throughout the series as stronger couples form. The winning couple receives \$100,000.

The show, which strips contestants of their phones or access to the outside world, has previously asked fans to avoid cyberbullying contestants. Host Ariana Madix called for fans to stop doxxing and harassing the show’s stars in a recent interview with The Associated Press.

Ortega entered the villa at the end of the first episode as a bombshell, one of the first in a steady stream of new contestants who come in after the show began, often expected to disrupt existing couples and create new relationship dynamics.

Ortega quickly coupled up with Nic Vansteenbergh, whom she remained with up until her departure. Her exit broke up one of the few consistent couples of the season. The couple had just announced a few episodes prior they were “closed off,” a popular “Love Island” phrase to indicate neither contestant was interested in exploring a connection with any other islander.

“Before Cierra had left, my mind was clear. I knew what the future would look like, and now, I’m lost,” Vansteenbergh said during Sunday’s episode.

Vansteenbergh stayed on the show as a single islander after Ortega left, and he ultimately re-coupled with fellow contestant Olandria Carthen before the end of the episode.

Belle-A Walker, a contestant who was dumped earlier this season, took to Instagram to express heartbreak over Ortega’s resurfaced posts. Walker, who is Asian American, said she is “deeply appreciative” of the show’s producers “for taking a stand and making it clear that racism of any kind is not tolerated.”

“Asian hate is oftentimes overlooked and dismissed. But being a first-generation American, I have personally witnessed and experienced how real and hurtful comments like these are,” Walker wrote on her Instagram story page. “It is my hope that this situation can help shed light on how big of an issue anti-Asian hate really is.”

## Animal trafficking charges

## ‘Tiger King’ twist finds ‘Doc’ Antle faces prison

LOS ANGELES, July 8, (AP): Five years after the true crime documentary “Tiger King” captivated a country shut down by COVID-19, the final legal troubles for one of its main characters will be resolved Tuesday in a courtroom in South Carolina.

## Bhagavan

“Doc” Antle faces up to 10 years in prison for trafficking in exotic animals and money laundering after pleading guilty in November 2023.

Exactly what punishment prosecutors are asking for and any arguments for leniency from Antle’s attorneys were kept from the public before Tuesday morning’s hearing in federal court in Charleston.

Three others who pleaded guilty in his investigation received either probation or a four-month prison sentence.

Antle’s sentence is the final true-life chapter of the Tiger King saga. The Netflix series debuted in March 2020 near the peak of COVID-19 restrictions.

The show centered on dealers and conservationists of big cats, focusing on disputes between Joe Exotic, a collector and private zookeeper from Oklahoma, and Carole Baskin, who runs Big Cat Rescue in Florida.

Exotic, whose real name is Joseph Maldonado-Passage, is serving a 21-year federal prison sentence for trying to hire two different men to kill Baskin.

Antle, who owns a private zoo called Myrtle Beach Safari, appeared in the first season of the documentary and was the star of the third season.

Antle’s zoo was known for charging hundreds or thousands of dollars to let people pet and hold baby animals like lions, tigers and monkeys that were so

young they were still being bottle-fed. Customers could have photos or videos made. Antle would sometimes ride into tours on an elephant.

Myrtle Beach Safari remains open by reservation only, according to its website. Antle has remained out on bail since his arrest in June 2022.

Antle’s federal charges were brought after the Tiger King series.

Prosecutors said he sold or bought cheetahs, lions, tigers and a chimpanzee without the proper paperwork. And they said in a separate scheme, Antle laundered more than \$500,000 that an informant told him was being used to get people into the U.S. illegally to work.

Antle was used to having large amounts of money he could move around quickly, investigators said.

The FBI was listening to Antle’s phone calls with the informant as he explained a baby chimpanzee could easily cost \$200,000. Private zookeepers can charge hundreds of dollars for photos with docile young primates or other animals, but the profit window is only open for a few years before the growing animals can no longer be safely handled.

“I had to get a monkey, but the people won’t take a check. They only take cash. So what do you do?” Antle said according to a transcript of the phone call in court papers.

Two of Antle’s employees have already been sentenced for their roles in his schemes.

Meredith Bybee was given a year of probation for selling a chimpanzee while Andrew “Omar” Sawyer, who prosecutors said helped Antle launder money, was given two years of probation.

Jason Clay, a Texas private zoo owner, pleaded guilty to illegally selling a primate and was sentenced to four months in prison, while charges were dropped against California ranch owner Charles Sammut.

## Film



Sara Sampaio arrives at the premiere of ‘Superman’ on Monday, July 7, at TCL Chinese Theatre in Los Angeles. (AP)

## A perfect summer read

## Family drama reigns in ‘Summer Storms’

NEW YORK, July 8, (AP): It’s one thing to look at someone like Jeff Bezos or Elon Musk and envy their wealth and success. It’s a totally different thing to be the child of a tech pioneer, with a reputation to uphold lest stock prices suffer - at least according to Sarah MacLean’s latest novel “These Summer Storms.”

Alice Storm’s world is immediately captivating. Her childhood feels completely alien; an upper-class New York City upbringing taking helicopters to Rhode Island to spend summers at Storm Manor under an oppressive father and stifled mother - whom my brain immediately cast as Jessica Walter a la “Archer” or “Arrested Development” - drink and tonic always in hand. But Alice hasn’t seen her family in five years, since she was excommunicated from the Storm empire. And while she’s enjoying the independence and accomplishment that comes from building a life for herself by herself, the death of tech mogul Franklin Storm, the patriarch, is enough to drive her back to the family’s secluded, stormy island one more time.

So if there’s a hookup with a



This cover image released by Ballantine shows ‘These Summer Storms’ by Sarah MacLean. (AP)

strange, handsome man on the way there, who cares? Alice is grieving. She can have this one thing and move on, right?

Wrong! MacLean wouldn’t dare let the romance end there. “These Summer Storms” may be a genre shift for the author, but it doesn’t mean she’s leaving romance com-

pletely behind. A steamy undercurrent of lust runs through a passionate enemies-to-lovers plot alongside the shifting sands of a shaken family in great need of some therapy, who find themselves thrust into an inheritance game Franklin manufactured before his death.

If Franklin’s widow and four kids want to see a penny of his enormous wealth, they’ll have to follow his rules, which range from saying nice things about him and not speaking during odd hours to revealing grave truths and upending years-long relationships.

The drama is intoxicating, and it feels great to get swept up in an imaginary rich family’s problems. “These Summer Storms” is pitted with little mysteries and interpersonal land mines. While the novel loses some momentum in the final act, it’s a fun beach read, perfectly positioned for summer; on one level, it’s a light read with rich-behavingly appeal. But it also goes deeper, into grief and emotional healing. MacLean writes with a strong narrative voice filled with humor and beautiful word-paintings.

And, of course, plenty of storm metaphors.

## Variety

**ROME, Ga.:** A woman who appeared on MTV’s “16 and Pregnant” was arrested Monday in Georgia on charges including involuntary manslaughter related to a man’s death by fentanyl poisoning earlier this year.

**Whitney Purvis**, 33, was being held without bond in the Floyd County Jail in Rome, Georgia, about 65 miles (105 kilometers) northwest of Atlanta, according to online jail records. Online records did not indicate whether she had an attorney who could comment the charges.

WAGA-TV reported that police records say that officers went to a home in Rome on Feb. 16 and found John Mark Harris dead from an overdose. Officers saw possible drug paraphernalia at the scene.

An arrest warrant accuses Purvis of giving Harris a combination of xylazine and fentanyl known as “Tranq” that led to an overdose, the television station reported. (AP)

**CHANGSHA:** An exhibition showcasing cultural relics from ancient Pompeii opened Tuesday at the Hunan Museum in Changsha, capital of central China’s Hunan Province.

The exhibition, titled “Meet Pompeii: The Eternal City,” features more than 130 artifacts, including frescoes, sculptures, and bronze and gold ware.

The statue of Venus, the patron goddess of Pompeii, serves as the representative piece of the exhibition, according to Amelia Menna, an archaeologist with the National Archaeological Museum of Naples, which was among the partners that organized the exhibition with the Hunan Museum.

Noting that the Roman Empire and ancient China were both important centers of civilization, Menna said the exhibition marks another important contemporary exchange between the two civilizations.

“It is part of our efforts to introduce major ancient civilizations to the public as we work toward building the Hunan Museum into a world-class institution,” said Shu Lili, curator of the exhibition who works for the museum. (Xinhua)

**VIENTIANE:** Laos organized the Lao Ethnic Cultural Festival to showcase the unity and cultural harmony of its 50 ethnic groups in celebration of the 75th anniversary of the Lao Front for National Development (LFND).

The festival, scheduled from Tuesday to Saturday in Lao capital Vientiane, aims to promote unity and solidarity among Laos’ 50 ethnic groups while preserving and showcasing their unique customs, traditions, music, literature, and everyday lifestyles.

According to a report from the Lao Ministry of Education and Sports on Tuesday, the event offers both domestic and international visitors a rare opportunity to experience the authentic cultures and lifestyles of each ethnic group.

The festival features a variety of activities, including an ethnic heritage exhibition, cultural performances, and displays of traditional clothing, handicrafts, utensils, and food. It also highlights Laos’ traditional craft of Naga motif weaving, the Lamvong dance, and Khaen music -- recognized by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. (Xinhua)

**ULAN BATOR:** The 19th edition of Mongolia’s national costume festival is held in Ulan Bator, capital of Mongolia, on Tuesday with the aim to promote the tourism sector and encourage the younger generation to wear traditional clothing.

Several thousand of people dressed in traditional costumes participated in the annual festival titled “Mongolians in Deel” in the central square of Ulan Bator, according to the capital city’s Department of Tourism.

This year’s festival was co-organized by the Ministry of Culture, Sports, Tourism, and Youth, the capital city’s Department of Tourism and the Mongolian Tourism Organization and Mongol costumes center. (Xinhua)





Korean visitors take pictures on the pier at Lake Brienz in Iseltwald, Switzerland, Sunday, May 21, 2023. (AP)

‘Crash Landing On You’ fans pay to visit Swiss dock

Swiss village cashes in on K-drama tourism boom

GENEVA, July 8, (AP): A Swiss village has cashed in on a pay-for-entry turnstile used by avid tourists who flock each day to a lakeside dock featured in the hit South Korean Netflix series “Crash Landing On You,” often to snap souvenir photos.

Local leaders in Iseltwald and tourism officials insist the village’s 406 inhabitants aren’t getting rich off the influx of visitors, who pay 5 Swiss francs (\$6.30) to access the dock. In 2024, entries brought in nearly 245,000 francs (\$307,000), while a one-franc public pay toilet collected about 58,000 francs more, said village clerk Gabriela Blatter.

Proceeds have gone mostly to garbage disposal, restroom cleaning, additional work hours and custodial staff hires, she said.

Titia Weiland, manager of the Bönigen-Iseltwald Tourism agency, said the funds go right back to village upkeep: “It’s not correct to read it as ‘the community gets rich,’” alluding to some comments along those lines in the media and online.

The village, situated along a small peninsula that juts out into Lake Brienz, features majestic views of Alpine peaks over the water.

An episode in early 2020 of the cross-border Korean love story spotlighted the dock as a romantic getaway. That sparked online hype among fans of the series across Asia and beyond, which hasn’t let up, fueling the rush of tourism to Iseltwald.

The continued influx has exposed growing pains for the Swiss village, like those faced by other tourist hotspots that get too much of a good thing.

**Infrastructure**

Part of the problem is infrastructure: Iseltwald has three hotels and four restaurants, not enough for about 1,000 visitors who arrive by tour bus, public bus and car each day on average, according to Blatter. The village is revamping a parking lot to help cope with the strain, and the only village store now operates 7 days a week. Previously, it was open Monday to Friday.

“There were always tourists in Iseltwald. We are

happy with them. The problem is that the tourists don’t understand what’s private and what’s public,” Blatter said, adding that some traipse through private yards and gardens. “They go everywhere.”

For months, fans of the series could visit the dock for free until the turnstile was put up in 2023 to help offset costs incurred by the local government.

Not long ago, Weiland said, “we were wishing for more tourists in Iseltwald: In some ways, we are thankful ... but it can be extreme.” Villagers who hosted the crews for on-site filming at the dock had no idea the series would become such a runaway success, she said.

The village has a website devoted to the “filming location” of the series that lists transportation options and entreats visitors to respect the dock, refrain from littering, and consider the “quiet atmosphere of this authentic Swiss village” by keeping noise down and avoiding private property.

“Enjoy your stay in beautiful Iseltwald and take with you memories to your home country!” the site says.



Keira Knightley poses before Chanel Fall-Winter 2025/26 Haute Couture collection presentation in Paris, July 8. (AP)



Penelope Cruz poses during Chanel collection presentation. (AP)



Marion Cotillard attends Chanel's Fall-Winter 2025/26 Haute Couture show in Paris. (AP)



Sakura Ando at the Chanel Fall-Winter 2025/26 Haute Couture presentation in Paris. (AP)

Fashion

Ayissi fuses African tradition and Parisian craft

Van Herpen unveils ‘living’ algae dress in Paris

PARIS, July 8, (AP): For years, Dutch wunderkind and celebrity favorite Iris Van Herpen has occupied fashion’s edge - not just with boundary-pushing designs conjured from banana leaves, cocoa beans and 3D-printed polymers, but also by standing apart as one of couture’s rare independents.

Blurring the lines between biology, art and design, Van Herpen has built a legacy outside the powerful luxury groups that dominate Paris.

Monday’s collection at Paris Couture Week, “Sympoiesis,” felt like the culmination of her restless experimentation: A show that dared to imagine clothing as both organism and artifact.

In a shadowy Paris venue, Van Herpen sent out a series of gossamer gowns spun from alternative fibers so fine and insubstantial that they seemed conjured from air itself.

At the collection’s heart, a luminous “living dress,” animated by millions of bioluminescent algae, quietly stole the scene.

The algae, thriving within a custom-molded nutrient matrix, glimmered in electric blue as if stitched from the deep sea - offering an eerie, captivating spectacle that went beyond mere artifice.

Elsewhere, Van Herpen introduced wedding gowns crafted from lab-grown bio-protein, a futuristic Japanese fiber that’s biodegradable and endlessly recyclable - a glimpse of a fashion industry reimagined for a new era.

If the show dazzled, it also underscored a rare feat in modern couture: independence.

In a world where most designers rely on billion-dollar groups to bankroll their dreams, Van Herpen stands nearly alone, thriving outside the grip of giants like LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton and Kering.

Her creations have become magnets for pop royalty and rule-breakers: Lady Gaga, Beyoncé, Björk, Scarlett Johansson and Natalie Portman have all worn her sculptural gowns on the world’s biggest stages.

At the Met Gala, Hailee Steinfeld stunned in a Van Herpen dress made from ocean plastic. Dove Cameron shimmered in her work in 2022.

Star power helps sustain the atelier, but it’s invention that defines her legacy. While many independents have vanished from the couture calendar, Van Herpen survives by never playing it safe.

Every season, she proves that true originality is not only possible - but essential - in Paris.

By harnessing living organisms and boundary-pushing textiles, Van Herpen’s latest collection doubled down on her signature ethos: couture not just as spectacle or skill, but as an open question - what might fashion, and nature, become next?

In a world obsessed with spectacle, Van Herpen continues to ask not only what we wear, but how we care for the world that makes it possible.

Imane Ayissi

Beneath an opulent chandelier in a sunlit salon, Imane Ayissi’s fall couture show once again fused African tradition with Parisian craft.

Monday’s running motif was the flower, explored in bold, distinct ways.

In one of the most striking looks, the model’s entire upper body was transformed into a sculpture of giant vermilion flowers - petals constructed to fly outward and create a vivid silhouette.

Another satin dress placed a flower appliqué playfully at the hip, as if growing from the fabric itself.

Elsewhere, a tailored pink jacket was punctuated by crisp white floral embellishments, merging softness with geometry.

Ayissi played with contrasts throughout: sharply structured jackets alongside softer, draped pieces, and traditional African textiles interpreted with couture techniques. Handwork and tactile details gave the collection both presence and lightness.

If there was sometimes tension between architectural lines and exuberant decoration, Ayissi’s best looks felt fresh and intentional - pushing the conversation between heritage and high fashion forward. Once again, he made a compelling case for the place of African craft in the heart of Paris couture.

**Schiaparelli**

Paris couture week opened Monday not with sequins or red carpet pageantry, but with the surreal sight of Cardi B and a live crow.

Wrapped in a custom Schiaparelli gown of graphic fringe, the U.S. rapper stood beneath the gilded columns of the Petit Palais, holding the black bird on her arm. Her avian plus one squawked, glared and nearly lunged - setting the tone for a monochrome show that itself soared straight into the surreal.

It was perhaps a fitting image for Schiaparelli.



A model wears a creation as part of the Chanel Fall-Winter 2025/26 Haute Couture collection presented Tuesday, July 8, in Paris. (AP)



A model wears a creation by Iris van Herpen. (AP)



A model wears a creation by Chanel. (AP)



Models wear creations as part of the Iris van Herpen F/W 2025/26 Haute Couture collection presented Monday, July 7, in Paris. (AP)



relli. Elsa Schiaparelli, the house’s founder, built her legend in the 1930s by weaving the unexpected - lobster dresses, shoe hats, and, yes, animals - into the heart of high fashion.

That legacy pulsed through Daniel Roseberry’s Fall 2025 collection, a spectacle in pure black and white, staged as if the city itself had been drained of color, leaving only stark contrast and raw emotion.

Inside, the mood was cinematic, and not just owing to the glitzy guest list, including Dua Lipa and Hunter Schafer. Gowns and jackets were defined by intensity and ease, with the waist and hips shaped through unexpected techniques. One sweeping gown undulated,

conjuring the ghostly silhouette of a deep-sea medusa. Hints of disco sheen flickered like film across the runway.

But if the house has been criticized in the past for relying on extreme corsetry and body manipulation, this season marked a shift. Roseberry, perhaps heeding the critics, abandoned his signature corset silhouette. In its place: a freer, more elastic exploration of the body, echoing Schiaparelli’s own restless spirit.

Roseberry said the collection was inspired by the moment in 1940 when Elsa Schiaparelli fled Nazi-occupied Paris for New York - a period “when life and art was on the precipice: to the sunset of elegance, and to the end of the world as we knew it.”

Here, that tension was alive in every look: archival codes reimagined with a restless push toward the future. Silhouettes veered between sculptural and fluid, with foulards stitched from measuring tapes and Swiss dots in silk thread - a nod to Elsa’s era, crafted using century-old techniques.

Yet the show was more than spectacle. This was couture at its most essential - an ideas factory for the entire fashion industry, unfettered by trends.

“Chanel was interested in how clothes could be of practical use to women; Elsa was interested in what fashion could be,” Roseberry added.

Variety

**NEW YORK:** Jeff Ross, a comedian known for hosting brutal roasts of celebrities, is coming to Broadway this summer with a one-man autobiographical show that will offer fans a softer, more intimate side.

“The hard part for me is letting go of a bit of my armor - of my roastmaster persona - and letting the audience get to me so that I can then get them,” he tells The Associated Press ahead of a formal announcement Wednesday. “I think it’s healthy to change it up and surprise people.”

“Jeff Ross: Take a Banana for the Ride” will play the Nederlander Theatre starting Aug. 5 for an eight-week engagement through Sept. 29.

The show will explore Ross’ close relatives, especially his grandfather on his mother’s side - Ross calls him “the hero of my childhood” - who stepped up after the comedian’s parents died when he was a teenager.

“It’s very autobiographical, but it’s also not really about just me. It’s about all of us. When I talk about my uncle or my mom, I want you to see your uncle and your mom in the stories. That’s really important to me,” Ross says.

“It’s very joyful. It kind of takes the stigma out of loss and sickness and lets people know that



Ross

they’re going to be OK no matter what happens.”

The title comes from the days when Ross was living with his grandfather in New Jersey. The younger man would take his grandfather to doctor visits or visit him in the hospital during the day and at night go into New York for open-mic nights. (AP)

□ □ □

**BEIJING:** A five-episode animated short video series themed around China’s 5,000-year-old Liangzhu civilization was released globally on Monday.

Titled “The Quintet of Liangzhu Civilization,” the animated series consists of five episodes: “Pottery,” “Jade,” “Stone,” “Agriculture,” and “Fire,” each focusing on a key element of the Liangzhu culture. Drawing from extensive research, the series vividly portrays life during the Liangzhu period

through character-driven stories.

The animation features five different artistic styles: watercolor, colored pencil, printmaking, ink painting, and paper-cutting. According to its creators, the animation was hand-drawn, with intricate details such as characters’ headgear and housing reflecting the unique charm of the culture.

The series was jointly presented by the China Center for International Communication Development and the management committee of Hangzhou Liangzhu archaeological site management district, and was produced by the Central Academy of Fine Arts.

Located in east China’s Zhejiang Province, the Liangzhu ruins gained UNESCO World Heritage status in 2019 as a testimony to the existence of Chinese civilization at least 5,000 years ago. (Xinhua)



Virtual sports show lower injury rates than real sports

AI VR fitness program shows promise in tackling teen obesity

SHANGHAI, July 8, (Xinhua): For eight weeks, approximately 180 overweight or obese Chinese teenagers, who were born in the digital age, took part in a virtual coaching program involving table tennis and soccer.

The new virtual reality (VR) sports initiative is part of China's efforts to combat adolescent obesity by utilizing the most advanced AI technology.

Adolescent obesity has become a global public health crisis, with the number of obese 5- to 19-year-olds worldwide nearly tripling in the period from 1990 to 2022. China is now prioritizing tackling teen obesity in its public health initiatives.

Faced with this challenge, some scientists are investigating whether virtual reality (VR) technology can help digitally-native teenagers reach weight-loss goals safely and effectively.

An international multidisciplinary team led by health and computer scientists from Shanghai Jiao Tong University in east China have created the world's first intelligent VR sports intervention system -- which combines AI-driven virtual coaching, motion tracking and immer-

sive VR environments to guide users through exercise sessions.

The system, named Reverie (Real-World Exercise and VR-Based Exercise Research in Education), features a transformer-based AI coach, trained using deep reinforcement learning, which provides real-time feedback and adapts to individual performance.

This groundbreaking intelligent tool underwent a rigorous clinical trial involving 227 overweight or obese teenagers, including a control group, with the results published in the journal Nature Medicine.

In the eight-week randomized controlled trial, the first of its kind globally, participants were divided into groups engaging in either real-world sports, namely table tennis or soccer, VR-based versions of the same sports, or a control group with no additional exercise.

Participants outside the control group received exercise intervention sessions three times a week -- in addition to their regular physical education classes at school.

Encouragingly, REVERIE has demonstrated signifi-

cant potential in helping overweight and obese adolescents lose weight, improve cognitive function, and maintain long-term exercise motivation.

Both VR and real sports groups showed comparable fat loss, with VR users experiencing additional cognitive benefits, including enhanced working memory and olfactory sensitivity, according to the study.

Brain imaging revealed that VR exercise led to greater neural efficiency and plasticity, while further analysis identified unique metabolic and gut microbiome changes linked to cognitive improvements.

Notably, the VR group maintained higher exercise motivation six months after the trial, suggesting that immersive digital workouts could help increase teenagers' willingness to engage in physical activity and overcome common barriers like low engagement and social anxiety.

The system also proved safer than real sports -- with a lower injury rate.

The evidence-based study shows that the VR system holds promise as an empathetic solution in addressing the challenges of physical inactivity and obesity among

adolescents.

A review article which appeared in Nature magazine commended Reverie for offering a "novel and effective strategy" and yielding "similar, and at times superior, benefits" compared with conventional real-world sports.

"Virtual reality has evolved beyond a closed sensory simulation experiment. It now functions as a digital symphony, resonating with and subtly recalibrating the human nervous system," said the study's lead researcher Sheng Bin from Shanghai Jiao Tong University.

The term Reverie, literally linked to virtual reality, echoes the renowned Chinese scientist Qian Xuesen's translation of VR as "reverie," which he believed would vastly enhance human perception and open up a new world.

Looking ahead, the team plans to harness the potential of VR in fostering healthier, more active lifestyles among adolescents -- thereby contributing to global efforts to improve the health of this age group.

Experts break down options

Which strength training method is best for you?

NEW YORK, July 8, (AP): When it comes to weight-resistance exercise, you can choose free weights such as dumbbells or barbells. Or weight machines, which are often driven by cables or levers. You can use resistance bands or tubes to build strength. Or try pushups and pullups - old standbys that create muscle overload by using your own body weight.

These four basic options for strength training present fitness possibilities for young or old or beginners. And they offer flexibility for use in the gym, your home or in a hotel room during travel.

You'll probably wind up using a combination of the four, and they all have their pros and cons. They are appropriate for all ages and can be augmented with aerobic exercises like walking or running - or even climbing stairs.

Let's let Dr. Rafael Escamilla, a biomechanist and physical therapist at Sacramento State University in California, and Dr. Michael Stone, a sports scientist at East Tennessee State University, walk us through the possibilities and their pluses and minuses, depending on your age, your motivation and your goals.

Both are internationally recognized experts, college professors and former competitive weightlifters who still work out almost daily. Both suggest a medical check if you're just starting out and the guidance of a trainer at the beginning. Most suggest strength training two or three times per week.

We're talking primarily about dumbbells, barbells, kettlebells and medicine balls.

"If you're relatively healthy, free weights are the way to go," Stone told The Associated Press. "They have more carryover to daily life - to lifting things. It transfers better. In daily life you pick up your grandchildren, pick up the groceries."

Free weights are also more versatile, accommodating natural movements that a machine will not allow. Free weights require the user to focus on balance, activating additional muscle groups than simply those targeted.

Stone reminded that you need not use much weight. Just a pound, or a kilo or two, will do it. Start slowly and increase the weight

gradually.

"I would also strongly suggest that if you've never lifted weights before, go find somebody who knows something about it," Stone added.

This is probably the least intimidating option for the beginner. The machines offer stability and a fixed pattern of movement and they give beginners a chance to get familiar with the movements involved in strength training.

"Machines are a good way to start," Escamilla told The Associated Press. "They're safe and easy and you don't need a lot of technique or skill to do them."

Escamilla pointed out they also reduce the risk of injury, isolate muscles and help build confidence as you're starting out. The machines also are more time effective.

"Start here and then you can gravitate to free weight and other options," Escamilla said.

These are the most portable options. They can help to build muscle, improve flexibility and balance, and avoid the need to sign up for a gym membership. The bands or tubes are made of elastic and come in a variety of sizes and resistance levels - how far they stretch and how difficult it is to stretch them.

Bands also come in fabric models.

"They take up no room to pack and they're supercheap," Escamilla said. "You can take them with you as you travel - just throw them in your suitcase."

You can use them to work your legs, arms, back, chest and shoulders and other muscle groups. They can be used in many configurations and may be less intimidating than dumbbells or barbells.

"The bands won't cut it for a 300-pound (140-kilo) football player," Escamilla added. "But they're good for your average person - your average adult."

The idea with every weight-resistance exercise is to overload the muscles. Your own bodyweight can be used to do this.

Exercises like pushups, pullups, squats, lunges and planks and others fall into this category.

"Your body weight can be used as a form of resistance," Escamilla said. "You can get a good workout doing these and you need almost no equipment."

Children battle obesity, chronic illness, depression

American kids have become steadily unhealthy over nearly 20 years: study



Children run on the lawn at the Liberty Memorial in Kansas City, Mo., on April 28, 2020. (AP)

NEW YORK, July 8, (AP): The health of US children has deteriorated over the past 17 years, with kids today more likely to have obesity, chronic diseases and mental health problems like depression, a new study says.

Much of what researchers found was already known, but the study paints a comprehensive picture by examining various aspects of children's physical and mental health at the same time.

"The surprising part of the study wasn't any with any single statistic; it was that there's 170 indicators, eight data sources, all showing the same thing: a generalized decline in kids' health," said Dr. Christopher Forrest, one of the authors of the study published Monday in the Journal of the American Medical Association.

Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. has brought children's health to the forefront of the national policy conversation, unveiling in May a much-anticipated "Make America Healthy Again" report that described kids as undernourished and overmedicated, and raised concerns about their lack of physical activity. But the Trump administration's actions - including cuts to federal health agencies, Medicaid and scientific research - are not likely to reverse the trend, according to outside experts who reviewed Monday's study.

"The health of kids in America is not as good as it should be, not as good as the other countries, and the current policies of this administration are definitely going to make it worse," said Dr. Frederick Rivara, a pediatrician and researcher at the Seattle Children's Hospital and UW Medicine in Seattle. He co-authored an editorial accompanying the new study.

Forrest and his colleagues analyzed surveys, electronic health records from 10 pediatric health systems and international mortality statistics. Among their findings:

- Obesity rates for US children 2-19 years old rose from 17% in 2007-2008 to about 21% in 2021-2023.
- A U.S. child in 2023 was 15% to 20% more likely than a U.S. child in 2011 to have a chronic condition such as anxiety, depression or sleep apnea, according to data reported by parents and doctors.
- Annual prevalence rates for 97 chronic conditions recorded by doctors rose from about 40% in 2011 to about 46% in 2023.
- Early onset of menstruation, trouble sleeping, limitations in activity, physical symptoms, depressive symptoms and loneliness also increased

among American kids during the study period.

- American children were around 1.8 times more likely to die than kids in other high-income countries from 2007-2022. Being born premature and sudden unexpected death were much higher among US infants, and firearm-related incidents and motor vehicle crashes were much more common among 1-19-year-old American kids than among those the same age in other countries examined.

The research points to bigger problems with America's health, said Forrest, who is a pediatrician at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.

"Kids are the canaries in the coal mine," he said. "When kids' health changes, it's because they're at increased vulnerability, and it reflects what's happening in society at large."

RFK Jr. backs food firm for healthy US

WASHINGTON, July 8, (AP): Health secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. on Monday praised a company that makes \$7-a-pop meals that are delivered directly to the homes of Medicaid and Medicare enrollees.

He even thanked Mom's Meals for sending taxpayer-funded meals "without additives" to the homes of sick or elderly Americans. The spreads include chicken bacon ranch pasta for dinner and French toast sticks with fruit or ham patties.

"This is really one of the solutions for making our country healthy again," Kennedy said in the video, posted to

his official health secretary account, after he toured the company's Oklahoma facility last week.

But an Associated Press review of Mom's Meals menu, including the ingredients and nutrition labels, shows that the company's offerings are the type of heat-and-eat, ultraprocessed foods that Kennedy routinely criticizes for making people sick.

The meals contain chemical additives that would render them impossible to recreate at home in your kitchen, said Marion Nestle, a nutritionist at New York University and food policy expert, who reviewed the menu for

The AP. Many menu items are high in sodium, and some are high in sugar or saturated fats, she said.

"It is perfectly possible to make meals like this with real foods and no ultra-processing additives but every one of the meals I looked at is loaded with such additives," Nestle said. "What's so sad is that they don't have to be this way. Other companies are able to produce much better products, but of course they cost more."

Mom's Meals do not have the artificial, petroleum dyes that Kennedy has pressured companies to remove from products, she noted.

Drug prices fall

Obesity drug 'access' tight

NEW YORK, July 8, (AP): Prices are falling for the popular obesity treatments Wegovy and Zepbound, but steady access to the drugs remains challenging.

The medications still amount to around \$500 per month for those without insurance - out of reach for many patients. And even for people with insurance, coverage remains uneven.

"The medications should be available, the question is at what price and can people sustain that," said Matt Maciejewski, a Duke University professor who studies obesity treatment coverage.

Doctors say the situation forces them to get creative in treating patients, but there's hope that prices may fall more in the future.

Wegovy and Zepbound are part of a wave of obesity medications known as GLP-1 receptor agonists that have soared in popularity.

Zepbound brought in \$2.3 billion in U.S. sales during this year's first quarter, making it one of drugmaker Eli Lilly's best sellers.

Novo Nordisk says Wegovy has about 200,000 weekly prescriptions in the U.S., where it brought in nearly \$1.9 billion in first-quarter sales.

The benefits consultant Mercer says more businesses with 500 or more employees are adding coverage of the injected drugs for their workers and family members.

And Novo says 85% of its patients who have coverage in the U.S. pay \$25 or less per month.

Plus some patients with diabetes can get coverage of the GLP-1 drugs Ozempic and Mounjaro from Novo and Lilly that are approved to treat that condition.

But most state and federally funded Medicaid programs don't cover the drugs for obesity and neither does Medicare, the federal program mainly for people age 65 and older.

Even the plans that cover the drugs often pay only a portion of the bill, exposing patients to hundreds of dollars in monthly costs, said Dr. Beverly Tchang.

Drugmakers offer help with these out-of-pocket costs, but that assistance can be limited.

"Coverage is not the same as access," said Tchang, a New York-based doctor who serves as a paid advisor to both Novo and Lilly.

Bill-payers like employers are nervous about drugs that might be used by a lot of people indefinitely.

Some big employers have dropped coverage of the drugs due to the expense. Pharmacy benefit managers, or PBMs, also are starting to pick one brand over the other as they negotiate deals with the drugmakers.

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End of criminal proceedings does not affect ongoing procedure before industrial tribunal

## Mbappé drops legal harassment case against PSG and seeks reconciliation

PARIS, July 8, (AP): Kylian Mbappé has dropped the legal proceedings he started this year against Paris Saint-Germain for moral harassment, a person with knowledge of the situation told the Associated Press.

The Paris prosecutor’s office last month said Mbappé accused the club in a legal filing, and opened an investigation. A person close to the France captain said on Tuesday that Mbappé’s decision to end that legal procedure was linked to a desire for reconciliation with his former club.

The person was not authorized to speak publicly in line with the practice of Mbappé’s entourage.

The France captain is at odds with his former club, arguing PSG owes him 55 million euros (\$61 million) in unpaid wages. The person said the end of the criminal proceedings does not affect that ongoing procedure before an industrial tribunal.

When he accused Paris Saint-Germain of moral harassment this spring, Mbappé denounced the ‘lofting’ he claimed to have been subjected to at the club. The word lofting is used in France to describe a practice that involves isolating a player from the main squad for sporting, administrative, or disciplinary reasons.

Mbappé was unhappy with the way he was treated by the Ligue 1 club when he was sidelined before the 2023-24 season, following his decision not to extend his club contract.

But according to his entourage, relations between Mbappé and PSG

president Nasser Nasser Al-Khelaifi have been improving for several weeks.

Mbappé joined Real Madrid last summer on a free transfer after scoring a club-record 256 goals in seven years at PSG. He will face his former club in Wednesday’s Club World Cup semifinal.

Mbappé’s relationship with PSG ended amid deep tensions, and some fans booed him in his last home game at Parc des Princes. PSG felt let down by Mbappé after offering him the most lucrative contract in club history when he signed a new contract in 2022.

Mbappé stunned PSG in June 2023 by informing the club he would not take the option for an extra year. With his contract effectively into its final year, it put PSG in the position of needing to sell Mbappé to avoid losing him for nothing when the contract expired.

His PSG career could have ended that summer amid a tense transfer stand-off.

After telling the club he would not extend, Mbappé was left off a pre-season tour to Japan and South Korea and forced to train with fringe players. PSG said it would rather sell him than let the player leave for free in 2024, but he rejected a 300 million euros move to Saudi Arabia team Al-Hilal.

PSG left Mbappé out of the opening league game of that season but he soon returned to the lineup following talks.



Real Madrid's Kylian Mbappé controls the ball against Borussia Dortmund's Rami Bensebaini during the second half of a Club World Cup quarterfinal soccer match in East Rutherford, N.J. (AP)

### Vet eyes glory with new club

## Di María makes emotional return to Rosario Central

ROSARIO, Argentina, July 8, (AP): A teary-eyed Angel Di María was introduced as the latest signing by Rosario Central on Monday, 18 years after he left his boyhood club.

Di María, who helped Argentina win the 2022 World Cup, always wanted to return to Rosario, but he received death threats from drug dealer gangs.

Located 300 kilometers north of Buenos Aires, Rosario is a hub of violent crime and clashes between groups seeking to monopolize the drug trade.

“Coming home after so long is something very special. It was what I wanted. To play for Central again,” the 37-year-old Di María said. “Being a champion with Central is the only thing I’m missing.

“I couldn’t believe it when I was training today. It felt like it was the first time. I thoroughly enjoyed my first training session.”

Di María joined Rosario Central when he was aged four, and made his professional debut with the club at 17 in 2005. After winning the 2007 Under-17 World Cup, he was sold to Benfica.

He went on to play for Real Madrid, Manchester United, Juventus, Paris Saint-Germain and Benfica for a second time, and collected nearly 30 trophies. He scored against France in the 2022 World Cup final in Qatar and won the last two Copa Americas.

Di María is coming off a Club World Cup appearance with Benfica. He scored three



Angel Di María shows his Rosario Central soccer club jersey during his presentation event as the club's new player at Gigante de Arroyito stadium in Rosario, Argentina. (AP)

goals for the Portuguese side which was eliminated by Chelsea in the round of 16.

“Right now, I’m not thinking about retirement,” he said. “I’m thinking about playing, about enjoying myself. About continuing at whatever level I’ve been doing.”

## China’s Lin, Wang reach second round

WASHINGTON, July 8, (Xinhua): Men’s world No. 1 Lin Shidong and women’s second seed Wang Manyu of China both advanced to the last 32 at the World Table Tennis (WTT) United States Smash.

Lin emerged victorious in a full-game battle against France’s Thibault Poret, while Wang swept past Sweden’s Christina Kallberg in straight games.

Facing Poret, Lin twice held the lead but was pushed to a deciding game by his 34th-ranked opponent before sealing the win with an 11-5 final game.

“As I haven’t competed internationally for a while, my adaptation to the venue and the table wasn’t that good at the start,” said Lin. “As the match progressed, I became more confident in my shots. Hopefully I will get the shape back as soon as possible and go all out against any opponent.” Chinese players had mixed results in the men’s singles first round. Xiang Peng defeated

Portugal’s Joao Geraldo three-one, but Lin Gaoyuan fell to Spain’s Alvaro Robles in five games, and Zhou Qihao lost in straight games to Nigeria’s Quadri Aruna.

In the women’s draw, Wang Manyu controlled the key moments in an 11-9, 11-8, 11-8 win over Kallberg.

“It was our first encounter, so I made full preparations for what might lie ahead. I just kept patient on crucial points, and tried to reduce unforced errors,” Wang remarked.

Asked about her goals for the tournament, Wang said, “Raise my game and adaptation game by game.” She was joined in the second round by teammate Wang Yidi, who defeated Japanese wildcard Miyu Nagasaki 3-0, and Xu Yi, who edged past Shi Xunyao in an all-Chinese matchup.

Also on Monday, notable players advancing included Lin Yun-ju of Chinese Taipei, Sweden’s Truls Moregard, and Japan’s Satsuki Odo and Mima Ito.

### Best of the Rest

**Tottenham signs Takai:** Tottenham Hotspur has signed 20-year-old Japan international defender Kota Takai from J-League side Kawasaki Frontale for a fee of around five million pounds (6.8 million U.S. dollars).

Takai has agreed on a five-year contract until the end of June 2030 and subject to a work permit. He moves to the UEFA Europa League champions after 81 appearances for his former club, helping Kawasaki reach the 2025 AFC Champions League final after beating Cristiano Ronaldo’s Al-Nassr in the semis.

The defender has represented Japan at the 2024 Paris Olympic Games and has played four times for the senior national team after making his debut against China in September 2024. (Xinhua)

**Szczesny signs contract with Barca:** Wojciech Szczesny has signed a two-year contract extension to keep him at FC Barcelona until the end of June 2027, the club announced on Monday.

The news means the 35-year-old remains part of the Barcelona squad after his previous deal expired at the end of June.

The former Arsenal, Juventus and Roma goalkeeper came out of retirement to join Barcelona early last season after Marc-Andre ter Stegen tore his cruciate knee ligament, leaving Inaki Pena as the only fit goalkeeper in the Barca squad.

Although he needed time to get fully match fit, Szczesny made his debut in the Copa del Rey third round tie away to lower league Barbastro on January 4 and quickly established himself as first choice, finishing the season with 2,726 minutes in 30 games, playing a key role in Barca’s La Liga and Copa del Rey double.

Szczesny has signed his new contract despite Barcelona paying the release clause of Espanyol’s highly rated goalkeeper Joan Garcia early this summer and Ter Stegen completing his recovery at the end of last season. (Xinhua)

**Wilson leaves Newcastle:** Former England striker Callum Wilson has confirmed his departure from Newcastle after his contract expired at the end of the season.

“It’s time to say goodbye after an unbelievable few years in the Toon,” the 33-year-old Wilson, who is a free agent, said in a statement.

The striker, who also played in the Premier League for Bournemouth, joined Newcastle in 2020 for 20 million pounds (\$27 million) and scored 49 goals in 130 appearances.

“I am so proud to have worn the iconic number 9 shirt and to have added a little more history to it. Scoring at the Gallowgate End really is as special as they say,” Wilson said.

Wilson had an injury-disrupted campaign last season, but still made 22 appearances, including coming on a substitute in Newcastle’s English League Cup victory against Liverpool, which ended the club’s 70-year wait for a major domestic trophy.

“We stood strong together through the highs and some lows to help the club experience new heights,” he said. (AP)



Phoenix Mercury guard Sami Whitcomb (33) dribbles past Dallas Wings guard JJ Quinerly (11) during the first half of a WNBA basketball game in Phoenix. (AP)

### Dream uses 15-2 run in 4th quarter to beat Valkyries

PHOENIX, July 8, (AP): Sami Whitcomb scored 29 of her career-high 36 points in the first half, Alyssa Thomas had her 16th career triple-double and the Phoenix Mercury beat the Dallas Wings 102-72 to avoid its first three-game losing streak of the season.

Whitcomb’s 29 were the most points scored by a WNBA player in any half this season.

Whitcomb scored 22 points in the opening 12 minutes to help Phoenix build a 33-21 lead. She made 10 of her first 12 field goals, with her sixth 3-pointer giving Phoenix a 46-33 lead.

Whitcomb was fouled on a 3-point attempt with 8:27 left in the third quarter and made two free throws to set a new career high with 31 points. She missed the third free throw, but Phoenix got the offensive rebound and Whitcomb drained a 3-pointer for a 59-42 lead.

Whitcomb, who entered with a season high of 18 points, finished 12 of 19 from the field,

including 7 of 11 from 3-point range.

Thomas had 15 points, 15 assists and 10 rebounds for Phoenix (13-6), which reached the century mark for the third time in five games. Satou Sabally (right ankle) missed her first game of the season.

JJ Quinerly scored 18 points and Aziyha James added 15 for Dallas (6-14). Paige Bueckers scored 11 in 24 minutes. The Wings were without starters Arike Ogunbowale (left thumb) and Dijonai Carrington (rib).

The Mercury avenged a 98-89 loss on Thursday to the Wings, who were the first team in 25 years to start four rookies.

Six-time All-Star DeWanna Bonner, who was waived by the Indiana Fever on June 25, sat courtside. Multiple outlets reported that Bonner, won two WNBA titles with Phoenix, is expected to sign with the Mercury in the coming days.

Thomas, Bonner’s fiancée, was traded to Phoenix during the offseason after getting the franchise tag from Connecticut.

Allisha Gray scored 24 points, Naz Hillmon had 16 points and a career-high four 3-pointers, and the Atlanta Dream controlled the fourth

quarter for a 90-81 victory over the Golden State Valkyries.

Gray put Atlanta ahead for good with 4:34 left after completing a three-point play and Hillmon made 3-pointers on back-to-back possessions to cap a 15-2 run for an 87-77 lead.

The Dream outscored the Valkyries 26-13 in the fourth.

Rhyné Howard added 15 points and Brionna Jones had 14 points, eight rebounds and five assists for Atlanta (12-7), which begins a six-game road trip on Friday at Indiana. Brittney Griner scored 10 of her 11 points in the first half.

Monique Billings led Golden State (9-9) with 19 points. Kayla Thornton added 15 points and Tiffany Hayes had 12. Veronica Burton and Kate Martin each scored 11.

Golden State went 5 of 7 from 3-point range in the first quarter and shot 60% overall to build a 26-16 lead. The Valkyries also ended the second quarter on an 8-0 run for a 45-43 lead at the break.

Billings’ follow shot with 3.2 seconds left in the third gave the Valkyries a 68-64 lead.

Atlanta scored a season-high 25 points off turnovers.

### Sixers re-sign veteran guard Kyle Lowry

## Powell joins Heat, Collins goes to Clippers, Love and Anderson headed to Utah in 3-team trade

MIAMI, July 8, (AP): The Miami Heat have acquired Norman Powell, while John Collins is going to the Los Angeles Clippers and Kevin Love and Kyle Anderson are headed to the Utah Jazz as parts of a three-team trade that was completed

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Monday.

Also in the deal: at least one second-round draft pick, going from the Clippers to Utah.

Powell averaged 21.8 points last season for the Clippers and is a career 40% shooter from 3-point range. Collins averaged 19 points in 40 games for the Jazz last season, while Love averaged 5.3 points in 23 games with the Heat and Anderson averaged 6.7 points in 25 games after being traded to Miami.

Powell figures to give Miami much-needed scoring and shooting. The Heat were 24th out of 30 teams in points per game last season, plus have already seen the departure of Duncan Robinson - the team’s career 3-point leader - this sum-



In this file photo, Los Angeles Clippers guard Norman Powell (24) in the second half of Game 7 of an NBA basketball first-round playoff series in Denver. (AP)

mer. Robinson joined the Detroit Pistons in a deal that was agreed to last week and finalized on Monday.

Love is an NBA champion, a five-time All-Star, a

likely Hall of Famer when his playing days end and had expressed interest in possibly remaining with the Heat even past his current contract - which is set to expire after the coming 2025-26 season.

Veteran guard Kyle Lowry re-signed with the Philadelphia 76ers as he embarks on what will be his 20th season in the league.

The terms of the deal were not disclosed by the team.

A Philadelphia native, the 39-year-old Lowry played in 35 games last season for the 76ers. He averaged 3.9 points and 2.7 assists.

Paolo Banchero has checked a lot of boxes since joining the Orlando Magic. Won rookie of the year, been an All-Star, helped the

team to the playoffs twice.

And now, the Magic are betting on there being more - much more.

Banchero has signed the richest contract in Magic history, the team announced Monday night. The five-year extension is worth \$239 million and could reach about \$287 million should he become eligible for a supermax deal, a person with knowledge of the agreement said.

The person spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because the terms were not revealed by either Banchero or the Magic. ESPN, which first reported the agreement, said it also included a player option for the final year.



# Rampant Spain secures place in Euros quarterfinals

Portugal draws with Italy to stay alive

**THUN, Switzerland, July 8, (AP): World Cup champion Spain booked a spot in the quarterfinals of the Women's European Championship after another statement victory, 6-2 over Belgium.**

It was, surprisingly, the first time Spain won back-to-back matches at the Euros, after beating Portugal 5-0 in its opener.

With 11 goals in two matches, Spain and its star-packed squad is living up to its billing as the tournament favorite and two-time Ballon d'Or winner Alexia Putellas had a stark warning for the other teams.

The result combined with Italy's 1-1 draw against Portugal in the late match advanced Spain to the last eight.

Spain tops Group B with six points. Italy is second with four,



Spain's Claudia Pina celebrates after scoring her side's fifth goal during the Euro 2025, group B, soccer match between Spain and Belgium at Arena Thun in Thun, Switzerland. (AP)

three more than Portugal. The top two progress to the quarterfinals. On Friday, Italy faces Spain in their final group match and Portugal plays the eliminated Belgium.

But Belgium can take positives. The Red Flames went toe to toe with Spain before a flurry of late goals had them more concerned about goal difference - which could be a deciding factor.

Spain laid siege to the Belgium goal from the start. Mariona Caldentey played in a lovely pass from the edge of the area to Vicky López, who cushioned it on for Putellas to sweep into the far corner.

However, Spain's 22nd-minute lead lasted barely two minutes before Justine Vanhaevermaet headed in Tessa Wullaert's corner at the near post.

Spain captain Irene Paredes was playing her first match of the tournament after being suspended from the opener, and she made it 2-1 before the break when she headed in a corner.

Two-time Ballon d'Or winner Aitana Bonmatí was brought on at half-time. She was hospitalized for viral meningitis before the tournament and played only eight minutes against Portugal.

Portugal desperately pressed Italy to find a goal to stay alive at the Women's European Championship and finally got it in the 89th minute from Diana Gomes to secure a 1-1 draw.

Italy was minutes from joining Spain in the quarterfinals with a lead taken in the 70th on captain Cristiana Girelli's high-class curling shot from 20 meters.

Only when Portugal was heading to an early exit did its attacks start to fire. Diana Silva's 80th-minute goal was ruled out for an offside spotted after a two-minute video review.

Then Portugal was denied by the crossbar in the 89th when Carole Costa's firm header rebounded. But the ball was recycled down the left flank and Gomes met a low cross with



Italy's Cecilia Salvai, center, and Portugal's Ana Borges jump for the ball during the Euro 2025, group B, soccer match between Portugal and Italy at Stade de Geneve in Geneva, Switzerland. (AP)

a looping shot that eluded Laura Giliuliani's dive.

"There was a great emotional reaction from them," Italy coach Andrea Soncin said of the Portugal fightback.

Italy is still favored to advance, moving up to four points in the group standings. That is three clear of Portugal but also six better in goal difference which is now the tiebreaker between the two.

"Destiny is still in our hands," Girelli said, looking to Friday's final round when Italy plays Spain and Portugal faces Belgium. Portugal must find its scoring touch and likely hope free-scoring Spain can beat Italy heavily.

"It's easier right now because on the psychological side we have momentum," Portugal coach Francisco Neto said.

The frenetic ending was dramatically different to a lackluster first half and poor quality in Portugal's play to

that point.

Portugal may face Belgium without defender Ana Borges, who was sent off five minutes into stoppage time.

Portugal gave a start to star playmaker Kika Nazareth less than four months after surgery on her left ankle. She had more influence as the game wore on despite her lack of game time.

It was a first half of honest endeavor and too little creativity that sparked a wave around the stadium by both sets

of cheerful but restless fans. It rounded the stadium four times and restarted in the 65th.

In a pre-game tribute to Portugal and Liverpool forward Diogo Jota, the Portuguese players wore warmup jerseys with his name on the back.

Portugal also wore black armbands during the game to honor the man whose death in a car crash was announced last Thursday, on the morning of the team's 5-0 loss to Spain.

Sulaibikhat boosts squad

## Iturriza joins Kuwait Club as third foreign signing

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 8: Kuwait Club has bolstered its first handball team with the signing of 35-year-old Cuban-born Portuguese international Victor Iturriza on a one-season deal. Known for his strength and experience, Iturriza previously played for European handball giants Barcelona and Veszprém (Hungary), making him one of the most prominent players in the sport.

The signing comes as part of Kuwait Club's strategy to solidify its squad for the upcoming season. The deal rounds out the club's trio of international



Goalkeeper Al-Saffar with Anad and Mansi.

professionals, alongside Frankis Marzo and Vladan, a former Al-

Qadisiya player whose contract recently expired. Angel Hernandez, meanwhile, has departed the squad to join a club in the Japanese league.

This move aligns with the Kuwait Handball Association's announcement that clubs will be allowed to register three foreign players per team, with only two permitted on the court at the same time, and the third remaining on the bench.

Meanwhile, Sulaibikhat Club has made key moves of its own, signing Yousef Dhaif and goalkeeper Abdullah Al-Saffar for the new season. The signings were formalized in the presence of club president Saad Anad and secretary general Nasser Mansi.

Sulaibikhat had previously extended the contract of head coach Walid Salmeen and brought in Ahmed Abdul Latif as goalkeeper coach. The club also renewed deals with two foreign players: Estonian international Karl Thom and Nouri Ben Halima, a French-Algerian. However, the contract of Estonian player Denir Janima was not renewed.

Elsewhere, Kuwait national handball team star Nawaf Al-Shammari has reportedly received two official offers from local clubs interested in signing him for next season. Al-Shammari is currently reviewing both proposals and is expected to make a decision soon.

## Kuwait Premier Handball League begins September 2 with 8 Clubs

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 8: The Kuwait Handball Association (KHA) has officially released the schedule for the 2025-2026 handball season, set to begin in early September with competitions across multiple age categories and divisions.

The Men's Premier League will commence on September 2 with the participation of eight clubs. Teams will be distributed into the match schedule via lottery draw.

The league format includes a new regulation that allows each team to register three professional players per match, although only two may be on the court at any time, with the third listed on the bench.

The team finishing in 8th place will be automatically relegated to the First Division.

The 7th-place team will compete in a playoff match against the second-place team from the First Division to decide promotion or relegation.

The First Division League, which includes participation from youth teams, will begin on September 4. The league will follow a round-robin format, with each team



The Kuwait Handball Association logo.

facing its opponents four times during the season.

The full schedule for the youth and junior categories includes:

- Junior League: Begins September 19
- Youth League: Begins September 20
- Junior (B) League: Begins November 4
- Youth League: Begins November 5

These age-group leagues are part of the Association's ongoing development strategy to nurture local talent and expand the competition base across all levels.

## Rauf, Shadab to miss Pakistan series in Bangladesh

ISLAMABAD, July 8, (AP): Pakistan fast bowler Haris Rauf and allrounder Shadab Khan were injured and will miss the Twenty20 series in Bangladesh this month.

Rauf injured a hamstring in Major League Cricket in the United States last week, and Shadab recently underwent shoulder surgery.

Uncapped fast bowlers Ahmed Danial and Salman Mirza were picked in a 15-man squad on Tuesday to supplement Abbas Afridi and fast bowling allrounder Faheem Ashraf.

Left-arm spinner Sufiyan Muqeem was also recalled after he was over-

looked for the last home series against Bangladesh.

Spin allrounder Mohammad Nawaz has also made his way back into the national squad since last appearing in January 2024 against New Zealand, after impressive performance in the Pakistan Super League.

The three-match T20 series will be played in Mirpur from July 20-24.

Pakistan: Salman Agha (captain), Abrar Ahmed, Ahmed Daniyal, Faheem Ashraf, Fakhar Zaman, Hassan Nawaz, Hussain Talat, Khushdil Shah, Abbas Afridi, Mohammad Haris, Mohammad Nawaz, Sahibzada Farhan, Saim Ayub, Salman Mirza, Sufiyan Muqeem.

A rising star in the golden age of Japanese boxing

## Nakatani determined to knock out Inoue

SAGAMIHARA, Japan, July 8, (AP): One is known as "The Monster," the other "Big Bang."

The bout between champion boxers Naoya Inoue (30-0-0, 27 KO) and Junto Nakatani (31-0-0, 24 KO) is already being billed as Japan's "fight of the century." And the date hasn't even been set.

Sports pundits are hailing what's happening these days as the golden age of Japanese boxing. And this is a nation that has produced its share of Hall of Famers.

For a period last year, all four division bantamweight champions were Japanese. The Ring magazine's latest Top Ten pound-for-pound ranking has three Japanese fighters, including Inoue and Nakatani.

Both Nakatani and Inoue have at least one fight before their dream match. But no one is expecting either of them to lose.

"That's the way boxing works. Inoue has a story, and I have a story. When these stories clash, people are moved and gain courage. That's where it is fun," Nakatani said in an interview with The Associated Press at M.T Boxing Gym southwest of Tokyo.

"For me, boxing is what you show in the ring all that you worked for and built every day. It's a place where you express the life you have lived," he said.

Nakatani smiles often, exuding a kindness that strikes a contrast to his almost scientific brutality in



Junto Nakatani looks on during a training session at a gym in Sagami-hara City, Kanagawa Prefecture. (AP)

the ring.

If you ever get angry, you will lose, he said. One must keep control, as boxing is a contest of minds and strategies, doing exactly what your opponent does not want you to do.

Earlier this year, Inoue, the first Japanese fighter to be No. 1 in the pound-for-pound rankings, which evaluates boxers taking their weight and size into account, defended his super bantamweight title against Ramon Cardenas at T-Mobile Arena in Las Vegas.

Inoue gave his fans a fright by getting knocked down in the second round but came back to soundly stop the fight in the eighth.

It was Inoue's second fight in Las Vegas, with his debut coming four years ago in a seventh-round knockout of Australian Jason Moloney.

Inoue, one of only three male boxers in the four-belt era to unify at two weight classes, is scheduled for a September showdown in Tokyo against Murodjon Akhmadaliev of Uzbekistan.

Nakatani's next opponent isn't decided yet. But speculation is rife it might be Cardenas, allowing fans to analyze how Nakatani fares compared to Inoue.

The buzz is spreading to a fan base previously not associated with boxing in Japan, like women and children.

These are fighters who draw long lines for their T-shirts and other merchandising, inspire manga, or Japanese comics, and pop up on hair product ads.

Boxing fever was hot with the packed crowd of 10,000 at the Ariake Coliseum for the WBC and IBF bantamweight unification title match between Nakatani and Ryosuke Nishida last month.

People are still talking about the fight, in which Nakatani came on fierce from the first round. Nishida's eye became swollen, his shoulder was dislocated, and the fight was stopped after the sixth round.

Nakatani said he won't be taking the same strategy against Inoue. The strategy was carefully planned with his Mexican American trainer Rudy Hernandez especially for Nishida.

"He is an athlete who has everything. He has outstanding boxing

skills and so he is hard to beat. But even then, there are possibilities," Nakatani said of Inoue, vowing to beat him by knockout.

Inoue, who was at ringside to witness Nakatani's win, said afterward in a tweet: "Welcome to the super bantamweight battle front. Can't help but get excited when there's a Japanese this good."

Both Nakatani and Inoue started out learning karate as children.

Nakatani's father sent him to karate school when he was in third grade because he was always playing video games. He later switched to boxing, where he fared better because of the weight classes. He stopped playing games.

Nakatani's walkout music is a defiant rendition by aging rocker Tsuyoshi Nagabuchi, vowing to give up a smug existence and instead be brave and selfless like the World War II kamikaze pilots.

Nakatani said he chose that song to express gratitude to past generations, who sacrificed so much to give his generation peace. It happens to be one of his dad's favorite songs.

Nakatani is taking it a step at a time. But he is already thinking about the legacy he will leave behind.

"When the time comes for me to retire, I want to end my career as the kind of boxer whom everybody loves," he said.

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NEWS





In this file photo, Orlando Magic forward Paolo Banchero celebrates a 3-point shot against the Boston Celtics during the first half in game 3 of a first-round NBA playoff basketball series in Orlando, Fla. Banchero has signed the richest contract in Magic history, the team announced Monday night. The five-year extension is worth \$239 million and could reach about \$287 million should he become eligible for a supermax deal, a person with knowledge of the agreement said. (AP) — See Page 14

# Sports

Al-Arabi files FIFA and CAS complaints over Hamdan transfer

## KFA reaffirms compliance with FIFA regulations amid transfer dispute

KUWAIT CITY, July 8: The controversy surrounding Al-Arabi player Hassan Hamdan’s “departure” has deepened, with the Kuwait Football Association (KFA) citing FIFA regulations that require player cards to be issued within 72 hours of request – regardless of contract status.

The latest development comes as Al-Arabi filed formal complaints with FIFA and the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) against the KFA, the Public Authority for Sports, the Kuwait Olympic Committee, and Kuwait Club. The club is seeking the retroactive cancellation of Kuwait SC’s results for the past two seasons, alleging violations of sports laws and transfer regulations.

Al-Ahli Club had requested an international transfer certificate (ITC) for Hamdan to complete his registration – despite Hamdan’s current contract with Al-Arabi running until 2027. However, the KFA responded that FIFA regulations require associations to issue a player’s card through the TMS (Transfer Matching System) without delay, even in cases where a contract dispute exists.

In a letter sent to Al-Arabi, the KFA clarified that it had no authority to deny the issuance of Hamdan’s ITC and warned that failure to comply could subject the Federation to disciplinary measures.

“Our role is strictly procedural. Any contractual or financial dispute between the player and the club must be addressed by the FIFA Dispute Resolution Chamber,” the Federation stated.

The KFA confirmed receiving a request from the Jordan Football Association on July 3 for Hamdan’s ITC. Although Al-Arabi formally objected



In this file photo, Al-Arabi and Kuwait Club players fight for the ball during league match.

– claiming Hamdan remains under contract – the association proceeded, attaching Al-Arabi’s objection within the TMS but continuing the transfer

process in compliance with international guidelines.

Al-Arabi had attempted to register a new contract for Hamdan dated June 1, 2025. However, the KFA rejected this registration, citing an overlap with an existing contract that expires in June 2027. This would exceed the five-year maximum contract length allowed under FIFA rules unless accompanied by a release document proving early termination of the first contract.

“The Kuwait Football Association affirms its full commitment to FIFA regulations and denies taking any irregular actions,” the statement concluded.

Al-Arabi’s legal representative, Mutlaq Al-Jadaei, emphasized that the complaint also includes a challenge to Mohammed Daham’s transfer from Al-Nasr to Kuwait Club, which the club claims was conducted in violation of regulations.

In a public statement, Al-Jadaei revealed:

“A sports arbitration case has been filed on behalf of Al-Arabi Club’s chairman against the KFA, Kuwait Club, and others.

The aim is to annul Daham’s transfer and retroactively strip Kuwait Club of all titles from the 2023–2024 and 2024–2025 seasons, pending the arbitration ruling.”

Al-Arabi has called on Kuwait Football Association to remain neutral and to shield the complaint process from any outside interference. The club also urged the CAS to ensure strict adherence to legal procedures throughout its review.

## Sabalenka battles back to reach last four

Fritz breaks through at Wimbledon

LONDON, July 8, (AP): Aryna Sabalenka trailed by a set, then twice was down a break in the third before grabbing the last three games to reach the Wimbledon semifinals by overcoming 104th-ranked Laura Siegemund 4-6, 6-2, 6-4 at Centre Court on Tuesday.

Sabalenka, No. 1 since last October, never has been to a title match at the All England Club, the only Grand Slam tournament where that’s the case. She won the Australian Open twice and the U.S. Open once, and was the runner-up at this year’s Australian Open (losing to Madison Keys) and French Open (losing to Coco Gauff).

The 27-year-old Belarusian lost in the semifinals at Wimbledon in 2021 and 2023.

On Thursday, she gets a third chance in that round.

Sabalenka hadn’t dropped a set during this year’s trip to the grass-court major until Tuesday – but she also hadn’t faced an opponent whose style is quite as an unorthodox as that of the 37-year-old Siegemund.

The German, who eliminated No. 6 Keys last week, was the oldest and by far the lowest-ranked of any woman in the quarterfinals, as well as the one with the fewest career titles (two).

She arrived at Wimbledon with a career record there of 2-5 and with a 4-9 mark on tour in 2025.

But her ability to change the depth, speed, angles and spins of her shots over and over can frustrate any opponent and dull the type of power that Sabalenka brings to the court. And, make no mistake: Sabalenka was frustrated, especially in the final set.

As her mistakes mounted, she would look up at her box with a quizzical expression and raise her hands. After missing one forehand off a short ball, she knelt on the grass near the net.

After getting broken for the sixth time of the afternoon to fall behind 4-3 in the last set, Sabalenka broke right back to open her match-ending run. In the next game, she finally delivered her lone two aces of the match, one at 103 mph, the other at 116 mph.

When Sabalenka produced a volley winner to break again and end things



Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus reacts after winning a point against Laura Siegemund of Germany during a quarter final women's singles match at the Wimbledon Tennis Championships in London. (AP)



Taylor Fritz of the U.S. plays a return to Karen Khachanov of Russia during the men's singles quarter final match at the Wimbledon Tennis Championships in London. (AP)

after nearly three hours, she shut her eyes, spread her arms wide and let out a big scream.

Taylor Fritz recovered from a mid-match lull and reached the semifinals

at the All England Club for the first time with a 6-3, 6-4, 1-6, 7-6 (4) victory over Karen Khachanov. The No. 5-seeded Fritz, an American who was the runner-up at last year’s U.S. Open,

came in with a 1-4 record in major quarterfinals, 0-2 at Wimbledon.

The last two women’s quarterfinals are No. 7 Mirra Andreeva vs. Belinda Bencic, and No. 8 Iga Swiatek vs. No.

19 Liudmila Samsonova. The men’s matchups are No. 1 Jannik Sinner vs. No. 10 Ben Shelton, and 24-time major champion Novak Djokovic vs. No. 22 Flavio Cobolli.

## Kazma renews Al-Faraj, Al-Subaie deals as Al-Shabab continues transfer spree

KUWAIT CITY, July 8: Kazma Club has officially renewed the contracts of team captain Nasser Al-Faraj and goalkeeper Faisal Al-Subaie for an additional season, as the club looks to rebuild and contend for domestic titles.

Al-Faraj, who was sidelined by injury in recent seasons, made a strong comeback last year. His standout performances convinced the club’s board to extend his contract and retain his leadership on the pitch.

Kazma has scheduled the start of pre-season training for August 15, under the guidance of newly appointed Croatian coach Dragan Tadić, who replaces Bosnian coach Rosmir Sefko following the expiration of his contract in June.

In a push to return to the domestic podium after several underwhelming seasons, Kazma has been active in the transfer market:

Sultan Al-Enezi, a midfielder with experience at Al-Qadisiya, Al-Arabi, and Dhofar SC (Oman), has joined the squad.

Bandar Al-Barazi, a standout from the Olympic team and formerly of Al-Nasr, has also been signed.

Defender Badr Dhikrallah and striker Mishaal Al-Shammari have both renewed their contracts for another season.

The club has also strengthened its foreign lineup with the addition of Jordanian duo Ali Al-Azaizeh and Youssef Bujazer, while renewing the contracts of Anas Al-Awadat (Jordan) and Samson Enekola (Nigeria).

Meanwhile, newly promoted Al-Shabab Club continues to build a competitive squad for the upcoming season. The club



Al-Qanaei and Al-Shabab official agree to terms of contract.

has signed goalkeeper Saud Al-Qanaei, who brings experience from stints with Al-Azraq, Al-Tadamon, Al-Arabi, Al-Salmiya, and Al-Yarmouk.

Al-Shabab has also recently added Ahmed Ghazi, Mohammed Khalil, Yaqoub Al-Tararwah, Shaheen Al-Khamis, and Dhahi Al-Shammari to its roster.

## Jota was driving above the speed limit when he crashed, Spanish police believe

BARCELONA, Spain, July 8, (AP): Spanish police believe Liverpool player Diogo Jota was driving over the speed limit when he and his brother died in a car crash last week.

Spain’s Civil Guard said on Tuesday that while their investigation into the cause of the crash last Thursday continues, they believe Jota was driving too fast when the Lamborghini veered off course after a tire burst.

Previously, the police had not said if Jota or his brother André Silva were driving. On Tuesday they said that it appeared Jota was.

The siblings died in the car when it burst into flames on an isolated section of highway early in the morning. Portuguese media reported Jota was heading to the northern Spanish city of Santander to take a ferry to England where he would rejoin Liverpool after being advised not to fly following a recent lung procedure.

Their funeral was held in Portugal on Saturday.



A Portugal fan holds a scarf with a picture of Portugal international and Liverpool player Diogo Jota who died recently, before the Euro 2025, Group B, soccer match between Portugal and Italy at Stade de Geneve in Geneva, Switzerland. (AP)

## Pogacar beats Van der Poel in sprint to win stage 4 of Tour de France

ROUEN, France, July 8, (AP): Tadej Pogačar showed his sprinting skills by beating Mathieu Van der Poel in a dash to the line to win the hilly fourth stage of the Tour de France on Tuesday.

Van der Poel was the better sprinter of the two at the end of Sunday’s second stage and looked set to clinch a second win in this year’s race when he attacked about 200 meters from out and led. But the defending Tour champion somehow found another gear to surge past him at the line, then pumped his fists in celebration.

They both have exactly the same overall time of 16 hours, 46 minutes after

four stages, and count one stage win each, but Van der Poel kept the yellow jersey because of better finishing positions in the other two stages.

The 174-kilometer stage suited allrounders, starting from Amiens and ending with five consecutive small climbs to the Normandy city of Rouen.

The first of the climbs – Côte Jacques Anquetil – bore the name of a five-time Tour champion. The Frenchman dominated cycling in the 1960s, when he also won the Giro d’Italia twice and the Spanish Vuelta.

The peloton’s pace picked up strongly heading into the last two climbs, with

speeds reaching 60 kph (37 mph). Pogačar attacked on the last climb up Rampe Saint-Hilaire and initially dropped archrival Jonas Vingegaard, but the two-time Tour winner responded well and caught up.

As the frontrunners turned home, Van der Poel was right behind and then launched a trademark attack, like he did to win Stage 2 on Monday by outsprinting Pogačar.

But this time roles were reversed as the Slovenian star claimed the 18th stage win of his Tour career. Vingegaard finished third.