



Kuwait, France ink key declarations



Left: French President Emmanuel Macron and his wife Brigitte Macron stand with Indonesia's President Prabowo Subianto, left, and His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, right, during the Bastille Day parade, Monday, July 14, 2025 in Paris. Right: Leclerc tanks drive down the Champs-Élysées avenue during the Bastille Day parade. (AP)



Kuwait Amir, French President Macron strengthen ties over Elysee banquet

KUWAIT CITY/PARIS, July 14, (KUNA): In the presence of His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and President of France Emmanuel Macron, a ceremony was held Monday afternoon at the Elysee Palace in Paris, for the signing of two declarations of intent between Kuwait and France.

The first declaration of intent between the two governments is related to the Strategic Investment Partnership for 2025-2035.

The second declaration of intent between the two governments is meant to strengthen cooperation in the cultural field and to commemorate, in 2026, the 65th anniversary of the Kuwaiti-French diplomatic relations.

The two declarations were signed by Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya and French Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs Jean-Noel Barrot.

Earlier, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent on Monday a cable to the President of France Emmanuel Macron on the occasion of his country's national day.

His Highness the Amir wished President Macron and the people of France more

success and development.

Similarly, His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent on Monday a cable of congratulations to the President of France Emmanuel Macron on the advent of his country's national day.

His Highness Sheikh the Deputy Amir wished the French leadership and people evermore success and progress.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah also sent on Monday a cable to the President of France Emmanuel Macron, congratulating him on his country's national day.

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Opinion

Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

Dear PAAAFR, ease pressure ... there is no need for envy

ENHANCING food security and self-sufficiency is not only a concern for Kuwait but for the entire Gulf region. The difference lies in the depth of vision and the optimal use of land, which allows our brothers in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries to benefit from their wealth to diversify sources of income.

Despite similar climates and the persistent drought some of these countries face, they have managed to diversify their sources of income and use their land wisely.

In most of these countries, both state-owned and privately owned lands serve the same strategic purpose – achieving food self-sufficiency and promoting domestic tourism not only in winter but throughout all seasons.

I read in the newspapers of these countries that there are no strict conditions for granting farms to citizens, nor are there specific requirements regarding the types of crops grown or how the land is used. Furthermore, some Gulf countries allow beneficiaries to allocate 20 percent or more of their

farms, or as they see fit, for tourism and entertainment purposes for attracting visitors who lack vacation destinations.

This has enabled many citizens to rely on domestic tourism, reducing their need to spend money abroad. It has also empowered farm owners to diversify their crops, broaden their income sources, and offer valuable services.

In contrast, Kuwait imposes strict conditions on the allocation of agricultural plots. Because of these restrictions, beneficiaries face the risk of having their farms revoked, in addition to hefty fines and other difficulties.

I have previously mentioned that the value of land is determined by the projects implemented

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Kuwait reaffirms commitment to strengthening ties with Lebanon



Left: Kuwaiti First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah shakes hands with Lebanese President Joseph Aoun. Right: Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef addresses the media after meeting Lebanese President Aoun.



Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef meets Lebanese President

BEIRUT, July 14, (KUNA): Lebanese President Joseph Aoun received Kuwaiti First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah and his accompanying delegation at the Presidential Palace in Baabda on Monday.

During the meeting, Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef conveyed the greetings of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and his sincere wishes for the Lebanese Republic for continued security, stability and pros-

perity, stressing Kuwait's keenness to strengthen bilateral relations between the two countries in various fields.

The meeting addressed several regional and international topics of common interest, as well as ways to develop bilateral cooperation between the two countries' security agencies and exchange expertise in various fields.

Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef lauded the deep-rooted fraternal

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French envoy lauds Kuwait-France relations at National Day reception

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 14: French Ambassador to Kuwait Olivier Gauvin has affirmed the depth and strength of relations between France and Kuwait, praising the official visit of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to Paris.

Gauvin made the statement during a reception on the occasion of the French National Day -- Bastille Day, with Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister

Sheikh Jarrah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and several heads of diplomatic missions in attendance.

He described the visit of HH the Amir as "a milestone in the history of bilateral relations. We are celebrating an exceptional moment, as the celebration of France's National Day coincides with the visit of His Highness the Amir of Kuwait to France. He was received yesterday at a military parade on the Champs-Élysées, followed by a luncheon hosted by President Emmanuel

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Photo by Mohammad Morsi
French Ambassador to Kuwait Olivier Gauvin leads the ceremonial cake-cutting to mark Bastille Day, joined by Deputy Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

Newswatch

IRBIL: President of Kurdistan Region in northern Iraq, **Nechirvan Barzani** and Commander of the Global Coalition forces in Iraq and Syria, General **Kevin Leahy** affirmed on Monday necessity of safeguarding Middle Eastern security and stability.

Kurdistan region presidency mentioned in a statement that this was in a meeting between Barzani and Leahy along with his accompanying delegation. (KUNA)

CAIRO: Egypt's general intelligence agency chief Major General **Hassan Rashad** held talks with Qatar's Prime Minister and Foreign Minister **Sheikh Mohammad bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani** to renew support for a ceasefire in the **Gaza Strip**, local media reported on Monday.

The meeting comes as part of extensive talks the Egyptian official has held with Palestinian and Israeli delegations to push forward Cairo's efforts to put in place a ceasefire in the Palestinian enclave, according to state-affiliated Al-Qahera News TV. (KUNA)

AMMAN: At least 30 people were killed and nearly 100 others injured in armed clashes between local armed groups and tribal groups in the southern Syrian city of Sweida, the Syrian Interior Ministry announced on Monday.

According to the state news agency (SANA), the ministry said units from its forces, in coordination with the Ministry of Defense, would intervene to halt the fighting, restore order, and bring those responsible to justice to prevent further bloodshed. (KUNA)



2 Journalism needs presence on digital platforms: Al-Jarallah



8 Kuwait Codes 2nd cohort kicks-off in partnership with Zain

9 Warba Bank, ALSAYER launch Toyota Car Leasing Program

Store oil abroad, expert warns

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 14: As tensions between Iran and Israel have subsided and in light of the possibility of a resurgence in the future, international and geopolitical affairs researcher Abdullah Khaled Al-Ghanim stressed the need to increase Kuwait's sovereignty over energy and water resources.

In an exclusive statement to the newspaper, Al-Ghanim explained that

the situation between Iran and Israel is currently experiencing a period of relative stability and a temporary guarantee of navigational security in the Strait of Hormuz. "Therefore, the opportunity now is available for Kuwait to adopt a proactive strategic approach that ensures balance between taking advantage of the safe period and preparing for emergency scenarios," he suggested.

He pointed out that this can be achieved through two parallel paths:

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Bursa Kuwait to launch sukuk, bond trading in 2025: Al-Osaimi

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 14: Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Boursa Kuwait **Mohammad Al-Osaimi** said the timeline for debt instrument trading is proceeding as planned, indicating that sukuk and bonds will be traded in 2025.

He affirmed that all technical tests for index funds and the bond and sukuk market have been completed, and the regulatory rules are currently being prepared and will be announced within the next few months.

Al-Osaimi made the announcement on the sidelines of the launching of the second part of the third phase of the Capital Market Development Program,

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Photo by Rezk Tawfiq
Boursa Kuwait CEO Mohammad Al-Osaimi speaks during the launch of the second part of the third phase of the Capital Market Development Program.

Prayer Timings			
Fajr	03:24	Asr	15:28
Sunrise ..	04:58	Maghrib ..	18:50
Zohr	11:54	Isha	20:20

Local

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

By Day: Very hot and relatively humid over coastal areas with light to moderate freshening at times northwesterly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 10-40 km/h with a chance for blowing dust over western areas and some scattered clouds will appear.

Weather

By Night: Hot to rather hot and relatively humid especially over coastal areas with light to moderate southeasterly wind to northwesterly wind, with speeds of 08-32 km/h.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	49	33

Kuwait Airport	50	33
Abdaly	50	33
Jahra	51	37
Salmiyah	45	33
Ahmadi	45	32
Nuwaisib	50	33
Wafra	49	31
Salmi	49	33
Managish	50	36

Other Voices

You will be dearly missed Ellen Harmsen



Ellen Harmsen

By Nasser Al-Hajeri

It's never easy to say goodbye to someone who made every gathering warmer, every conversation lighter, and every day just a little bit brighter. As Ellen Harmsen prepares to leave Kuwait, those who know her – and there are many – are feeling the absence already.

Ellen has served as Head of Administration and Consular Affairs at the European Union Delegation to the State of Kuwait, but titles alone don't begin to capture who she is. In just two years, she became one of the most well-known and well-loved faces in Kuwait. That says a lot about the kind of person she is – kind, genuine, witty, and full of life.

She's the type of person who walks into a room and immediately makes people feel at ease. Her energy lights up every room she enters. With her warmth and sharp sense of humor, Ellen formed deep friendships across the diplomatic and local communities. She

embraced people with open arms, showing up not just to official events but to personal moments, birthdays, farewells, and simple coffee catch-ups. Always with a smile, and always fully present.

Having dedicated around 40 years of her life to serving her country, the Netherlands and the European Union, Ellen brought with her a lifetime of experience, but she wore it lightly. There has never been anything stiff or formal about her. She is open, fun, and remarkably down to earth. And that's what made her so beloved. She connected with people not through protocol or status, but through her heart.

As she now prepares for her next chapter, her departure leaves a gap that won't easily be filled. She has been a colleague, a friend, and a bright presence in so many people's lives. To Ellen, thank you for the laughter, the warmth, and the countless shared moments. We will miss you dearly. But wherever you go next, they are truly lucky to have you.



Editor-in-Chief of Al-Seyassah and Arab Times newspapers Ahmed Al-Jarallah of-fers advice to Kuwait University students Dana Al-Rifai and Fatima Al-Yaqout who were on a visit to the newspaper .



Editor-in-Chief of Al-Seyassah and Arab Times newspapers Ahmed Al-Jarallah receives Dana Al-Rifai and Fatima Al-Yaqout in his office.

Photos by Rizk Tawfiq

Journalism needs presence on digital platforms: Al-Jarallah

KUWAIT CITY, July 14: Dean of Kuwaiti journalism and Editor-in-Chief of Al-Seyassah and Arab Times newspapers Ahmed Al-Jarallah received a delegation of female students from the College of Business Administration at Kuwait University in the headquarters of the newspapers on Monday.

The visit was part of a field trip to media institutions organized by the college for its students to learn about the work environments in these institutions. It is included in the applied university project titled, "Between Paper and Screen."

Al-Jarallah briefed the delegation of students -- consisting of Dana Al-Rifai and Fatima Al-Yaqout who are majoring in Accounting and Marketing -- on the history of Al-Seyassah's founding and some of the pivotal milestones in his journalistic

career. He stressed that "successful media work necessitates institutional vision, discipline, and a team that deeply and professionally believes in the media message."

He also addressed the transformations in the media landscape in the age of technology and social media; emphasizing that journalism today is no longer limited to paper, but rather requires an intelligent and integrated presence on digital platforms.

He said "media institutions must balance the solidity of print content with the speed of online interaction." He called on the young generation of journalists to "keep pace with these changes without losing the spirit and ethics of the profession."

He then offered the students a set of tips drawn from his extensive experience; underscoring the

importance of "combining academic study with practical experience, especially in the fields of management and media."

On the other hand, the students expressed their happiness over this experience. They pointed out that they chose Al-Seyassah and Arab Times newspapers "because they are among the most prominent media institutions in Kuwait and the Gulf, and because of the distinguished reputation of Dean of Kuwaiti Journalism Ahmed Al-Jarallah's leadership, as well as his rich and inspiring professional experience."

At the conclusion of the meeting, Al-Jarallah affirmed his full support for youth and student initiatives. He said "the newspaper's doors are always open to all those who want to learn, take initiative and innovate in their field."

Fate of older applications questioned

By Mohammad Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 14: In line with the announcement of the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) that the total number of outstanding housing grant applications has reached 102,179 to date housing activist Hadi Al-Ajmi questioned the fate of older applications submitted between 1985 and 1999, which were not included in the latest statistics.

Al-Ajmi pointed out in a statement to the newspaper that around 700 housing grant applications were excluded from the latest official statistics, without the authority explaining the reasons for their exclusion; thereby, putting the applicants in the 'unknown' circle.

He confirmed that PAHW has not revealed its approach regarding the old applications in terms of cancellation, deletion or placing a 'block' that prevents them from being considered as existing applications. "This is despite the fact that the Housing Welfare Regulations do not include any legal mechanism for canceling the applications of those who were rejected for allocation to housing projects," he asserted.

He stated that this issue requires greater transparency and genuine disclosure from the authority to public opinion in order to clarify its position regarding those with old housing grant applications, with the need to issue an official statement clarifying the situation of this important segment of citizens awaiting their legitimate right to housing.

According to statistics obtained by the newspaper, all current housing applications date back to the period from 2000 to July 2025. This is the first time that applications from 1985 to 1999 were excluded from such statistics.

Furthermore, a reliable source confirmed to the newspaper that there is a need to establish more housing projects to reduce waiting lines, as the total State spending on rent allowance is estimated at KD15 million per month and annual spending on this item reached KD180 million.

Deputy Amir receives Dr Bouresli



HH the Crown Prince

KUWAIT CITY, July 14, (KUNA): His Highness Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received on Monday the President of the Supreme Judicial Council, President of the Court of Cassation, Dr. Adel Majed Bouresli.



KUNA photo

Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah receives the outgoing US Ambassador to Kuwait Karen Sasahara.

Deputy FM receives outgoing US envoy

KUWAIT CITY, July 14, (KUNA): Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah

received US Ambassador Karen Sasahara on Monday, marking the end of her tenure.

More power use in June scorcher

850 MW daily from GCC grid

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 14: The statistics issued by the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy for the month of June showed that the national electricity grid imported 612,692 megawatt-hours, with a daily average of 850 megawatts, through the Gulf Cooperation Council Interconnection Authority (GCCIA).

The newspaper obtained a copy of the statistics; indicating that the highest electrical load reached 17,520 megawatts on June 16 -- an increase of 710 megawatts or 6.6 percent compared to the highest load in the same month last year, which reached 16,810 megawatts. The temperature at that time reached 51 degrees Celsius, compared to 50 degrees Celsius in the previous year.

Meanwhile, the lowest electrical load was recorded on June 5; reaching 10,280 megawatts -- a decrease of 1,150 megawatts or 6.1 percent compared to the lowest load in June last year, which reached 11,430 megawatts.

The statistics also stated that the total electrical load for new customers reached 77,822,746 kilowatts.

In addition, the freshwater statistics for June showed that the maximum net daily wa-

ter consumption reached 517,459 million imperial gallons on June 4; while the maximum daily storage reached 4,300,573 million imperial gallons at the end of the same month.

In a related development, the statistics revealed that the ministry supplied electricity to 627 new customers in various housing sectors within the same month -- 559 in private housing, 32 in government housing, 18 in the investment sector, nine in the agricultural sector, five in the industrial sector and four in the commercial sector.

MoSA admin orders: Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) Dr. Khaled Al-Ajmi issued administrative decisions that included extending the secondment and transfer of a number of officials in a bid to regulate workflow and develop institutional performance.

The decisions stipulate extending the secondment and transfer of Awareness and Guidance Department Director Bader Al-Azmi to the position of Director of the Awareness and Guidance Center; as well as the transfer of Payroll Controller Abdul Mohsen Al-Makhyal to the position of Controller at the Charitable Societies and Endowments Department, Controller at the Charitable Societies and Endowments Department Asim Al-Failakawi to the position of Controller at the Development and Membership Affairs Department, Head of the Elderly Department (Women) Huda Al-Mutairi to the position of Head of the Administrative Support Department, and Head of the Mobile Services Department in Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governorate Kholoud Al-Khalidi to the position of Head of the Elderly Department (Women).



KUNA photo

Deputy Chief of Staff of the Kuwaiti Army Air Vice Marshal Sabah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah is briefed on the duties of the Support Command.

Army Support Command role in backing army units hailed

KUWAIT CITY, July 14, (KUNA): Deputy Chief of Staff of the Kuwaiti Army Air Vice Marshal Sabah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah conducted an inspection visit on Monday to the Administrative Support Command.

The inspection visit is to review operational procedures, scheduled maintenance plans, and training and technical qualification programs aimed at enhancing operational efficiency and combat readiness.

In a statement, Deputy Chief of Staff of the Kuwaiti Army Air Vice Marshal Sabah Jaber received a briefing on the

responsibilities and duties of the Support Command and was updated on its level of readiness and available capabilities.

During the visit, he praised the efforts of the Command in developing administrative and technical performance, and for its vital role in supporting various army units, and emphasized the importance of continuing to strive toward maintaining combat preparedness.

The visit included a field tour of vehicles, equipment, maintenance workshops, training centers, warehouses, and technical supply units.

15 PAMA long-term staff face ouster

KUWAIT CITY, July 14: Minister of Justice and Chair of the Board of Directors of the Public Authority for Minors Affairs (PAMA) Counselor Nasser Al-Sumait issued a decision on Sunday to refer 15 PAMA employees to retirement for completing 30 years of service, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a statement, Minister Al-Sumait explained that the decision is part of ongoing efforts to develop the

administrative structure and enhance the efficiency of institutional work, in line with PAMA's vision to modernize its administrative system and improve the quality of its services. This step reflects PAMA's commitment to leadership renewal and to creating opportunities for young professionals to assume positions of responsibility, thus ensuring continued excellence in delivering fair and efficient services to those in need.

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A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

Sports role in purifying
the identity of a nation

“ON December 11, 2017, I published an article titled “So that the sports suspension crisis does not recur,” in which I raised the issue of investing in clubs and allowing them to develop themselves by developing a sound strategy for sports based on the principle of utilizing the private sector to serve Kuwaiti society and reducing negative phenomena by properly guiding youth toward sports without exploiting them in political conflicts among parties disputing sports decisions,” Sheikh Eng. Fahad Dawood Al-Sabah wrote for Al-Seyassah daily.



“The goal was not merely the financial investment in clubs, but to transform youth into a source of national pride without focusing on budgets. Instead, it was about making this sector productive on all levels, based on the principle of attracting youth to sports, enhancing a spirit of competition among them, and transforming competitions into a process of self-development for the individual. I wrote back then the following — “Today, we are suffering from a crisis of youth withdrawing from public activities due to the absence of a clear strategy to utilize their capabilities.”

“To that I would like to add today — “Strengthening national identity is achieved by activating shared values and principles, unifying the various segments of society, and highlighting the nation’s culture and identity.” Ultimately, young people are the future, and by encouraging them in various fields, including sports, we help steer them away from many negative influences, especially when we highlight their true national affiliation.

“In a region where sectarian and tribal fanaticism is on the rise, there must be true awareness of the need to strengthen national identity and guide young people toward constructive ways to use their abilities, rather than channeling their frustrations through sectarian and tribal divides.

“That day, I wrote, “Reconsidering the sports strategy should not be merely about redistributing power among competing parties, but rather about fostering integration through positive competition.” Some view purifying national identity as a mere administrative task, but in reality, it is a comprehensive process that touches all aspects of life and revitalizes every sector. It is ongoing and requires active participation from citizens, who play a crucial role in promoting a unified social spirit, primarily aimed at eliminating fanaticism and extremism.

“What I’m trying to emphasize is that time moves quickly and ideas evolve. We must focus on what can help instill a strong national spirit among our youth and channel their positive energies by making sports an honorable national pursuit. Sports also serve as a social platform that unites people, even amidst competition, provided there is a progressive vision to strengthen national identity through sports.

“All of this can be realized if there is a clear understanding of professionalism, and if a young citizen’s work permit officially recognizes the category of “professional athlete.” This would protect them from ridicule and ensure they are seen as employed professionals, rather than just “amateur football” players.”

Also:

“Consumers often see various numbered stickers on different types of fruit in the Kuwaiti market. However, what do they mean?” columnist Mohammad Ibrahim Al-Fraih wrote for Al-Seyassah daily.

“If the sticker consists of four digits and begins with a 3 or 4, it indicates that the fruit was grown using conventional farming methods and has been treated with pesticides. Therefore, it should be washed thoroughly before consumption. If the sticker has five digits, and the first digit is 8, this means the fruit or vegetable has been genetically modified (GMO).

“If the first digit is 9, it is considered organic. As for the rest of the numbers, they are registered codes used to identify storage locations and carry the product’s name, such as 3030 for Clementine, 311 for Papaya from Brazil, 4015 for Red Apple, and so on. These codes are part of the PLU (Price Look-Up) system, which is designed to identify the type of fruits and vegetables, and facilitate their buying and selling process.

“This system is widely used in European countries as it provides retailers with a complete record of sales and product types, and helps in setting global prices. I hope that such a system will be fully adopted in Kuwait in the future.”

“The Kuwaiti Writers Association, founded in 1964, has made a clear and lasting impact on various aspects of cultural and literary history both inside and outside Kuwait,” columnist Khaled Ahmed Al-Tarrah wrote for

Al-Seyassah daily.

“However, in recent years, the legacy of its pioneers and their notable achievements has been increasingly distorted, drifting away from its original path. Some boards of directors, or more precisely, a significant number of members, have alternated between excessive pandering to the Bedoun community.

“It has become increasingly evident that certain Bedoun groups are actively fueling this misleading narrative, going so far as to appoint a Bedoun figure to lead the prestigious Al-Bayan magazine. A discerning reader will notice this sentiment reflected in the pages of Al-Bayan, where editorials consistently glorify this group and express support for it, both implicitly and explicitly, under the pretext of supposed victimhood. The underlying aim appears to be the deliberate blurring of Kuwaiti identity at cultural and literary events through unfounded claims.

“Of course, the role of cultural and literary institutions is not to investigate the lineage or origins of participants. Rather, their concern should lie in the ethical and professional integrity of individuals, which necessitates transparency regarding one’s true identity, as reflected in the official information contained within their travel documents issued by the relevant security authorities. One television channel hosted a Bedoun poet who, according to his official security records, is of Iraqi origin. However, he misled the audience by presenting himself as a Kuwaiti poet, repeating the same deception at a literary event in a Gulf country, without any regard for ethical standards.

“Another individual, a Bedoun woman, seized the media spotlight on Radio Monte Carlo by falsely and misleadingly speaking about the so-called “Kuwaiti Bedoun.” Her statements distorted and oversimplified the truth, aiming to blur Kuwaiti identity and promote a narrative of victimhood, while casting doubt on the fairness of Kuwaiti laws, the legitimacy of official decisions, and the integrity of national security policies. There is no such thing as an “American Bedoun” or a “British Bedoun.” Likewise, there is no legal or social basis for the term “Kuwaiti Bedoun.”

“However, when shame and conscience are absent, a person may disavow their origins for malicious purposes. We do not deny the humanity of the Bedoun community, nor do we deny their creativity, limit their ambitions, or reject their right to a dignified life. The state already provides these basic necessities, yet some individuals rebel, driven by personal grievances or psychological factors.

“Today, the “Literary Unity” list, led by Dr. Mohammad Al-Baghili, is contesting the Kuwaiti Writers Association elections, scheduled for Tuesday, July 15. This list is dedicated to preserving national identity, correcting the association’s course, and preventing the politicization of its platform, as occurred previously, when certain figures aligned with the



Muslim Brotherhood ideology took control of the association’s leadership.

“In recent years, we have witnessed a troubling trend: the erosion of cultural values and the diminishing spirit of the Kuwait Writers Association. It is time to revive Kuwait’s cultural heartbeat and restore it to the literary community. We place our hopes in the success of the “Literary Unity” list, so that the Kuwait Writers Association can once again reflect the nation’s authentic cultural identity. I would like to emphasize that the Kuwait Writers Association is a cultural platform for enlightened thought. This does not negate the valuable contributions of my esteemed colleagues Dr. Sulaiman Al-Shatti, Dr. Khalifa Al-Waqyan, and others who have played a sincere role in nurturing the talents of a group of Bedoun individuals, without any racial bias or discrimination.

“However, it is unfortunate that some among the very beneficiaries, the Bedoun, were the first to disavow the goodwill and support extended to them by cultural and literary figures. Instead, they chose to spread a toxic narrative of cultural and social rebellion, both inside and outside Kuwait.

“In general, it is clear that the upcoming electoral battle within the Kuwait Writers Association is a pivotal one. We hope it will result in a decisive victory for the “Literary Unity” list. I trust the Ministry of Social Affairs to take the necessary steps by carefully reviewing candidate information, verifying eligibility, and closely monitoring the election process to ensure that the next Board of Directors does not drift into empty rhetoric about the Bedoun or resort to pandering at the expense of national interest and cultural identity.”

— Compiled by Mahmoud Attiyeh / Simi K. Kutty



Participants of the graduation ceremony of the first diving course for policewomen (2024-2025). Inset: Sheikh Mubarak Ali Al-Yousef addressing the contingent.

‘Mol to boost women’s role in maritime security’

KUWAIT CITY, July 14, (KUNA): Director-General of Kuwait Coast Guard Commodore Staff Sheikh Mubarak Ali Al-Yousef affirmed that the General Directorate of the Coast Guard of the Ministry of Interior was working to empower women and enhancing their role in the field of maritime security.

The Ministry of Interior realized the impor-

ance of the role women can play in the field action in maritime security, he said in a speech to the graduation ceremony of the first diving course for policewomen (2024-2025).

Commodore Staff Sheikh Mubarak Ali Al-Sabah noted that the course fell in the framework of the Ministry’s efforts to build the capacity of the security personnel and main-

tain a high level of preparedness.

Senior security officers attended the event, according to a press release from the Ministry.

The course, held between May 18 and July 10, gathered 17 female trainees who received theoretical and practical training on diving techniques.

Trio jailed, fined in acquiring
Kuwaiti citizenship by deceit

‘Defendant enjoyed monetary benefits’

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

KUWAIT CITY, July 14: The Criminal Court closed one of the most serious cases of forgery and tampering with national identification cards.

The court, headed by Counselor Mutab Al-Ardi, sentenced a Kuwaiti citizen and two Gulf nationals to seven years in prison with hard labor for forging Kuwaiti citizenship and tampering with official documents over a period of 30 years -- from 1994 to 2024. The court also fined them and ordered them to pay a total of more than KD473,000.

The penalties include the dismissal of the Kuwaiti defendant from public office, repayment of KD15,912 and a fine of double that

amount. Another defendant was ordered to repay KD132,142 and a similar fine.

According to the investigation results, the Public Prosecution charged one of the defendants of forging a nationality certificate, birth certificate and civil identification card in the name of another defendant who claimed to be his son. This was done in agreement with another defendant, a Gulf national -- the other defendant’s real father -- to obtain official Kuwaiti documents based on false information.

The investigations indicated that the Kuwaiti defendant exploited his position as a public employee to unlawfully seize money, including

child allowances from the Ministry of Health and sums from the Public Institution for Social Security (PIFSS) totaling more than KD13,000. He used fraudulent methods to falsely claim that another defendant was his son who, in turn, fraudulently obtained a housing loan of KD4,000 from Kuwait Credit Bank (KCB); a rental allowance of KD18,600 and an additional KD109,542 from the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM), benefiting from privileges allocated to Kuwaiti citizens.

Investigations conducted by a Nationality and Passports investigation officer revealed that the defendants agreed to include the other defendant’s son in the Kuwaiti’s citizenship file, exploiting the goodwill of employees at the Nationality and Travel Documents General Department. The other defendant’s photos on his citizenship documents matched his official identification documents in his Gulf country, according to the forensic evidence report.

‘Fake doc’ acquitted

94 dead in 6 months

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

KUWAIT CITY, July 14: Road accidents decreased drastically following the introduction of tougher penalties and fines for traffic violations in the new Traffic Law, which took effect on April 22.

The number of traffic accident deaths reached 94 in the first half of this year, compared to 143 in the first half of last year.

The General Traffic Department confirmed the significant decline in the number of deaths resulting from traffic accidents during the first half of this year -- from Jan 1 to June 30 -- with 49 deaths. It attributed this decline to several factors, especially the amended Traffic Law, which is part of the efforts of the State to enhance road safety and develop smart security and traffic systems that effectively contribute to monitoring violations and controlling dangerous behavior on the road.

According to the department, the citizens and expatriates also played a vital role in this improvement, through their commitment to abide by traffic rules. “This positive decline is the result of the community’s cooperation with security agencies and their commitment to contribute to the achievement of national goals to protect lives and prevent losses resulting from accidents,” it added.

The department affirmed that work is continuing to improve the efficiency of the traffic system and promote traffic culture among all segments of society, stressing that protecting lives is a shared responsibility which requires continuous cooperation and awareness.

Woman acquitted: The Criminal Court acquitted an Egyptian woman, who was accused of illegally practicing medicine at a cosmetic clinic. According to case records, a complaint was filed alleging that the woman impersonated a doctor and issued medical prescriptions without proper authorization.

The Public Prosecution charged her with violating Law No. 70/2020, which regulates the practice of medicine, asserting that she offered medical consultations and prescribed medications without holding a valid medical license.

During the trial, defense attorney Ali Al-Hammadi argued that the case stemmed from flawed and unsubstantiated investigations. He contended that the search warrant issued by the prosecution was invalid, as it was based on unverified and insufficiently serious information, failing to meet legal standards.

Al-Hammadi pointed out the presumption of innocence and the principle that any doubt must be resolved in favor of the accused. He asserted that the evidence against his client was contradictory and lacked coherence, falling short of proving the charges beyond reasonable doubt. He also cited a ruling by the Court of Cassation, affirming that a search warrant issued without legitimate investigative grounds renders any resulting evidence inadmissible.

Following deliberations, the court ruled in favor of acquittal, concluding that the case documents did not provide conclusive proof of the defendant’s involvement in the alleged offenses.

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MEW pushes ahead on Abdally Economic Zone power projects

Four main transformers to boost grid

By Mohammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 14: The Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy has included the installation of four 11/132 kV main transformer stations in Abdally Economic Zone in the contracts it intends to put up for bidding in the current fiscal year.

Sources from the ministry revealed that this is one of the major development projects of the ministry. They said this is part of the

commitment of the ministry to provide electricity and water services and the necessary infrastructure for the implementation of major economic projects.

Sources confirmed that the contract will be among those scheduled for tendering through the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) in the current fiscal year. They indicated that the abovementioned stations will ensure the delivery of electricity to the area by transferring the electrical energy produced from the production plants in large quantities to the main supply centers for distribution in appropriate quantities to reach the buildings in the area.

Sources added that the ministry is coordinating with all the relevant authorities to identify

the requirements of its development projects -- residential and economic -- in order to meet these requirements and include them in its annual plan.

Sources disclosed that the ministry also prepared the necessary contracts for tendering and implementation according to the timetables set by the concerned authorities.

It is worth mentioning that the development of Abdally Economic Zone includes the establishment of an industrial, service and logistics center that links trade between Kuwait, other Gulf states, Iraq, Eastern Europe and Central Asia; taking advantage of its strategic geographical location in the northern region.

CAPT approves next phase of Subiya tender

Energy ministry adds water meter service to Sahel app

KUWAIT CITY, July 14: The Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy has launched a new electronic service for citizens to obtain their water meter history through the Sahel government application, reports Al-Jarida daily quoting sources.

Sources stressed that this is part of the digital transformation strategy of the ministry in order to streamline and expedite procedures related to meter files. With the new service, users can access statements detailing the date of installation and other relevant information without the need to visit the ministry, sources revealed.

Officials confirmed that the service is already available through Sahel and encouraged all consumers to utilize it to save time and effort; indicating the ministry is keen on expanding its digital services.

On the other hand, the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) has approved the request of the ministry to publish the minutes of

the preliminary meeting and the amended annex related to the tender for providing highly efficient and sustainable engineering services for open-cycle gas turbines (Phase II) at Subiya Power and Water Distillation Plant.

Sources stated that this measure aims to complete the technical and administrative aspects of the tender process, while reinforcing transparency and equal opportunity among qualified bidders. Sources explained that the publication of the minutes and amended annex ensures that all participating companies have access to accurate technical information as the project moves toward the awarding and implementation phases.

Sources said the plant is one of the largest facilities for power generation and water production in the country. "Through this tender, the ministry intends to maintain the sustainability and operational efficiency of the gas turbines in line with modern standards," sources added.

Jahra Committee gears up for crucial urban decisions

By Inaas Awadh
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 14: The Jahra Governorate Committee at the Municipal Council, headed by Abdullah Al-Enezi, will hold its second meeting for the fourth term on Tuesday.

The committee will discuss the following:

- Request to reallocate land for the establishment of a kidney dialysis center in Jahra Governorate;
- Request of the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy to allocate a freshwater service route to feed the liquefied natural gas (LNG) plant of Kuwait Oil Tanker Company (KOTC) in Umm Al-Aish;
- Request of the Ministry of Health to change the use of the site of the Pest Control Center in Jahra to a kidney dialysis center, with the amendment of its boundaries and the addition of more space;
- Letter of Jahra Governor Hamad Al-Habashi regarding the allocation of a plot for the construction of a walkway.

Furthermore, the Technical Committee, headed by Munira Al-Amir, will meet on Monday to deliberate on the final approval of the regulatory plot project in Qibla and a request to reorganize a number of plots and public facilities in the area, in accordance with the rules governing regulatory plots.

Visit targets better service delivery

Supreme Judicial Council president assesses Ahmadi Court operations

KUWAIT CITY, July 14: The President of the Supreme Judicial Council and Head of the Court of Cassation Judge Dr. Adel Bouresli conducted an inspection visit to the Ahmadi Courts Complex on Sunday to gain a first-hand look at the workflow within the facility, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a press release, the Ministry of Justice explained that Dr. Bouresli, accompanied by several court presidents and deputy presidents, reviewed the smooth flow of procedures and assessed the suitability of the work environment in meeting the requirements of judicial services. The visit was aimed to identify the main challenges facing employees, explore ways to improve performance, and develop plans for distributing court sessions among judicial circuits for the upcoming 2025/2026 judicial season.

Dr. Bouresli was accompanied by Vice President of the Court of Cassation Counselor Saleh Al-Raqtan, President of the Court of Appeals Counselor Mohammed Al-Rifai, Vice President of the Court of Ap-



Judge Dr. Adel Bouresli, the President of the Supreme Judicial Council

peals Counselor Younis Al-Yassin, and Vice President of the Court of First Instance Counselor Khaled Al-Othman.

Meanwhile, Attorney General Counselor Saad Al-Safran has appointed the First Attorney General and Head of the Attorney General's Technical Office Counselor Badr Al-Masoud as the acting Head of the Public Prosecution.

Fishermen await fish growth to boost haul

Meide fishing season kicks off but remains elusive with sparse catch

KUWAIT CITY, July 14: The meide (mullet) fishing season started in early July, but the catch remains elusive, reports Al-Rai daily.

This is the reality at the start of the meide fishing season. Despite the high expectation of consumers, the catch has been noticeably absent in the nets and market stalls even though the fish population appears to be increasing.

An official source from the Public Authority for Agriculture and Fish Resources (PAAAFR) attributed the scarcity of maid fish in recent days to several key factors. The main factor is that the fish have not yet left Kuwait Bay due to their small size. This is in addition to the limited number of active fishermen, as many are still waiting for the issuance of their work permits.

The source stated that "the real start of the meide fishing season is expected in about two weeks -- once the fish grow larger and move out of the restricted fishing zone." He pointed out this timeline aligns with the start of the shrimp fishing season on Aug 1 -- when more fishermen from abroad will arrive and the likely improvement of weather conditions.

Chairman of Kuwait Fishermen Un-



KUNA photo

Meide fish

ion Abdullah Al-Sarheed told the daily that the outlook for the season remains uncertain. "The meide fish are still inside the bay and have not yet reached the fishing zones approved by the PAAAFR," he explained.

He also cited the recent strong winds and unstable weather as additional challenges delaying fishing operations. "Foreign fishermen have not yet arrived due to work permit delays. While 33 boats are currently going out daily, the sea conditions are not favorable," he added.

Move aims to boost oversight

Social Affairs Ministry expands roles of key department heads

By Fares Ghaleb
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 14: Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Social Affairs Dr. Khaled Al-Ajmi issued an administrative decision assigning Director of the Cooperative Facilities Department Khaled Marzouq to assume the duties of the Cooperative Oversight and Inspection Department, in addition to his



Dr. Al-Ajmi

current work.

The decision included assigning Director of the Civil Society Associations Department Iman Al-Anzi to manage charitable associations and foundations, in addition to her existing duties.

This decision is part of the ministry's efforts to enhance integration between departments with regulatory and supervisory functions.

Sources revealed that the ministry will continue to issue a series of new administrative decisions this week, including the assignment of several departments and sectors, as part of a comprehensive development process aimed at reorganizing administrative and supervisory processes.

Full-time Kuwaiti dentist required

MoH issues new dental practice roles for private medical centers

KUWAIT CITY, July 14: The Health Licensing Department at the Ministry of Health issued new regulations governing the practice of Dentistry in private medical centers in the country, reports Al-Anba daily.

According to the regulations, the existing licensed private medical centers that include dental services will be permitted to continue offering such services, provided they comply with the updated rules.

The new regulations stipulate that the number of dentists practicing in each existing center will be limited to a maximum of three full-time dentists or an equivalent arrangement involving practitioners working outside the official working hours. Two part-time dentists

working outside official hours will be considered equivalent to one full-time dentist, in line with current regulations for private dental clinics.

It also stipulates that at least one of the dentists must be a Kuwaiti national employed full-time at the center; while it is prohibited to establish new dental clinics or add dental services to new medical centers.

The ministry stressed the need for all concerned centers to comply with the new regulations; and make necessary adjustments -- if any -- within four months from the date the regulations were issued. Centers that fail to comply risk the revocation of dental practice authorization from their licenses.

CARSIR starts receiving Bedoun women with revoked citizenship

KUWAIT CITY, July 14: The Central Agency for Remedying of the Situations of Illegal Residents (CARSIR) announced that it will start receiving Bedoun women whose citizenship was revoked, pursuant to Article 8 of the relevant law, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a press release, CARSIR explained that it will receive those who are not recognized as Kuwaiti nationals, as well as those who were previously treated as Kuwaitis but were residing illegally before being granted Kuwaiti citizenship.



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Deputy FM receives ‘outgoing’ envoys of Kazakhstan, Bhutan

KUWAIT CITY, July 14, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received Monday the outgoing Ambassador of

the Republic of Kazakhstan Azamat Berdibay.

He also received, on Monday, the outgoing Ambassador of the Kingdom of Bhutan, Chitem Tenzin.

Kuwait charity, UNHCR sign deal to aid Syrian returnees

Agreement provides vital financial support amid fragile recovery

KUWAIT CITY, July 14, (KUNA): Namaa Charity, part of Kuwait Social Reform Society, on Monday signed with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) an agreement to facilitate return of the Syrian refugees to their country.

The charity executive chairman, Saad Al-Otaibi, said in a statement to KUNA that the agreement, partly aimed to give them cash money, was in line with the country's approach to help people in need at wars and catastrophes.

The accord is a fruit of the cooperation with the international agency, Al-Otaibi said, affirming the national associations and charities' adherence to laws that regulate philanthropic activities. The financial aid for the Syrians will help families restore their lifestyle, based on productivity and self reliance, said Al-Otaibi.

For his part, Mohammad Al-Omar, the deputy chairperson of the Reform Society, indicated that the agreement is designed to help the poorest refugees.

Nisreen Rubaian, the UNHCR representative in Kuwait, told KUNA that the contribution comes at a delicate time for Syrian refugees seeking stability in their home country.

Rubaian added that the financial assistance is one the most efficient means to help refugees returning to their countries, indicating that the sums help them pay for necessities and housing rents in the first months after their return.



Muhammad Al-Omar, Vice President of the Social Reform Society.



Namaa Charity and Refugee Affairs sign an agreement to empower and integrate Syrian refugees returning to their country.



Attendance of participating official bodies.

KUNA photos

Continued from Page 1

Kuwait, France

Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and his accompanying delegation attended Monday's Bastille Day military parade in Paris, marking France's National Day and 80 years since World War II, in the presence of French President Emmanuel Macron.

Participating in the celebration were the Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto, along with senior French officials.

France celebrated its national holiday (Bastille Day) on Monday with a military parade on the Champs-Elysees, with a wide participation from the French Armed Forces and representatives from several friendly countries.

The military parade began at the Arc de Triomphe, the first avenue on the Champs-Elysees, and proceeded to the main stage at the Place de la Concorde.

This year's military parade featured more than 7,000 personnel, with 5,600 on foot, along with 100 aircraft, 250 motorized vehicles, and 200 horses from the Republican Guard.

The parade also saw a distinguished participation from Indonesia, which attended with a military delegation of more than 400 personnel, as part of strengthening defense cooperation between the two countries.

The French Presidential Palace (Elysee) said in a statement that this year's parade coincides with the centenary of the founding of the Bleuettes de France, and the centenary of the flame of the unknown soldier committee, where President Macron presented a new sword in a symbolic gesture honoring the nation's military history.

The parade also dedicated a section to honoring the commitment of French youth, a move aimed at strengthening national values and civic spirit among new generations.

In honor of His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and his accompanying delegation, the President of France Emmanuel Macron held a lunch banquet at the Elysee Palace in Paris, on the occasion of His Highness the Amir's official visit to the country.

His Highness the Amir was received by French President Emanuel Macron and greeted the French government's top officials as the French President shook hands with His Highness the Amir's accompanying delegation.

Official talks between the two heads of state took place, discussing the long-lasting sturdy ties between the two nations and modes of supporting and developing these relations to serve the nations' best interests.

The talks also included negotiations and coordination on issues of common interest, as well as latest developments on regional and international fronts.

On Sunday afternoon, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received, at his residence in Paris, French Minister Delegate for Foreign Trade and French Nationals Abroad Laurent Saint-Martin and members of the French chamber of commerce.

During the meeting, His Highness the Amir underscored the importance of seizing the ample investment opportunities in vital areas and strengthening strategic cooperation with major corporations in the French Republic.

He urged greater efforts to transfer know-how and attract more capital to support the national economy, develop

the human resources, create more job opportunities for the youth, and enhance development in Kuwait.

The meeting gathered, inter alia, Kuwait's Minister of Defense Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya, and Director-General of the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) Sheikh Dr. Meshal Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

See Also Page 6

Dear PAAAFR,

on it. In Kuwait, vast areas of undeveloped land remain unused, while a large segment of citizens neither own farms nor have places to spend their vacations. This number is expected to grow with the implementation of the new requirement for residents to obtain exit permits before traveling.

If beneficiaries were allowed to allocate part of their farms for tourism, people would have access to recreational facilities, at least for weekend getaways. This proposal offers numerous benefits, including the establishment of desert or agricultural resorts, not only for enjoying nature but also for promoting environmental education. It would give citizens the opportunity to learn firsthand about agricultural activities and help develop new and innovative tourism products. This would facilitate investment in the agricultural sector and increase state revenues.

So, why doesn't the government adopt the approach common in other Gulf countries and grant farm owners the freedom to use their land in ways that benefit both food security and tourism? Which is better - killing two birds with one stone, or continuing the constant threat of withdrawing agricultural land from beneficiaries?

Revoking land plots serves no one, instead, it increases dependence on foreign sources for food. Allowing farm owners to allocate a portion of their land for tourism would be both beneficial and encouraging.

Development is not merely a slogan to boast about, but it is a long-term process that requires the vision of a state capable of adapting to change and serving its people.

Protecting land goes beyond security and military measures; equally important is using the land to benefit the people.

This goal cannot be achieved amid artificial government obstacles that hinder farm development. Farmers need incentives to innovate, make optimal use of their land, and diversify their sources of income. They also need an end to the widespread culture of envy.

Kuwait lacks sufficient recreational and agricultural projects. If we utilize the land as Gulf states do, we will reap the benefits and encourage innovation in fields that support sustainable development.

Incentives must be provided to those with the financial capacity to develop this barren desert, and they must be encouraged. Please ease the pressure fueled by envy and jealousy.

Those who have transformed barren deserts into productive green fields have invested a great deal of their own resources. The value of land lies not in the tons of sand it contains, but in the facilities built upon it.

Therefore, let us end this futile debate. No achievement is made without

mistakes, and the door should never be closed to good intentions because of a few errors.

Boursa Kuwait

which is a major milestone that reflects the market system's commitment to continue development in accordance with international best practices.

Regarding the expected volume of debt instrument trading on the stock exchange, Al-Osaimi explained "the current value of commercial debt instruments does not exceed KD2 billion; but after the approval of the Debt Law, we aspire to list government bonds and sukuk".

He pointed out that the stock exchange has a development program extending over three or four years to introduce major updates to its trading system. He revealed "we will begin testing the new trading system in the second half of 2026."

He stated that the stock exchange is cooperating with the Capital Markets Authority (CMA) to review several products to better present them, stressing that the introduction of the CCP and the Central Broker will help the stock exchange offer financial derivatives soon. He explained that these developments will lead to attracting foreign investments, coinciding with increased investor confidence.

About amending the listing requirements on the main market, Al-Osaimi confirmed that "when the reduction of listing requirements on the main market was approved by reducing the company's capital limit from KD15 million to KD5 million, we received numerous communications from subscription managers in this regard." He anticipates listings in the near future.

He disclosed that two family companies are currently negotiating with the stock exchange for listing; explaining that the stock exchange intends to attract companies in various sectors, including commercial, government and family businesses. He said the listing procedures and requirements are not easy, as companies are being reorganized and prepared for this step, which may require a period that may extend to several years.

He clarified that there is currently no intention to list oil sector companies, disclosing there have been discussions with the Public-Private Partnership Authority to list a government company such as North Al-Zour next year.

He added "the launching of the second part of the third phase of the Capital Market Development Program -- the main station -- reflects the market system's commitment to continue development in accordance with international best practices." He emphasized that "this achievement is a qualitative shift in the development process of the market and it is the result of the concerted efforts of CMA, Central Bank of Kuwait, Kuwait Clearing Company, Boursa Kuwait; and our partners from banks, investment companies and financial brokerage companies."

He confirmed that this phase witnessed a comprehensive development of the operational and technical infrastructure; including strengthening the clearing and settlement system,

upgrading and modernizing trading systems, and improving the market structure through the implementation of the 'Qualified Broker' model and the application of more accurate and transparent mechanisms for account management.

He explained that this achievement affirms the readiness of the market for more advanced stages in the future, and a shared vision for an efficient and flexible financial market capable of supporting economic development and attracting investments. He confirmed Boursa Kuwait's commitment to continue this journey, in partnership with all stakeholders, to ensure sustainable development and enhance the position of Kuwait as an advanced regional financial center.

On the other hand, Director of the Trading Department at CMA Khaled Al-Sahli stated that the second part of the third phase of the Capital Market System Development Program includes the provision of financial products. "Trading and post-trading have been activated through the applicable systems, in addition to preparing the structure of the articles, executive regulations and the stock exchange rules," he disclosed.

Al-Sahli indicated that work is underway to approve the executive regulations after the completion of the rules and regulations for settlement and litigation in the Central Depository, which will happen soon. He asserted "this development step contributes to boosting confidence among foreign investors and increasing foreign inflows, especially with the implementation of the CPP." He asserted that such steps taken by the Kuwaiti market open new horizons for brokerage firms.

Abdul Karim Al-Yaqout -- Director of Strategy and Product Development at Kuwait Clearing Company -- pointed out that the third phase is the cornerstone in the process of developing the infrastructure for post-trade operations, led by CMA and implemented by Kuwait Clearing Company, in cooperation with Boursa Kuwait and the Central Bank of Kuwait.

Al-Yaqout added that Kuwait Clearing Company plays a vital role in the areas of clearing, settlement, depository, collateral management and risk mitigation; thereby, contributing to the alignment of the Kuwaiti capital market with international standards, such as IOACO and PFMI.

He affirmed that there is a reconciliation period extending six months from the start of the phase, in addition to another phase for transferring client funds to brokerage firms after obtaining their approval. He said a date has been set for this phase and July 17 is the deadline for this step.

French envoy

Macron. The visit is a milestone in the history of relations between the two countries -- spanning nearly 65 years, and its 65th anniversary will be celebrated in 2026. France and Kuwait are linked by a historic alliance based on trust and mutual respect."

He pointed out that political cooperation witnessed a strong boost over the past year, particularly with

the visit of the French Foreign Minister to Kuwait last April, to enhance coordination on regional crises, at a time Kuwait occupies the presidency of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).

He said "France and Kuwait share a commitment to multilateralism, peace and international solidarity. We are pleased to work together on development and humanitarian projects that reflect Kuwait's exemplary humanitarian commitment."

He pointed out that France has been a steadfast ally of Kuwait since the Iraqi invasion, as their armies fought side by side in the liberation war. He said the 1992 defense agreement with Kuwait was the first such agreement signed by Paris in the Gulf. He added that joint training exercises such as 'Pearl of the West' and 'Arab Breeze' embody the vitality of defense cooperation between the two countries. He also praised the training programs received by Kuwaiti officers in France.

He cited the growing interest of French companies in investing in Kuwait in light of the 'Kuwait 2035' vision; particularly in the fields of transportation, sustainable energy, smart cities and health. He also welcomed the growing interest of Kuwaiti investors in development opportunities in France, specifically in the fields of artificial intelligence and technology. He stressed that France has become the primary destination for foreign investment in Europe.

He confirmed that France remains the primary destination for Kuwaiti tourism within the Schengen Area, praising the country's active Francophone community. He reviewed the most prominent events held during Francophonie Month; such as concerts, film screenings, poetry evenings and debates; commending His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah's support for these activities.

He lauded the initiatives to strengthen academic relations, through the establishment of the Sorbonne Association under the patronage of Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nasser Al-Sabah. He said this will provide a platform for exchange between students, researchers and professors. He expressed his hope for increasing the number of Kuwaiti students in France, especially in innovation specializations like artificial intelligence, technology, engineering and management.

Kuwait reaffirms

relations between Kuwait and Lebanon, stressing Kuwait's keenness to consolidate the bonds of cooperation and joint coordination.

Meanwhile, Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef met Monday with Lebanon's parliament speaker Nabih Berri to discuss the longstanding ties between the two countries.

The meeting addressed a range of issues of mutual interests and explored ways to further strengthen the bilateral ties, especially in political and economic levels in a way that contributes to supporting stability and development efforts.

Both sides emphasized the importance of continuing this coordination and dialogue on regional and international matters, reaffirmed the need to boost mutual cooperation, thus serving both peoples' aspirations.

The visit reflects Kuwait's commitment to deepening its ties with Lebanon through joint collaboration.

Store oil

accumulating oil reserves abroad to the maximum point that cumulative daily production can accommodate, and strengthening the sovereign reserve of consumable water. He stated that "oil is the artery of the Kuwaiti economy; hence, any disruption in its export, even for one day, could lead to a widespread economic suffocation, which necessitates raising Kuwaiti oil stored abroad -- up to a ceiling of 450 million barrels or as much as we can. This will be used in the event of any developments in the region."

He is hoping that the oil storage will reach the equivalent of Kuwait's current daily oil production quota for half a year or less, as the higher the storage ceiling from 200 million to 450 million barrels abroad, the better prepared the country will be for the worst military scenario in the region. He explained that storing Kuwaiti oil in large quantities outside Kuwaiti borders is part of the steps to mitigate the risks associated with any emergency closure of the Strait of Hormuz.

Regarding other important benefits of storing oil abroad, Al-Ghanim said that it gives Kuwait strong negotiating power in the global market, even during crisis. "This allows for the potential to capitalize on rising oil prices by initiating sales from external storage in the event of disruptions in Gulf energy flows to global markets. Furthermore, external storage maintains cash flow in case of temporary disruptions to local oil production infrastructure for any reason," he elaborated.

On the mechanisms by which Kuwaiti oil storage capacity abroad can be increased, Al-Ghanim stressed this can be done by expanding strategic storage contracts with partners such as South Korea, India, Japan and Oman. He also emphasized the need to expand storage and add new storage sites like Pakistan, Turkiye, Vietnam, Indonesia and China.

On the importance of protecting water in case the Strait of Hormuz is exposed to any unexpected danger, Al-Ghanim asserted that "water, before it becomes scarce, is a reserve of life that is priceless, especially since Kuwait is a desert country and pure water is a sovereign commodity that is not less important than oil, and may even precede the latter in unconventional wars. Based on the average consumption of drinking and cooking water per Kuwaiti, the country needs to import not less than nine billion liters of drinking and cooking water to cover the consumption of nearly five million people for a period ranging from six to nine months to ensure the country's protection from any interruption in desalination facilities as a result of any military developments in the region."

America

3 killed in Kentucky shooting: Two women – a 72-year-old and a 32-year-old – were killed Sunday in a shooting in Kentucky, officials said.

The incident unfolded around 11:35 a.m. ET (1535 GMT) near Blue Grass Airport, where a trooper pulled over a vehicle after receiving a license plate reader alert. The suspect in the vehicle shot the trooper, carjacked another vehicle and fled the scene before arriving at Richmond Road Baptist Church, where he killed the two women, Lexington Police Chief Lawrence Weathers said at a news conference.

The fleeing suspect wounded two men before being fatally shot by three responding officers and pronounced dead at the scene. The injured trooper is in stable condition.

In a post on the social platform X, Kentucky Governor **Andy Beshear** called the incident “senseless acts of violence” and thanked the swift response by local police. (Xinhua)



Beshear

Massachusetts fire kills 9: Nine people have died in a fire at an assisted living facility in Massachusetts, where people were hanging out of windows screaming for help, authorities said Monday. At least 30 people were injured.

Firefighters responded to the Gabriel House assisted living facility in Fall River at about 9:50 p.m. Sunday and were met with heavy smoke and flames at the front of the building, with occupants trapped inside, the state Department of Fire Services said in a news release. About 70 people live in the house.

The fire was out by Monday morning and firefighters were able to get inside and rescue numerous occupants. About 50 firefighters responded, including 30 who were off-duty.

Many of those rescued were taken to local and regional hospitals in varying conditions. Five firefighters suffered injuries that were not life-threatening, the statement said.

“This is an unfathomable tragedy for the families involved and the Fall River community,” said Chief Jeffrey Bacon.

He told reporters “multiple people were hanging out the windows looking to be rescued.” Family members who showed up said police were trying to break windows.

Leo Johnson, 45, of Fall River, told The Boston Globe he rushed over to find his 68-year-old mother, who lives on the top floor of Gabriel House. (AP)

□ □ □

Wildfire destroys lodge, structures: A fast-moving wildfire destroyed a historic lodge and dozens of other structures on the Grand Canyon’s North Rim, forcing officials to close access to that area for the season, the park said Sunday.

The Grand Canyon Lodge, the only lodging inside the park at the North Rim, was consumed by the flames, park Superintendent Ed Keable told park residents, staff and others in a meeting Sunday morning. He said the visitor center, the gas station, a waste water treatment plant, an administrative building and some employee housing were among the 50 to 80 structures lost. “Numerous” historic cabins in the area also were destroyed, the park said.

Two wildfires are burning at or near the North Rim, known as the White Sage Fire and the Dragon Bravo Fire. The latter is the one that impacted the lodge and other structures. (AP)

US Senate vote this week to test popularity of DOGE spending cuts

WASHINGTON, July 14, (AP): US Senate Republicans will test the popularity of Department of Government Efficiency spending cuts this week by aiming to pass President Donald Trump’s request to claw back \$9.4 billion in public media and foreign aid spending.

Senate Democrats are trying to kill the measure but need a few Republicans uncomfortable with the president’s effort to join them.

Trump’s Republican administration is employing a rarely used tool that allows the president to transmit a request to cancel previously approved funding authority. The request triggers a 45-day clock under which the funds are frozen. If Congress fails to act within that period, then the spending stands. That clock expires Friday.

The House has already approved Trump’s request on a mostly party line 214-212 vote. The Senate has little time to spare to beat the deadline for the president’s signature. Another House vote will be needed if senators amend the legislation, adding more un-



US Senate Majority Leader John Thune, speaks to reporters outside his office at the Capitol in Washington on July 8. (AP)

certainty to the outcome.

Trump has asked lawmakers to rescind nearly \$1.1 billion from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, which represents the full amount it’s

due to receive during the next two budget years.

The White House says the public media system is politically biased and an unnecessary expense.

‘Who’s got next?’

US Democrats already lining up for 2028 presidential race in early voting states

SENECA, SC, July 14, (AP): The first presidential primary votes won’t be cast for another two and a half years. And yet, over the span of 10 days in July, three Democratic presidential prospects are scheduled to campaign in South Carolina.

Nearly a half dozen others have made recent pilgrimages to South Carolina, New Hampshire and Iowa – states that traditionally host the nation’s opening presidential nomination contests. Still other ambitious Democrats are having private conversations with officials on the ground there.

The voters in these states are used to seeing presidential contenders months or even years before most of the country, but the political jockeying in 2025 for the 2028 presidential contest appears to be playing out earlier, with more frequency and with less pretense than ever before.

California Gov. Gavin Newsom was referred to as a presidential candidate at one stop in his two-day South Carolina tour last week. Voters shouted “2028!” after he insisted he was there simply to strengthen the party ahead

of the 2026 midterms. South Carolina has virtually no competitive midterm contests.

Term-limited Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear, who acknowledges he’s considering a 2028 bid, will spend two days touring South Carolina this week. He will focus on the state’s Black community while drawing an implicit contrast with Newsom on cultural issues, according to excerpts of his planned remarks obtained by The Associated Press.

California Congressman Ro Khanna, a progressive aligned with the Bernie Sanders’ wing of the Democratic Party, will target union members and Black voters when he’s in the state a few days later with the son of a civil rights leader.

And former Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel is having private conversations with key South Carolina Democrats, including presidential primary kingmaker Rep. Jim Clyburn, in which Emanuel indicated strong interest in a presidential run. That’s according to Clyburn himself, who said he’s also had direct contact with Beshear and



Minnesota Gov Tim Walz, (left), speaks to reporters as Maryland Gov. Wes Moore looks on at Rep. Jim Clyburn’s World Famous Fish on May 30 in Columbia, SC. (AP)

Khanna after appearing alongside Newsom last week and Maryland Gov. Wes Moore in May.

“That’s what candidates have to do:

position themselves and be ready when lightning strikes,” Clyburn said.

The unusually early jockeying is playing out as the Democratic Party

struggles to repair its brand, rebuild its message and fill a leadership vacuum after losing the White House and both chambers of Congress in 2024.

Democrats are decidedly more optimistic about 2028.

Republicans will not have the advantage of incumbency in the next presidential contest; the Constitution bars President Donald Trump from seeking a third term. And the race for the Democratic nomination appears to be wide open, even as 2024 nominee Kamala Harris and running mate, Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz, have left open the possibility of running again.

With no clear front-runner, some Democratic operatives believe upwards of 30 high-profile Democrats could ultimately enter the 2028 primary – more than the party’s overpacked 2020 field.

And as Democrats struggle to stop Trump’s power grabs in Washington, some report a real sense of urgency to get the 2028 process started.

Texas Rep. Jasmine Crockett, a rising Democratic star, told the AP earlier this year that presidential prospects

“need to be more visible earlier” as party officials look to take cues from a new generation of leaders.

“What freaks most Democrats out is not really understanding who’s up next. Like, who’s got next?” she said. “And I think that that is really what people want most; they want their presidential nominee now.”

Beshear, Kentucky’s 47-year-old two-term governor, is scheduled to make his first visit to South Carolina on political grounds on Wednesday and Thursday.

He will promote his appeal among red-state moderates and Black voters in a Thursday speech hosted by the Georgetown County Democrats in a region that voted three times for Trump and has a large Black population.

“Democrats have a huge opportunity to seize the middle and win back the voters who have been increasingly skeptical of the Democratic brand. But it’s going to take focus and discipline,” Beshear is expected to say, according to speech excerpts obtained by the AP.



Local police officers and Spanish civil guard agents take positions during the disturbances in Torre Pacheco, eastern Spain on July 12. (AP)

Police detain 8 after anti-migrant clashes in Spanish town

Eight people have been detained by police in Spain in relation to violent clashes that erupted between far-right groups, local residents and migrants in a southeastern town over the weekend, officials said on Monday.

Clashes in Torre-Pacheco in the

Murcia region took place on Saturday night after an elderly resident was beaten up earlier in the week by unknown assailants, which led to a call by far-right groups to seek retribution on the area’s large migrant community.

The motivation for the initial at-

tack was not clear.

Among those detained were two people allegedly linked to the attack on the elderly man and several others in relation to the weekend clashes, Mariola Guevara, the central government’s representative in Murcia, said Monday on X. (AP)

Trump to make unprecedented 2nd state visit to UK in September

LONDON, July 14, (AP): US President Donald Trump will make an unprecedented second state visit to the UK between Sept 17 and 19 when he will be hosted by King Charles III and Queen Camilla at Windsor Castle, Buckingham Palace said Monday.

Trump, who is a big supporter of the royal family, particularly of the monarch, will be accompanied by his wife, Melania Trump, during the three-day visit, the palace confirmed.

No US president has been invited for a second state visit. Trump previously enjoyed the pomp and pageantry of the state visit in 2019 during his first term when he was hosted by Charles’ late mother, Queen Elizabeth II.

The invitation for the second state visit from the king was hand-delivered by British Prime Minister Keir Starmer in February during a meeting at the White House.

After reading it, Trump said it was a “great, great honor” and appeared particularly pleased by the fact he will be staying at Windsor Castle, to the west of the capital. “That’s really something,” he said.

Precedent for second-term US presi-



British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, (left), hands an invitation from King Charles III for a second state visit to President Donald Trump at the White House on Feb 27, in Washington. (AP)

dents who have already made a state visit is usually tea or lunch with the monarch at Windsor Castle, as was the case for George W. Bush and Barack Obama.

State visits are ceremonial meetings

between heads of state that are used to honor friendly nations and sometimes smooth relations between rivals. While the king formally issues the invitation for a state visit, he does so on the advice of the elected government.

US pledges more Patriot missiles to Ukraine

Trump’s envoy meets with Zelenskyy

KYIV, Ukraine, July 14, (AP): US President Donald Trump’s special envoy to Ukraine and Russia met with Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in Kyiv on Monday, as anticipation grew over a possible shift in the Trump administration’s policy on the three-year war.

Zelenskyy said he and retired Lt Gen Keith Kellogg had “a productive conversation” about strengthening Ukrainian air defenses, joint arms production and purchasing US weapons in conjunction with European countries, as well as the possibility of tighter international sanctions on the Kremlin.

“We hope for the leadership of the United States, because it is clear that Moscow will not stop unless its ... ambitions are stopped by force,” Zelenskyy said on Telegram.

Trump last week said he would make a “major statement” on Russia on Monday. Trump made quickly stopping the war one of his diplomatic priorities, and he has increasingly expressed frustration about Russian President Vladimir Putin’s unbudging stance on US-led peace efforts.

Trump has long boasted of his friendly relationship with Putin, and after taking office in January repeatedly said that Russia was more willing than Ukraine to reach a peace deal. At the same time, Trump accused Zelenskyy



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, (left), and United States Special Envoy for Ukraine and Russia, Joseph Keith Kellogg talk in Kyiv, Ukraine on July 14. (AP)

of prolonging the war and called him a “dictator without elections.”

But Russia’s relentless onslaught against civilian areas of Ukraine wore down Trump’s patience. In April, Trump urged Putin to “STOP!” launching deadly barrages on Kyiv, and the following month said in a social media post that the Russian leader “has gone absolutely CRAZY!” as the bombardments continued.

“I am very disappointed with President Putin, I thought he was somebody that meant what he said,” Trump said late Sunday. “He’ll talk so beautifully and then he’ll bomb people at night. We don’t like that.”

Russia has pounded Ukrainian cities, including the capital, Kyiv, with hundreds of drones and cruise and ballistic missiles that Ukraine’s air defenses are struggling to counter.

Macron announces 6.5 billion euros in extra military spending in next 2 years

PARIS, July 14, (AP): French President Emmanuel Macron on Sunday announced 6.5 billion euros (\$7.6 billion) in extra military spending in the next two years because of new and unprecedented threats, ranging from Russia to nuclear proliferation, terrorists and online attacks.

The French leader laid out the spending plans in a sweeping speech calling for intensified efforts to protect Europe, and support Ukraine in its war against Russia’s full-scale invasion. He said France will aim to spend 64 billion euros (\$74.8 billion) in annual defense spending in 2027, the last year of his second term. That would be double the 32 billion euros in annual spending when he became president in 2017.

“Since 1945, freedom has never been so threatened, and never so seriously,” Macron said in the French president’s traditional speech to the military on the eve of the Bastille Day national holiday. “We are experiencing a return to the fact of a nuclear threat, and a proliferation of major conflicts.”

“To be free in this world, we must be feared. To be feared, we must be powerful,” he said.

He insisted that France can find the money to spend more on the military even as it tries to bring down massive national debts. Conservative and far-



French President Emmanuel Macron speaks to the army leaders at the Hotel le Bienne on July 13, ahead of the Bastille Day parade in Paris. (AP)

right parties have supported greater defense spending, while left-wing parties accuse the government of sacrificing hard-won social welfare benefits for military spending.

Europe is in danger because of Russia’s war in Ukraine and wars in the Middle East, and because “the United States has added a form of uncertainty,” Macron argued. Other dangers he cited included online disinformation

campaigns by unnamed foreign governments and propaganda operations targeting children, in “the screen era.”

Macron also ordered France’s top military and defense officials to start a “strategic dialogue” with European partners about the role that the French nuclear arsenal could play in protecting Europe. In an exceptional move, France and Britain agreed in recent days to cooperate on nuclear defense issues.

Macron’s speech came as U.S. President Donald Trump is expected to make an announcement about Russia on Monday, and the head of NATO is traveling to Washington for two days of talks. Trump last week announced plans to sell NATO allies weaponry that they can then pass on to Ukraine, which has been struggling to repel massive and complex Russian air assaults.

Macron recently spoke with Russian President Vladimir Putin for the first time in three years, but remains a target of widespread criticism in Russia for his vocal support for Ukraine. The Kremlin argues that the Ukraine conflict is a consequence of Western countries’ decision to ignore Russia’s security interests.

The head of the French military, Gen. Thierry Burkhard, laid out risks emanating from Russia that stretch well beyond Ukraine.

‘Philippines defense secretary renounced Maltese citizenship before appointment’

MANILA, Philippines, July 14, (Agencies): Philippine Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr. had renounced his Maltese citizenship and disclosed it to Filipino authorities before taking office, the Defense Department said Monday.

Philippine law generally disqualifies candidates for high public office who have dual citizenship, especially those with foreign citizenship acquired through naturalization, unless they renounce their foreign citizenship.

Teodoro, who was appointed defense chief by President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. in 2023, is one of the most vocal critics of China’s aggressive actions in the disputed South China Sea and elsewhere in Asia. He has led efforts by the Philippines to deepen its treaty alliance with the United States and build new security ties with other countries to deter China.

The Manila Times reported Teodoro had acquired a Maltese passport in 2016 with a validity of 10 years. The Defense Department said, however, Teodoro’s Maltese passport “was surrendered and renounced” before he filed his certificate of candidacy for a Senate seat in 2021. Teodoro lost that senatorial bid.

Also:

MANILA: Three people were killed and a toddler was injured after a sport utility vehicle (SUV) crashed into a pedestrian and a roadside house in **Sorsogon** province, southeast of Manila, at dawn on Saturday, local authorities said.

The incident occurred around 4:10 a.m. local time in **Castilla** town, when the SUV, traveling south from Manila, veered out of control, according to Edgar Ardales of the Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office.

Monday’s hospitalization was to carefully determine the right dose of the new medication to avoid side effects, while monitoring his heart by electrocardiogram and other examination, the IHA said. (AP)



Philippine Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr. gestures as he answers questions during an interview with The Associated Press at the Department of National Defense headquarters in Quezon city, Philippines on March 5. (AP)

Australia hosts largest-ever military exercise with 19 nations taking part

MELBOURNE, Australia, July 14, (AP): The largest-ever war-fighting drills in Australia, Exercise Talisman Sabre, are underway and expected to attract the attention of Chinese spy ships.

Australia launched missiles from its M142 High Mobility Artillery Rocket System, known as HIMARS, on Monday during live-fire exercises at the Shoalwater Bay Training Area, a 4,500 square kilometer (1,700 square mile) Outback expanse in Queensland state. The HIMARS launchers were recently bought from the United States.

“Today was the first time the Australian Army has live-fired our long-range, multi-domain platforms being the HIMARS, so it is a remarkable day,” Brig. Nick Wilson told reporters.

Talisman Sabre began in 2005 as a biennial joint exercise between the United States and Australia.

This year, more than 35,000 military personnel from 19 nations, including Canada, Fiji, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, South Korea, Singapore, Thailand, Tonga, and the United Kingdom, will take part over three weeks, Australia’s defense department said.

Malaysia and Vietnam are also attending as observers. The exercise will also take place in Papua New Guinea, Australia’s nearest neighbor. It is the first time Talisman Sabre activities have been held outside Australia.

Chinese surveillance ships have monitored naval exercises off the Australian coast during the last four Talisman Sabre exercises and were expected to surveil the current exercise, Defense Industry Minister Pat Conroy said.



Military personnel watch a display at Exercise Talisman Sabre 2025, Australia's largest-ever war fighting drills at Shoalwater Bay Training Area, near Rockhampton, Australia on July 14. (AP)

Cameroon’s 92-year-old president seeks 8th term amid health rumors

YAOUNDE, Cameroon, July 14, (AP): Cameroon’s 92-year-old president announced Sunday he will seek his eighth term in the October elections. The announcement comes after speculation the aging leader would not run, setting the stage for an electoral showdown.

Paul Biya, Africa’s second-longest-serving president after Teodoro Obiang of Equatorial Guinea, is frequently sick and abroad. Last year, talk spread that he had died, prompting the government to publicly deny the rumors. Cameroon’s second president since independence from France in 1960, Biya has been in power since 1982.

Promising that the best is yet to come in his post on social media, Biya reiterated his determination to rule, saying, “Rest assured that my determination to serve you is commensurate with the serious challenges facing us.”

The more than 40 years of Biya’s rule have left a lasting impact. His government has faced various challenges, including allegations of corruption and a secessionist movement in Cameroon’s English-speaking provinces that has forced thousands out of school and triggered deadly clashes with security forces.

“President Biya’s announcement to run again is a clear sign of Cameroon’s stalled political transition. After over 40 years in power, what the country needs is renewal – not repetition. Cameroonians deserve democratic change and accountable leadership,” Nkongho Felix Agbor, a human rights advocate and lawyer told The Associated Press.

Cameroon has also had to deal with spillover violence by the Islamic extremist Boko Haram group, based in neighboring Nigeria.

Recently, several of Biya’s longtime allies defected to announce their own candidacies for president.

He cruised to victory in 2018 with over 70% of the vote in an election marred by irregularities and low turnout due to ongoing separatist and jihadist violence.

In a region threatened with shrinking democratic space, several other African countries also have presidents accused of using state mechanisms to prolong their stay in power. Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni recently sought nomination for a seventh term, a move that would bring him closer to five decades in power in the East African country.



Cameroon President Paul Biya delivers a speech during a ceremony at the Boulouris National Cemetery in Boulouris-sur-Mer, south eastern France on Aug 15, 2024. (AP)

Africa

S.Africa police minister suspended: South African President Cyril Ramaphosa on Sunday suspended the country’s police minister and announced an investigation into allegations he has been colluding with criminal syndicates.

Ramaphosa’s actions follow allegations made by a top police official in the KwaZulu-Natal province, Gen Nhlanhla Mkhwanazi, that **Senzo Mchunu** and deputy police commissioner Shadrack Sibiyha had interfered with sensitive investigations.

Ramaphosa said the probe will be headed by a judge, and announced Firoz Cachalia as the acting minister of police.

“The commission will investigate the role of current or former senior officials in certain institutions who may have aided or abetted the alleged criminal activity, failed to act on credible intelligence or internal warnings, or benefited financially or politically from a syndicate’s operations,” Ramaphosa said during a televised address Sunday. (AP)



Mchunu

W.Sudan paramilitary attacks kill 18: At least 18 civilians were killed and 31 others injured in attacks by the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) on areas in the North Kordofan State in western Sudan, volunteers group said on Sunday.

“The RSF committed a horrific atrocity in the Shaq Al-Noum area of North Kordofan State, killing 11 civilians, including three children, and injuring 31 others, among them nine women,” the Sudanese Doctors Network, a volunteer group, said in a statement. The network described the attack as “a brutal assault that violates all humanitarian norms and international conventions,” saying that it reflects the RSF’s ongoing pattern of targeting unarmed civilians and spreading fear in previously safe areas. (Xinhua)

Asia

Japan former emperor Akihito hospitalized: Japan’s 91-year-old former **Emperor Akihito** was hospitalized Monday to adjust his heart medication, palace officials said.

Akihito was diagnosed in May with myocardial ischemia, an asymptomatic heart condition of reduced blood flow from the coronary arteries to the heart muscle. He has since been on medication to improve blood flow to his heart while avoiding excessive exercise and reducing liquid intake.

Akihito abdicated in 2019, handing over the Chrysanthemum Throne to his son, current Emperor Naruhito and now holds the title of Emperor Emeritus.

After two months on the medication, doctors found little improvement in Akihito’s condition and decided to give him an additional treatment to alleviate the burden on his heart, the Imperial Household Agency said.

Monday’s hospitalization was to carefully determine the right dose of the new medication to avoid side effects, while monitoring his heart by electrocardiogram and other examination, the IHA said. (AP)



Akihito

S.Korean president’s approval rating up: South Korean President Lee Jae-myung’s approval rating rose 1.1 percentage points over the week to 74.7 percent last week, a weekly poll showed Monday.

The negative assessment on Lee’s conduct of state affairs fell 0.7 percentage points to 22.7 percent, according to computer assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) by local pollster Flower Research.

The ruling liberal Democratic Party’s approval score recorded this year’s high of 57.8 percent, 37.1 percentage points higher than the conservative opposition People Power Party’s 20.7 percent.

Support rate for the minor left-leaning Rebuilding Korea Party and the minor rightist New Reform Party posted 3.5 percent and 2.9 percent each last week.

The pollster’s separate survey of the automated response system (ARS) showed that Lee’s approval rating advanced 0.6 percentage points to 68.3 percent last week compared to the previous week.

The CATI and the ARS surveyed 1,003 and 1,008 voters each from Friday to Saturday. They had a plus and minus 3.1 percentage points in margin of error with a 95-percent confidence level. (Xinhua)

Cambodia to implement military conscription next year: Hun Manet

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia, July 14, (Agencies): Cambodia’s Prime Minister Hun Manet said Monday that his country will implement military conscription starting next year, in an announcement that coincides with persistent border tensions with Thailand.

Relations between the neighbors have deteriorated sharply following an armed confrontation on May 28 in which one Cambodian soldier was killed in one of several small contested patches of land.

The sides have agreed to de-escalate their dispute to avoid further clashes, but continue to implement or threaten measures that have kept tensions high, alongside exchanging sharp words.

The dispute has also roiled Thailand’s domestic politics. Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra was suspended from office after making what critics saw as a disparaging comment about her country’s military in a phone call to Cambodia’s former Prime Minister Hun Sen, who leaked a recording of it.

Also:

PHNOM PENH: A war-left anti-tank mine had exploded, killing a farm owner in northwest **Cambodia’s Battambang** province, a mine clearance chief said on Monday.

Heng Ratana, director-general of the Cambodian Mine Action Center (CMAC), said the blast happened late Sunday afternoon at a farm in Rotanak Mondol district’s Rasmey Sangha village when the ill-fated man was operating a tractor to plough his own farm.



In this photo released by Agence Kampuchea Press (AKP), Cambodian troops perform during ceremony to put in used the military building in northern Kampong Chhnang province on July 14. (AP)



People wade through floodwater in a street after heavy monsoon rain in Lahore, Pakistan on July 9. (Xinhua)

Monsoon rain-related accidents leave 104 dead and 200 injured across Pakistan

ISLAMABAD, July 14, (Xinhua): Torrential rains and flash floods have claimed at least 104 lives and left over 200 others injured across Pakistan between June 26 and July 12, the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) said on Sunday.

Six people were dead and 15 others injured in rain-related accidents in the past 24 hours, the NDMA said.

The eastern Punjab province recorded the highest number of fatalities with 39, followed by the northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province with 31, the southern Sindh province with 17, and the southwestern Balochistan province with 16.

Authorities have issued warnings for further rainfall in the coming days and urged residents, particularly those in low-lying and vulnerable areas, to take precautionary measures. Rescue and relief operations remained underway in the worst-affected regions.

Also:

ISLAMABAD: A total of 257 people were killed and 492 others injured in 501 terrorist incidents in **Pakistan’s** south-west **Balochistan** province in the first half of 2025, local authorities said in a report. The report recorded a 45 percent increase in terrorist incidents in the cited period compared to the same period last year.

A total of 81 attacks involving improvised explosive devices, grenades, bombs, and landmines resulted in 26 deaths and 112 injuries.

The report highlighted a sharp rise in attacks targeting non-local residents, with 52 people killed and 11 injured in 14 such incidents, a 100-percent increase over the previous period.

Two attacks on passenger trains claimed 29 lives, while 39 attacks on civilians left 11 people dead and 29 injured.

In addition, one health worker was killed in an attack on a polio vaccination team. Nine attacks on mobile phone towers injured two individuals. Balochistan, Pakistan’s largest province by area, has faced decades of violence linked to separatist movements and insurgent activity.

Lat/Am

Ecuador offers \$100K reward for lawmaker info: Ecuador’s government on Sunday offered a \$100,000 reward for information on the whereabouts of a lawmaker whom authorities accused of raping a minor.

The case against Santiago Díaz Asque became public when he was expelled from an opposition party earlier this week. Interior Minister Jhon Reimberg in a post on X said the reward is for “true and verifiable” information on Díaz’s location.

Authorities on Wednesday raided three properties linked to the case, but prosecutor’s have declined to provide details of the investigation.

Díaz requested unpaid leave from the National Assembly after he was kicked out of the Citizen Revolution party, but it was denied. He also published a letter in which he rejected the accusation and characterized it as an attempt to “silence my incorruptible and critical voice.” (AP)

Argentina accuses ex-prez of corruption: Prosecutors in Argentina formally accused former President Alberto Fernández of irregularities in contracting insurance for the public sector during his administration.

Federal Judge Sebastián Casanella, however, allowed Fernández to remain free while the case against the former leftist leader proceeds.

It’s the second case brought against Fernández since he left office, but the first related to alleged corruption. Earlier this year, he was charged with committing gender violence against former first lady Fabiola Yáñez.

In the insurance case, prosecutors are charging Fernández with carrying out negotiations incompatible with holding public office, which could carry a sentence of one to six years of prison. (AP)

Boursa Kuwait ends flat amid active trading

KUWAIT CITY, July 14, (KUNA): Boursa Kuwait ended Monday's session with its general index edging down 1.93 points, or 0.02 percent, to close at 8,622.47. Trading was active, with 913.1 million shares changing hands through 35,653 transactions, amounting to 119.6 million Kuwaiti dinars (approximately \$391.5 million). The Main Market Index declined by 20.65 points, or

0.28 percent, settling at 7,342.74. A total of 743.1 million shares were traded in 25,665 transactions, with a turnover of 60.2 million dinars (about \$197 million). The Premier Market Index posted a slight gain, rising 2.65 points, or 0.03 percent, to 9,367.87. The segment saw 170 million shares traded through 9,988 transactions, valued at 59.4 million dinars (around \$194.4 million).

Program offers two tracks in Cybersecurity and AI Python programming

Kuwait Codes 2nd cohort kicks-off in partnership with Zain

KUWAIT CITY, July 14: Zain announced the launch of the second cohort of the 2025 edition of the Kuwait Codes initiative, part of its ongoing strategic partnership with CODED Academy. The new phase features the participation of over 300 high school students and aims to equip them with advanced digital skills to enhance their readiness for the future.

The orientation session was held at the College of Life Sciences at Kuwait University – Shadadiya campus, with the participation of Hamad Al-Musaibeeh, Corporate Relations Department Manager at Zain Kuwait, who met with students and was briefed on the training plans and new focus areas for this cohort.

This phase introduces two main training tracks: one in Cybersecurity and another in Python programming using artificial intelligence technologies. This marks the first time Python with AI is included in the program. Python is one of the world's most widely



Al-Musaibeeh addressing the second cohort of students.

used programming languages, valued for its versatility and ease of learning, making it an ideal choice for developing students' technical

capabilities.

The expansion of the initiative builds on the success of previous seasons, with Zain continuing to



From the orientation session.

support quality educational programs that contribute to building a digitally aware generation capable of innovating across various tech-

nology and innovation sectors.

Kuwait Codes is considered one of the leading educational programs focused on developing students'

programming skills in a simplified yet professional manner. It offers a dynamic and engaging learning environment supported by modern training content that keeps pace with the evolving tech landscape.

The initiative aims to train 1,000 students during the current year across a variety of technical fields, including app development, website design, cybersecurity, and artificial intelligence.

Zain's participation in this initiative is part of its corporate sustainability strategy, which places youth empowerment and digital education at the forefront of its priorities. In line with this vision, the company supports a number of pioneering programs in partnership with CODED Academy, such as the girls-coding-focused X Academy, the Kuwait Hackathon Challenge, and a range of training initiatives that aim to enhance the technical capabilities of national talents to prepare them for the digital economy of the future.

Saudi Arabia leads the region in IPO proceeds raising \$2.8 billion

Markaz: GCC IPOs raise \$3.4 billion in H1 2025

KUWAIT CITY, July 14: Kuwait Financial Centre "Markaz" released its research report titled "Initial Public Offerings (IPO) in the GCC markets", stating that the region has seen 24 offerings during the year 2025 raising a total of USD 3.4 billion in proceeds, marking a 6% decrease compared to the previous year, where issuers raised USD 3.5 billion through 23 offerings.

Geographical Allocation:

Markaz's report stated that Saudi Arabia led the region in terms of IPO proceeds for the first half of the year, raising a total of USD 2.8 billion through 22 offerings which constituted 85% of the total GCC IPO proceeds during the year representing a 36% increase in IPO value compared to H1 2024.

Alpha Data, a software firm in the United Arab Emirates was the only IPO for the country during the first half of 2025 raising USD 163 million. This marks a 88% decline in proceeds for the UAE compared to the same period last year. Moreover, Oman's Asyad Shipping Company was the only IPO in the country during the first half of the year raising USD 333 million. Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain saw no IPOs during the first half of 2025.

Sector Allocation:

The Industrials sector raised a total of USD 1.4 billion, accounting for nearly 43% of the total proceeds during H1 2025 from offerings led by Flynas' USD 1.1 billion IPO followed by Asyad Shipping Company and Itmam Consulting Company. This was followed by the Real Estate sector which accounted for 17% of total proceeds for H1 2025 with USD 576 million of which Umm Al Qura for Development and Construction contributed USD 523 million. The Healthcare sector raised USD 505 million of which Specialized Medical Company's IPO raised USD 500 million. The Financial Services, Technology, Consumer Staples, Materials and Consumer Discretionary sectors contributed 12%, 6%, 4%, 3% and 1% respectively.

Post-Listing Performance:

At the end of H1 2025, 10 out of the 24 IPOs had shown positive return compared to their offer price. Asyad Shipping Company which was listed on the 12th of March 2025, achieved the highest gain at 835% by the end of H1 2025. Saudi Arabia's Umm Al Qura for Development and Construction Company followed recording a gain of 51% during H1 2025.

Flynas the largest IPO on Tadawul and the region during H1 2025 witnessed a 3.4% drop in the first day performance but ended the period recording a 0.2% drop compared to its offer price. On the other hand, many companies in the Materials sector witnessed negative returns compared to their offer price. Hedab Alkhaleej Trading Co. witness a decrease of 30% in its share price during H1 2025, Dkhoun National Trading Company decreased by 27% and Service Equipment Co. decreased by 26%.

GCC Markets Performance

The GCC equity market indices have experienced mixed performance in the first six months of 2025. Boursa Kuwait outperformed its GCC peers with a 18.1% increase year to date followed by Dubai Financial Market with a 10.6% increase. The Abu Dhabi Exchange (ADX) and Qatar Stock Exchange followed increasing 5.7% and 1.7% respectively. On the other hand, the Muscat Securities Market witnessed a decrease of 1.7%, Bahrain Bourse by 2.1% and Saudi Tadawul by 7.6%.

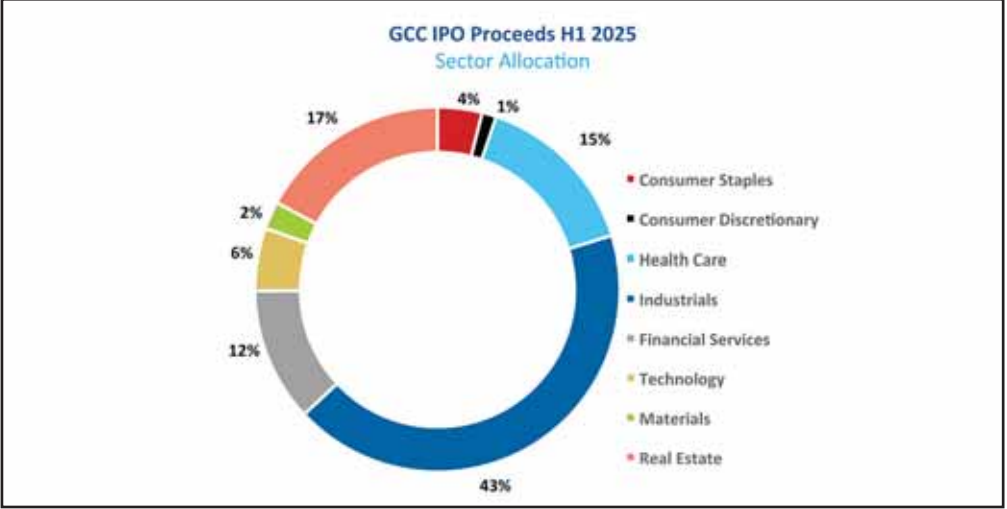
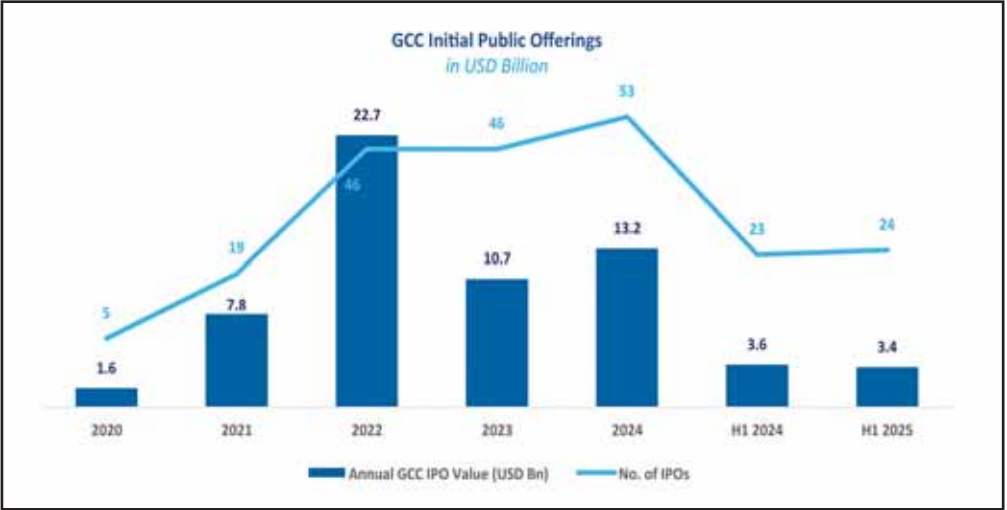
GCC IPO Pipeline:

Saudi Arabia is expecting to continue its dominance in the IPO market with strong activity across multiple sectors by PIF-led listing while the UAE expects to witness activity in the industrials and technology sectors. Moreover, Kuwait's Capital Markets Authority has officially launched a new regulatory framework to support the listing and trading of emerging companies on Boursa Kuwait in hopes to encourage public listings and enhance the Kuwaiti market

About Kuwait Financial Centre "Markaz"

Established in 1974, Kuwait Financial Centre K.P.S.C "Markaz" is one of the leading asset management and investment banking institutions in the MENA region with total assets under management of over KD 1.44 billion (USD 4.67 billion) as of 31 March 2025. Markaz was listed on the Boursa Kuwait in 1997. Over the years, Markaz has pioneered innovation through the creation of new investment channels. These channels enjoy unique characteristics and helped Markaz widen investors' horizons. Examples include Mumtaz (the first domestic mutual fund), MREF (the first real estate investment fund in Kuwait), Forsa Financial Fund (the first options market maker in the GCC since 2005), and the GCC Momentum Fund (the first passive fund of its kind in Kuwait and across GCC that follows the momentum methodology), all conceptualized, established, and managed by Markaz.

Selected IPOs	Country	Market	Offering Size (Stake)	Sector
Sports Club Co.	KSA	Tadawul	30%	Consumer Discretionary
National Unified Procurement Company	KSA	Tadawul	30%	Industrials
Riyad Capital	KSA	Tadawul	NA	Financial Services
AlRamz Real Estate Company	KSA	Tadawul	30%	Real Estate
Tabby	KSA	Tadawul	NA	Financial Services
Etihad Airways	UAE	ADX	20%	Industrials
Amanat Holding Education platform	UAE	DFM	30%	Education
Al Koot Insurance	Qatar	Qatar Stock Exchange	NA	Financial Services



Khaled AlShamlan, Andrew Jeffreys and Cristina Mirica

KFH, OBG discuss Kuwait's sustainable growth vision

KUWAIT CITY, July 14: The role of Kuwait Finance House (KFH) in supporting sustainable economic growth, financial innovation and private sector development in line with Kuwait Vision 2035 was among the central topics of discussion during a recent strategic meeting between Khaled AlShamlan, Group Chief Executive Officer of KFH, and a senior delegation from Oxford Business Group (OBG), led by Andrew Jeffreys, the Group's Chief Executive Officer, and Cristina Mirica, Country Director for Kuwait.

The meeting provided an opportunity for both parties to exchange insights on Kuwait's evolving financial landscape, with a particular focus on supporting national development priorities through knowledge sharing, responsible financial practices and enhanced stakeholder engagement.

Discussions also explored the possibility of future collaboration in areas such as thought leadership, joint events, and market intelligence. In addition, the parties highlighted the importance of ESG principles, digitalisation and strong corporate governance in shaping a resilient and inclusive financial ecosystem.

Khaled AlShamlan shared his thoughts with OBG that the meeting was aligned with KFH's broader commitment to enabling economic progress in Kuwait and strengthening engagement with strategic

knowledge partners.

"KFH remains committed to advancing sustainable growth and aligning with national priorities under Vision 2035. Our discussion with Oxford Business Group reflects our interest in working with knowledge partners to support financial innovation, enhance market transparency and drive private sector development in Kuwait and beyond," he said.

Andrew Jeffreys, CEO of Oxford Business Group, said the meeting offered a valuable opportunity to exchange views on regional investment dynamics and future collaboration.

"We are pleased to have had the opportunity to meet with Mr. AlShamlan and his team at a time when Kuwait's financial sector is undergoing rapid transformation. KFH's leadership in ethical banking and innovation aligns well with the themes we are exploring in our research. We look forward to deepening our engagement with key stakeholders in the sector," he noted.

The meeting forms part of OBG's ongoing research for The Report: Kuwait 2025, which will analyse key trends and investment opportunities across the country's economy and will be in both printed and digital formats. The publication will feature insights from leading public and private sector figures, alongside data and analysis covering financial services, energy, infrastructure, and other priority areas.

Yemen Central Bank warns against Houthi 50-riyal coin

ADEN, July 14, (KUNA): The Central Bank of Yemen in Aden, the provisional capital of the country, cautioned the citizens against dealing in a 50-riyal coin the Houthi militia said they issued in Sanaa yesterday.

The issuance of the coin without a legal or monetary coverage is a new serious act of sabotage that falls in the framework of economic warfare the Houthis wage against the Yemeni people, the Bank said in a press release on Sunday.

The Bank warned the citizens and the banking system in the Houthi-controlled areas that dealing in any fake currency, whether new or old, will make them liable to sanctions as long as the issuer, the Houthis, is illegitimate entity and designated as terrorist organization.



Wizz Air Airbus A320 approaches for landing at sunset in Lisbon, Portugal, on July 20, 2024. (AP)

CEO cites instability for Abu Dhabi exit

Wizz Air to suspend Abu Dhabi operations by September

DUBAI, July 14, (AP): Low-cost carrier Wizz Air said on Monday that it plans to suspend all locally based flight operations out of Abu Dhabi as geopolitics and operational developments test its margins.

Zayed International Airport, in the Emirati capital, has long been overshadowed by its successful Dubai neighbor, the world's busiest for international travel.

Wizz Air's decision to end operations out of its

hub in Abu Dhabi, effective Sept. 1, comes as it aims

to focus on its core markets in Central and Eastern Europe, the Hungarian company said in a post on X. The announcement follows last month's 12-day war between Israel and Iran, which shook the region and sent airlines scrambling amid airspace closures.

In a statement, Wizz Air CEO József Váradi said the company has had "a tremendous journey in the Middle East." But, he added, "the operating environ-

ment has changed significantly."

"Supply chain constraints, geopolitical instability, and limited market access have made it increasingly difficult to sustain our original ambitions," Váradi said.

Wizz Air's Abu Dhabi subsidiary, created in partnership with the government-owned Abu Dhabi Developmental Holding Co., was its first operation established outside of Europe.

New leasing option offers modern Toyota vehicles in Kuwait

Warba Bank, ALSAYER launch Toyota Car Leasing Program

KUWAIT CITY, July 14: As part of its strategy to provide innovative financing solutions and added value to its customers, Warba Bank has announced the launch of an exclusive car leasing program in collaboration with ALSAYER Car Rental Company. The new service allows customers to lease selected Toyota vehicles through a flexible and convenient financing policy, with a wide range of benefits tailored to meet their everyday needs.

The announcement was made during a press conference held at ALSAYER Toyota's showroom, where the agreement was signed by Mr. Mohammad Jassim Al Khudhur, Director of Auto Finance at Warba Bank, and Mr. Scott McNicol, General Manager of ALSAYER Car Rental and Leasing Company, with the presence of employees from both sides. The event featured a detailed presentation on the agreement and the benefits that will be offered to customers.

Commenting on the partnership, Mr. Mohammad Jassim Al Khudhur stated: "We are proud to launch this strategic partnership with ALSAYER Car Rental Company, which reflects our commitment to delivering innovative financial solutions that meet the needs of our customers and add real value to their banking experience. Through this collaboration, we aim to offer flexible and convenient leasing options that allow our customers to enjoy driving modern Toyota vehicles with a host of exclusive benefits that ensure peace of mind and safety."

Al Khudhur further emphasized that Warba Bank believes the true value of any product or service lies in its ability to meet and exceed customer expectations. He added: "Through our partnership with ALSAYER, we have developed a comprehensive leasing product that provides customers with a smooth journey, from choosing the right vehicle to enjoying post-leasing services, aligned with their lifestyle and aspirations. Guided by our slogan to 'Let's Own Tomorrow,' we continue to offer innovative solutions that empower our cus-



Warba teams up with ALSAYER for Toyota leasing offers.

tomers and help build a brighter, more sustainable future."

He also noted: "Our strategy at Warba Bank has always focused on providing smart, innovative products that offer real value to the customer. This product opens new doors for our clients to acquire a vehicle in a seamless manner, supported by carefully designed benefits that make partnering with us their preferred choice."

Exclusive Benefits and Integrated Services

The new leasing service offers a unique set of benefits including flexible leasing terms, routine maintenance, full

insurance coverage, a replacement car service, 24/7 roadside assistance, and door-to-door vehicle pick-up and drop-off for scheduled maintenance, all to ensure customer comfort and a seamless driving experience.

Mr. Scott McNicol, General Manager at ALSAYER Car Rental Company, commented:

"We are pleased to partner with Warba Bank to launch this offering, which makes it easier for customers to enjoy a premium driving experience without complications. We are confident that this collaboration will meet the needs of

diverse customer segments by providing exceptional leasing services from two of the most reputable institutions in the Kuwaiti market."

He added that ALSAYER Car Rental Company offers a wide selection of Toyota vehicles that are known globally for their advanced systems and focus on road safety, and are suitable for all segments, with competitive monthly payments compared to market prices. This enables customers to enjoy driving modern Toyota vehicles at accessible rates.

Customers interested in benefiting from this service can visit any Warba Bank branch or contact the customer service center for more information about terms, conditions, and how to apply.

About Warba Bank

Warba Bank is one of Kuwait's leading Islamic financial institutions, committed to providing innovative Sharia-compliant banking solutions with a focus on digital transformation, sustainability, and customer-centricity. The bank continues to set new standards in Islamic banking, redefining the customer experience and supporting the development of a sustainable and inclusive financial ecosystem.

Warba Bank has achieved remarkable success in a short period, establishing a leadership position in digital Islamic banking and ranking among the local banks with the highest number of shareholders, making it accessible to all segments of society. This achievement further confirms Warba's status as a trusted banking partner that blends innovation with social responsibility.

About ALSAYER Car Rental Company

ALSAYER Car Rental Company is a leading car rental and leasing service provider in Kuwait and part of the Al Sayer Group, the exclusive distributor of Toyota vehicles in the country. The company offers a wide range of vehicle leasing options with a strong emphasis on delivering high-quality services and exceptional customer experience.

Factories await 'new normal' as hiring slows down

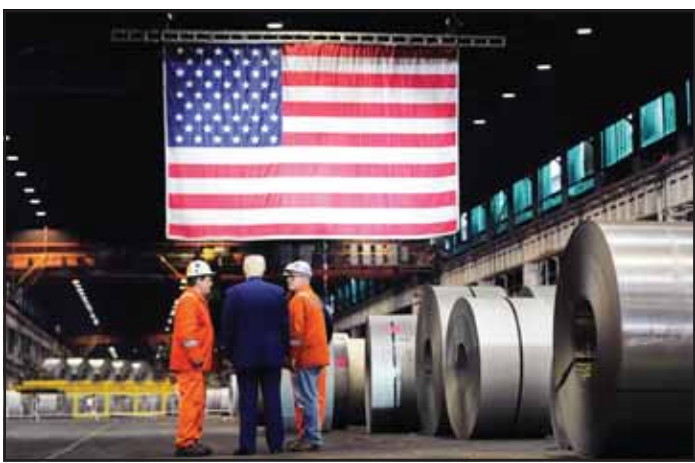
US manufacturing struggles amid tariffs

WASHINGTON, July 14 (AP): Democrats and Republicans don't agree on much, but they share a conviction that the government should help American manufacturers, one way or another.

Democratic President Joe Biden handed out subsidies to chipmakers and electric vehicle manufacturers. Republican President Donald Trump is building a wall of import taxes - tariffs - around the U.S. economy to protect domestic industry from foreign competition.

Yet American manufacturing has been stuck in a rut for nearly three years. And it remains to be seen whether the trend will reverse itself.

The U.S. Labor Department reports that American factories shed 7,000 jobs in June for the second month in a row. Manufacturing employment is on track to drop for the third straight year.



President Donald Trump talks to workers as he tours U.S. Steel Corporation's Mon Valley Works-Irvin plant, Friday, May 30, 2025, in West Mifflin, Pa. (AP)

The Institute for Supply Management, an association of purchasing managers, reported that manufacturing activity in the United States shrank in June for the fourth straight month. In fact, U.S. factories have been in decline for 30 of the 32 months since October 2022, according to ISM.

"The past three years have been a real slog for manufacturing," said Eric Hagopian, CEO of Pilot Precision Products, a maker of industrial cutting tools in South Deerfield, Massachusetts. "We didn't get destroyed like we did in the recession of 2008. But we've been in this stagnant, sort of stationary environment."

Big economic factors contributed to the slowdown: A surge in inflation, arising from the unexpectedly strong economic recovery from COVID-19, raised factory expenses and prompted the Federal Reserve to raise interest rates 11 times in 2022 and 2023. The higher borrowing costs added to the strain.

Government policy was meant to help.

Biden's tax incentives for semiconductor and clean energy production triggered a factory-building boom - investment in manufacturing facilities more than tripled from April 2021 through October 2024 - that seemed to herald a coming surge in factory production and hiring. Eventually anyway.

But the factory investment spree has faded as the incoming Trump administration launched trade wars and, working with Congress, ended Biden's subsidies for green energy. Now, predicts Mark Zandi, chief economist at Moody's Analytics, "manufacturing production will continue to flatline."

"If production is flat, that suggests manufacturing employment will continue to slide," Zandi said. "Manufacturing is likely to suffer a recession in the coming year."

Meanwhile, Trump is attempting to protect U.S. manufacturers - and to coax factories to relocate and produce in America - by imposing tariffs on goods made overseas. He slapped 50% taxes on steel and aluminum, 25% on autos and auto parts, 10% on many other imports.

In some ways, Trump's tariffs

can give U.S. factories an edge. Chris Zuzick, vice president at Waukesha Metal Products, said the Sussex, Wisconsin-based manufacturer is facing stiff competition for a big contract in Texas. A foreign company offers much lower prices. But "when you throw the tariff on it, it gets us closer," Zuzick said. "So that's definitely a situation where it's beneficial."

But American factories import and use foreign products, too - machinery, chemicals, raw materials like steel and aluminum. Taxing those inputs can drive up costs and make U.S. producers less competitive in world markets.

Consider steel. Trump's tariffs don't just make imported steel more expensive. By putting the foreign competition at a disadvantage, the tariffs allow U.S. steelmakers to raise prices - and they have. U.S.-made steel was priced at \$960 per metric ton as of June 23, more than double the world export price of \$440 per ton, according to industry monitor SteelBenchmarker.

In fact, U.S. steel prices are so high that Pilot Precision Products has continued to buy the steel it needs from suppliers in Austria and France - and pay Trump's tariff.

Trump has also created considerable uncertainty by repeatedly tweaking and rescheduling his tariffs. Just before new import taxes were set to take effect on dozens of countries on July 9, for example, the president pushed the deadline back to Aug. 1 to allow more time for negotiation with U.S. trading partners.

The flipflops have left factories, suppliers and customers bewildered about where things stand. Manufacturers voiced their complaints in the ISM survey: "Customers do not want to make commitments in the wake of massive tariff uncertainty," a fabricated metal products company said.

"Tariffs continue to cause confusion and uncertainty for long-term procurement decisions," added a computer and electronics firm. "The situation remains too volatile to firmly put such plans into place."

Some may argue that things aren't necessarily bad for U.S. manufacturing; they've just returned to normal after a pandemic-related bust and boom.

Factories slashed nearly 1.4 mil-

lion jobs in March and April 2020 when COVID-19 forced many businesses to shut down and Americans to stay home. Then a funny thing happened: American consumers, cooped up and flush with COVID relief checks from the government, went on a spending spree, snapping up manufactured goods like air fryers, patio furniture and exercise machines.

Suddenly, factories were scrambling to keep up. They brought back the workers they laid off - and then some. Factories added 379,000 jobs in 2021 - the most since 1994 - and then tacked on another 357,000 in 2022.

But in 2023, factory hiring stopped growing and began backtracking as the economy returned to something closer to the pre-pandemic normal.

In the end, it was a wash. Factory payrolls last month came to 12.75 million, almost exactly where they stood in February 2020 (12.74 million) just before COVID slammed the economy.

"It's a long, strange trip to get back to where we started," said Jared Bernstein, chair of Biden's White House Council of Economic Advisers.

Zuzick at Waukesha Metal Products said that it will take time to see if Trump's tariffs succeed in bringing factories back to America.

"The fact is that manufacturing doesn't turn on a dime," he said. "It takes time to switch gears."

Hagopian at Pilot Precision is hopeful that tax breaks in Trump's One Big Beautiful Bill will help American manufacturing regain momentum.

"There may be light at the end of the tunnel that may not be a locomotive bearing down," he said.

For now, manufacturers are likely to delay big decisions on investing or bringing on new workers until they see where Trump's tariffs settle and what impact they have on the economy, said Ned Hill, professor emeritus in economic development at Ohio State University.

"With all this uncertainty about what the rest of the year is going to look like," he said, "there's a hesitancy to hire people just to lay them off in the near future."

"Everyone," said Zuzick at Waukesha Metal Products, "is kind of just waiting for the new normal."

EU trade min meet amid Trump's 30% tariff threat

Brussels suspends retaliatory tariffs

BRUSSELS, July 14, (AP): European trade ministers are meeting in Brussels on Monday, following U.S. President Donald Trump's surprise announcement of 30% tariffs on the European Union.

The EU is America's biggest business partner and the world's largest trading bloc. The U.S. decision will have repercussions for governments, companies and consumers on both sides of the Atlantic.

"We shouldn't impose countermeasures at this stage, but we should prepare to be ready to use all the tools in the toolbox," said Denmark's foreign minister, Lars Løkke Rasmussen, told reporters ahead of the meeting. "So we want a deal, but there's an old saying: 'If you want peace, you have to prepare for war.'"

The tariffs, also imposed on Mexico, are set to start on Aug. 1 and could make everything from French cheese and Italian leather goods to German electronics and Spanish pharmaceuticals more expensive in the U.S., and destabilize economies from Portugal to Norway.

Meanwhile, Brussels decided to suspend retaliatory tariffs on U.S. goods scheduled to take effect Monday in hopes of reaching a trade deal with the Trump administration by the end of the month.

The "countermeasures" by the EU, which negotiates trade deals on behalf of its 27 member countries, will be delayed until Aug. 1.

Trump's letter shows "that we have until the first of August" to negotiate, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen told reporters in Brussels on Sunday.

Maroš Šefčovič, the EU's trade representative in its talks with the U.S., said negotiations would continue.

"I'm absolutely 100% sure that a negotiated solution is much better than the tension which we might have after the 1st of August," he told reporters in Brussels on Monday.

"I cannot imagine walking away without genuine effort. Having said that, the current uncertainty caused by unjusti-

fied tariffs cannot persist indefinitely and therefore we must prepare for all outcomes, including, if necessary, well-considered proportionate countermeasures to restore the balance in our transit static relationship."

The letters to the EU and Mexico come in the midst of an on-and-off Trump threat to impose tariffs on countries and right an imbalance in trade.

Trump imposed tariffs in April on dozens of countries, before pausing them for 90 days to negotiate individual deals. As the three-month grace period ended this week, he began sending tariff letters to leaders, but again has pushed back the implementation day for what he says will be just a few more weeks.

If he moves forward with the tariffs, it could have ramifications for nearly every aspect of the global economy.

In the wake of the new tariffs, European leaders largely closed ranks, calling for unity but also a steady hand to not provoke further acrimony.

Just last week, Europe was cautiously optimistic. Officials told reporters on Friday they weren't expecting a letter like the one sent Saturday and that a trade deal was to be inked in "the coming days." For months, the EU has broadcast that it has strong retaliatory measures ready if talks fail.

Reeling from successive rebukes from Washington, Šefčovič said Monday the EU is "doubling down on efforts to open new markets" and pointed to a new economic agreement with Indonesia as one.

The EU top brass will visit Beijing for a summit later this month while courting other Pacific nations like South Korea, Japan, Vietnam, Singapore, the Philippines, and Indonesia, whose prime minister visited Brussels over the weekend to sign a new economic partnership with the EU.

It also has mega-deals in the works with Mexico and a trading bloc of South American nations known as Mercosur.

While meeting with Indonesia's president on Sunday, Von der Leyen said that "when economic uncertainty meets geopolitical volatility, partners like us must come closer together."

Bitcoin doubles year-on-year

Crypto legislation, ETFs lift Bitcoin to all-time high

NEW YORK, July 14, (AP): Bitcoin has reached yet another all-time high, surpassing \$118,000 for the first time on Friday - as a flood of money continues to move into spot bitcoin ETFs, all while U.S. President Donald Trump's crypto-friendly influence makes its way through Washington.

According to data from CoinMarketCap, the going price for bitcoin climbed as high as \$118,856 early Friday. The world's most popular cryptocurrency later fell slightly under the \$118,000 mark in the afternoon - but was still dancing close to the threshold around 4 p.m. ET, sitting about \$8,000 higher than it was a month ago and more than double its price this time last year.

Spot bitcoin ETFs opened up cryptocurrency investing more widely after launching last year - and analysts have pointed to record inflows recently. And a soft U.S. dollar and the digital currency friendliness of Trump's administration also has helped to lift the price of bitcoin to unprecedented levels over the past few months.

Last month, the Senate passed legislation that would regulate a form of cryptocurrency known as stablecoins, the first of what the industry hopes will be a wave of bills to bolster its legitimacy and reassure consumers.

Known as the GENIUS Act, the bill would establish guardrails and consumer protections for stablecoins, a type of cryptocurrency typically pegged to the U.S. dollar. The acronym stands for "Guiding and Establishing National Innovation for U.S. Stablecoins." And next week, the House of Representatives will be considering this bill as part of Congress' efforts to strengthen the country's crypto position.

The fast-moving legislation comes on the heels of a 2024 campaign cycle in which the crypto industry ranked among the top political spenders in the country.

Trump, once a crypto skeptic, became a major promoter of the industry throughout his presidential run last year - and has since moved to expand his and his family's own crypto empire even further. Earlier this week, Trump Media & Technology Group said it had filed paperwork with the Securities and Exchange Commission seeking approval to launch its "Crypto Blue Chip ETF" later this year.

Bitcoin's rise also arrives amid a wider backdrop of economic uncertainty, notably the global turmoil spanning from Trump's steep - and at times on-again, off again - tariffs imposed against key trading partners worldwide.

"Bitcoin has shown resilience this year rebounding in-line with its macro exposures following tariff announcements," Citi analysts wrote in a Friday research insights. But again, they noted that the Trump administration "has been positive for Bitcoin" overall - and attributed bitcoin's recent rally to overall changes to the outlook of U.S. regulation, as well as investments into spot ETFs.

Bitcoin's backers have often argued that the asset is like a "digital gold" that can act as a hedge against volatility - but many have remained skeptical of that comparison. Larger market conditions have previously proven also to sway bitcoin's price.

In April, amid a wider selloff following Trump's sweeping "Liberation Day" tariff announcements, bitcoin briefly dipped below \$75,000. That marked the cryptocurrency's lowest price since before Trump's Election Day victory in November.

While bitcoin has since rebounded significantly, it's important for investors to remember that it's still a highly volatile - and relatively new - asset that's seen wild swings in value before. In short, history shows you can lose money in crypto as quickly as you've made it.

Asian stocks mixed as China reports export gains

World markets mixed amid tariff worries and earnings watch

BANGKOK, July 14, (AP): World shares were mixed on Monday as investors focused on tariffs and corporate earnings updates.

An announcement over the weekend by U.S. President Donald Trump that he plans 30% tariffs on goods from Mexico and the European Union had a modest immediate impact, as analysts said they expected progress toward trade deals before an Aug. 1 deadline.

Trump detailed the planned tariffs Saturday in letters posted to his social media account.

The Mexican peso weakened slightly against the dollar, trading at 18.6 pesos to the dollar.

Chinese shares advanced after the government reported that exports rose last month as a truce in a tariffs war prompted a surge in orders ahead of an Aug. 12 deadline for reaching a new trade deal with Washington.

Hong Kong's Hang Seng gained 0.3% to 24,091.45, while the Shanghai Composite index also was up 0.3%, at 3,519.65.

Tokyo's Nikkei 225 index slipped 0.3% to 39,459.62, while the Kospi in South Korea jumped 0.8% to 3,202.03.

In Australia, the S&P/ASX 200 edged 0.1% lower

to 8,570.40.

Taiwan's benchmark lost 0.6%.

On Friday, a modest pullback for U.S. stocks left major stock indexes on Wall Street in the red for the week.

The S&P 500 closed 0.3% lower, at 6,259.75, a day after setting a record high.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average dropped 0.6% to 44,371.51, and the Nasdaq composite gave up 0.2% to 20,585.53 after drifting between small gains and losses much of the day. The tech-heavy index was coming off its own all-time high on Thursday.



A person walks in front of an electronic stock board showing Japan's Nikkei index at a securities firm Monday, July 14, 2025, in Tokyo. (AP)

Girls especially view it as essential to achieving life goals despite rising costs and uncertainties

Most teens still see college as key to success



Ry-n Uyeda, 17, looks at a scholarship information board at Leeward Community College, on July 11, 2025, in Waianae, Hawaii. (AP)

‘About 7 in 10 teenagers said completing college is “extremely” or “very” important for getting good jobs, and about 6 in 10 teenagers say a degree is valuable in learning necessary life skills.’

PHOENIX, July 14, (AP): Most American teenagers say it is important to them to graduate from college, with girls especially describing it as a key step for accomplishing their life goals, according to a new poll.

Teenagers also generally are more upbeat than adults on college despite concerns about tuition costs, soaring student loan debt and the politicization of many issues in higher education.

Overall, about 6 in 10 teens say it’s “extremely” or “very” important to them to graduate from college, according to the survey from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research, which was

conducted this spring among teenagers between the ages of 13 and 17. That compares with about 4 in 10 adults who said the same in a UChicago Harris/AP-NORC poll from 2022.

The survey also found that many teens think it will be harder for them to achieve major life milestones - like owning a home, raising a family or reaching a good standard of living - than it was for their parents.

For Ry-n Uyeda, 17, the biggest concern about college is the prospect of being away from her home in Waianae, Hawaii. Uyeda is already taking college-level courses in high school and hopes to play softball at a university on the West Coast.

Uyeda said she wants to

develop time management skills and endurance to handle the pressures of being a student-athlete. But she hopes the college experience does not change who she is.

“I want to remember where I came from and the values that I’ve learned from here,” said Uyeda, who attends Waianae High School. “Going to a new place with new people in a new environment, I just want to still be myself.”

Seven in 10 teenage girls in the survey said it was at least “very” important to them to graduate from college, compared with 54% of teenage boys.

The disparity reflects a growing gender gap in college degree completion. In 1995, young men

and women were equally likely to hold a bachelor’s degree. Since then, a gap has emerged, with 47% of U.S. women ages 25-34 completing a bachelor’s degree compared with 37% of men, according to a Pew Research Center analysis of census data.

Teens raised in households with higher incomes and parents who went to college themselves also are more likely to view higher education as important.

Jalena Crawford, a 16-year-old high school junior, said she hopes to attend Grand Canyon University or Arizona State University to become a professional American Sign Language interpreter. She said her plans have been encouraged by rela-

tives with college degrees and it would be “weird” not to consider higher education.

“I didn’t really start thinking about college until I started liking ASL. I was trying to figure out what I was going to do,” Crawford said.

Most teens see a college education as a vital step for their future career prospects, although they see other benefits as well.

About 7 in 10 teenagers said completing college is “extremely” or “very” important for getting good jobs, and about 6 in 10 teenagers say a degree is valuable in learning necessary life skills. About half of teens see college as key for either becoming a more informed member of society or forming their personal identity, according to the survey.

Teenagers have many of the same life goals as adults, such as owning a home and raising a family, the poll found. About 8 in 10 teenagers value being able to pursue what they enjoy, having a good standard of living and having a successful career.

But few teenagers believe those goals have gotten easier to achieve for their generation compared with their parents.

About 7 in 10 teenagers believe owning a home has become harder to achieve for them compared with their parents, according to the poll. Just over half of teenagers say it’s become more challenging for their generation to raise a family. About half say that about having a good standard of living, having a successful career or traveling the world. Fewer, about 4 in 10, say it’s grown harder to graduate from college or be able to pursue what they enjoy.

Evarist Bego, 22, graduated earlier this year from the University of Southern California with a joint degree in business and film. He said he recalls wanting to go to college and then work his way up in his chosen industry but “that’s just not how it works anymore.”

It’s harder than he anticipated to find a job, which he said may owe partly to the creative industry he chose. He sees mostly temporary positions, like internships or fellowships.

“So many jobs that I see are entry-level, but then they require three-plus years of experience. I have interned in school, I had some experience, I had some enough,” he said.

Foreclosure inquiries jump nearly 30% amid rising financial strain

Consumer debt drives legal stress to 5-year high

‘Whether it’s missed mortgage payments, maxed-out credit cards, or mounting buy-now-pay-later balances, debt-fueled household spending is forcing people to ask a lawyer for help.’

ADA, Oklahoma, July 14, (Business Wire): Foreclosure legal inquiries jumped nearly 30% year-over-year in the second quarter as mounting consumer debt pushed Americans to seek legal help at the highest rate since November 2020, according to new data that offers an early warning sign of household financial stress ahead of the next Federal Reserve debt report.

LegalShield’s Consumer Stress Legal Index (CSLI) climbed 4.4% from March to June, driven by surging foreclosure and consumer finance legal inquiries, all rooted in increased debt.

“Debt is the common thread behind rising consumer stress,” said Matt Layton, senior vice president of consumer analytics at LegalShield. “Whether it’s missed mortgage payments, maxed-out credit cards, or mounting buy-now-pay-later balances, debt-fueled household spending is forcing people to ask a lawyer for help.”

Data analysis shows the Foreclosure Index jumped 13.3% during the quarter and is now nearly 28.9% higher than a year ago, marking the steepest annual

increase in three years. The Consumer Finance Index also climbed 8.7% since March, as more consumers sought legal assistance for debt-related issues such as defaults and loan modifications.

Americans in Debt

LegalShield’s CSLI report comes ahead of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York’s scheduled release of second quarter household debt numbers in early August. Household debt has steadily increased since 2013 following a period of decline after the 2008 recession.

Household debt balances stood at a record \$18.20 trillion in Q1 2025, a 0.9% rise from the end of 2024. In particular, mortgage balances grew by \$199 billion and home equity lines of credit (HELOC) increased by \$6 billion. More concerning is that overall debt delinquencies increased to 4.3% at the end of Q1, the highest level since 2020, including rising delinquencies for mortgages and HELOCs, as well as student loans that began reporting to credit agencies in Q1 following a nearly five-year pause due to the pandemic.

“LegalShield data tends to move ahead of official reports, and right now, it’s signaling deeper trouble,” said Layton. “In the coming weeks, we expect the next debt and foreclosure reports to reflect what calls to our provider lawyers are seeing – more households slipping into unsustainable financial territory.”

Consumers Take Action

LegalShield data tracks actions taken by consumers with more than 150,000 calls to provider lawyers each month. The LegalShield dataset is built on hard data based on American households’ real-time legal needs that reflect financial pressures and opportunities. This stands in contrast with polling based on opinion and sentiment. The latest rise in consumer stress reveals sharp increases in foreclosure and consumer finance inquiries, and those findings suggest that more Americans are struggling with debt, housing costs, and financial obligations, even as overall spending remains strong; the latest Personal Consumption Expenditures (PCE) data shows consumer spending is up 6.9% year over year in May.

Key Research Findings:

Consumer Stress Legal Index

(CSLI) Highest in More Than 5 Years

CSLI: 68.2 (up from 65.3 in March; up from 61.8 YoY)

+4.4% quarter-over-quarter | +10.4% year-over-year

The CSLI has increased four straight months, signaling intensifying economic stress for consumers despite a resilient stock market and stable employment figures.

Foreclosure Spike Signals Growing Housing Strain

Foreclosure Index: 46.8 (up from 41.3 in March; up from 36.3 YoY)

+13.3% quarter-over-quarter | +28.9% year-over-year

Rising insurance premiums, property tax reassessments, and adjustable-rate mortgage resets are pressuring homeowners. LegalShield’s Foreclosure Index closely tracks foreclosure filings nationally.

Rising Debt Fuels Surge in Consumer Finance Legal Issues

Consumer Finance Index: 106.4 (up from 97.9 in March; up from 101.7 YoY)

+8.7% quarter-over-quarter | +4.6% year-over-year

Consumers are increasingly seeking legal assistance for a wide

range of financial issues with a steep rise in the index in the second quarter. Analysis of the data indicates households are feeling the effects of delinquent debt, sustained interest rates and persistent inflation on everyday essentials.

Bankruptcy Dips in Q2 But Remains Elevated YoY

Index: 32.1 (down from 36.4 in March; up from 29.5 YoY)

–11.8% quarter-over-quarter | +8.8% year-over-year

Bankruptcy inquiries eased in the short term but remain significantly elevated compared to last year. The dip may reflect temporary stabilization due to seasonal factors, but high debt levels and consumer delinquencies still loom.

Study Methodology

LegalShield tracks an average of 150,000 monthly calls to provider lawyers based on more than 90 areas of law. That data comprises more than 35 million consumer requests for legal services dating to 2002. The CSLI is the flagship index reporting consumer stress, based on three subindices: Bankruptcy, Consumer Finance, and Foreclosure.

editor’s choice





Giveon poses for a portrait on Thursday, May 29, 2025, in New York. (AP)

‘Beloved’ soulful

Giveon highlights shared heartache

NEW YORK, July 14, (AP): Giveon has been on a quest for musical and personal growth since releasing his studio debut three years ago. But the more things have changed, they’ve also stayed the same.

“The girls didn’t stop,” he said with a sly smile. “I don’t even know if I grew in that area.”

That’s not necessarily bad news for the “Heartbreak Anniversary” singer, because when it comes to emoting about the complexities of love and romance, the business of Giveon is always booming.

“I don’t wanna get to a point where I start talking about the same thing, but there’s so much still left to say,” he said.

The seven-time Grammy nominee says plenty on his anticipated sophomore album, “Beloved,” out Friday. He won’t argue that it’s another heartbreak manifesto, but he insists this project is more nuanced and introspective.

“I like to write songs about what people are thinking, but they don’t want to say out loud,” said the Drake and Justin Bieber collaborator. “Some of these experiences aren’t that unique. I’ll Google something random, like, ‘Yo, my elbow itches on Thursday - what is that?’ Somebody’ll be like, ‘My elbow’s itching on Thursday, too!’ So, I’m like we all going through the same thing.”

Following 2020’s “Give or Take,” the 13-track featureless album was crafted during a three-year period, with Giveon writing on every song. With the bulk of production handled by Sevn Thomas, Peter Lee Johnson and Matthew Burnett, the rich sounds of live musicians were recorded and songs began as jam sessions. It was a change for the “Like I Want You” artist who generally starts his creative process by first writing over instrumental loops.

Relationship

Giveon’s identifiable baritone voice, wrapped around relationship musings, has consistently cut through the vibe-centered and party-focused R&B that’s dominated the past decade. Some fans and critics complain that vulnerability is absent among today’s artists, as phrases like “if it don’t feel like 90s R&B, I don’t want it” have become popular hashtags. Giveon evokes that golden era nostalgia, but you won’t find him begging and pleading to lost loves in the music video rain like many popular artists of that time.

“If she’s upset, I get on my knees and lock my fingers and be like, ‘Come on, please?’ She’s gonna look at me crazy,” joked the 30-year-old. “I don’t even like being outside in the rain no way - I don’t want to get sick.”

Ahead of “BELOVED,” Giveon released “Twenties,” peaking at No. 6 on Billboard’s hot R&B songs, and “Rather Be.” Standout tracks include the soulful ballad “Numb,” and “I Can Tell” in which he desires to rescue a love interest from an unhappy relationship. “Bleeding” - where one could argue there’s some pleading - is also a highlight, as he sings, “I’m stepping over pieces, broken heart’s on the floor / Cut my skin trying to make you whole again / So, I’m bleeding for your love.”

“That’s almost more than pleading. I’m damaged trying to help you get put back together ... it’s almost deeper and more vulnerable in ways because we could be taking the risk of being hurt as well,” he said of the song while defending his musical generation. “It’s easier to do that for something you’ve lost, but what if you feel like you really haven’t lost anyone yet? Worth getting pneumonia over?”

Currently, there are plans for a tour, and he revealed he’s open to creating a joint EP with Teddy Swims, a desire made known by the pop-soul singer in a previous interview with The Associated Press. Earlier this year, they joined forces on “Are You Even Real” which reached No. 1 on multiple Billboard charts, including adult R&B airplay.

Giveon, who’s also interested in creating short films, is adamant about one central creative principle: timelessness. He’s always considering how his art will be reevaluated in the future.

“I don’t speak in a trendy way - I just speak my authentic language. If you go look at a text thread from 10 years ago, 15 years ago, I’m probably speaking the exact same way. So, I think authenticity is what makes sure it’s not dated,” he said. “I don’t even like to cuss in my music ... that takes away from it, too. There’s no cuss words on here, actually. My granny will love it.”

Market seeks rebound with new releases

China’s summer box office poised for peak week

BEIJING, July 14, (Xinhua): As temperatures climb across China, its film market is also heating up, with the period leading to July 22 — or the day that the “Great Heat” falls on this year according to the traditional 24 solar terms — marking a potentially critical moment for summer movie releases.

The seven days from Sunday to the coming Saturday will see a flurry of new films hitting Chinese movie theaters. In total, 10 films are currently set to be released on July 18 and 19 — marking one of the most concentrated periods of debuts this summer — with several already holding preview screenings as of Sunday.

Among the new arrivals, “The Lychee Road,” a comedy directed by Da Peng and adapted from Ma Boyong’s popular novel, and “You Are the Best,” directed by Jiang Wen, have both moved up their release dates to July 18, heightening the competition for box office attention.

“The Lychee Road” follows a Tang Dynasty (618-907) official tasked with the near-impossible mission of transporting a bushel of lychees, prized but famously quick to spoil, on a grueling 2,500-km journey from Lingnan in southern China to the capital, Chang’an. His desperate ingenuity in overcoming the logistical challenge becomes a sharp satire of bureaucratic absurdity.

Other anticipated releases include “The Legend of Hei 2”, the sequel to the beloved animated fantasy, and “Girl on Edge,” a suspense thriller starring Zhang

Zifeng and Ma Yili.

“The Stage,” a comedy film directed by and starring veteran comedian Chen Peisi, is now slated for release on July 25, but has already begun preview screenings on Monday.

The industry is hoping the upcoming releases will provide the boost it needs, especially given that the financial results from some of the summer’s earlier releases have fallen short of expectations.

As of Sunday, the total yearly box office has reached 30.5 billion yuan (4.27 billion U.S. dollars), hitting this milestone 29 days earlier than in 2024. However, the summer movie season, which spans three months starting June 1, is currently lagging behind last year’s box office growth pace.

Record

In 2023, the summer box office hit a record high of 20.6 billion yuan, but 2024 saw a sharp drop to just 11.6 billion yuan. This year’s summer box office has earned 3.2 billion yuan as of Sunday, with seven imported films and three domestic titles among the top 10 performers.

Universal’s “Jurassic World Rebirth,” released on July 2, is leading the pack with 450 million yuan in ticket sales, followed by Peter Chan’s “She’s Got No Name,” which opened on June 21 and has earned 370 million yuan. Other top performers include Tom Cruise’s “Mission: Impossible - The Final Reckoning”

with 350 million yuan and Japanese animated movie “Detective Conan: One-eyed Flashback” with over 340 million yuan.

More big titles are set to debut after July 19. Of particular interest is the July 31 release of “731” (also known as “Operation Cherry Blossoms at Night”), a historical drama that revisits the horrific World War II-era human experiments conducted by Japan’s Unit 731, documenting a painful chapter of history while portraying the Chinese people’s heroic resistance.

Also grounded in history, “Dongji Island” is set for Aug. 8. It recounts the true story of Chinese fishermen rescuing over 300 British prisoners of war in October 1942, after the Japanese transport ship “Lisbon Maru” was torpedoed and left to sink, despite being secretly packed with more than 1,800 prisoners. The same events were previously explored in Fang Li’s critically acclaimed 2024 documentary, “The Sinking of the Lisbon Maru.”

Another notable release is the animated drama “Nobody,” based on an episode from the acclaimed “Yao-Chinese Folktales” animation series, which is set for Aug. 2.

As the summer progresses, the industry is pinning its hopes on these high-profile releases to drive the box office before the season concludes. The coming weeks will be crucial in determining whether this surge in content can translate into a much-needed recovery for the 2025 summer box office.

Film



This image released by Warner Bros. Pictures shows David Corenswet in a scene from ‘Superman.’ (AP)

Gunn’s film marks new era for DC cinematic universe

‘Superman’ flies to a \$122 million opening

NEW YORK, July 14, (AP): In a bid to kickoff a new era for DC Studios, James Gunn’s “Superman” opened with \$122 million in US and Canada ticket sales over the weekend, according to studio estimates Sunday.

DC and Warner Bros. had a lot riding on “Superman.” While the Walt Disney Co.’s Marvel Studios has had its own share of struggles, the superheroes of DC have recently found mostly kryptonite in theaters. Films like “Joker: Folie à Deux,” “The Flash” and “Shazam! Fury of the Gods” all flopped.

But “Superman,” written and directed by Gunn, is intended as a new start. It’s the first release fully steered by Gunn and Peter Safran, co-heads of DC Studios, since they were handed the keys to DC’s superhero cinematic universe.

And while Gunn turned “Guardians of the Galaxy” into a massive success for Marvel, his irreverent, idiosyncratic touch made the director — once a B-movie filmmaker with Troma Entertainment — an unlikely steward for one of the movies’ most bankable and beloved brands.

The roughly on-target opening was the third largest of 2025, and the first DC title to surpass \$100 million in its opening weekend since “Wonder Woman” in 2017. Warner Bros. could also celebrate a unique hot streak: “Superman” is their fifth movie in a row to open over \$45 million.

“It’s quite a win for DC Studios,” said Jeffrey Goldstein, chief of distribution for Warner Bros. “We needed to get the trust of the fanbase, and we didn’t have it. They were clear to us that we needed to take a step back and reinvent ourselves.”

Ticket sales were relatively soft for “Superman”

overseas. In 78 international markets, it grossed \$95 million. In China, it collected just \$6.6 million.

David A. Gross, who runs the movie consulting firm FranchiseRe, called the international performance the only ding against the otherwise strong “Superman” debut.

“Thus far, the foreign openings are not equal to domestic,” said Gross. “Superman has always been identified as a quintessentially American character and story, and in some parts of the world, America is currently not enjoying its greatest popularity.”

As an American icon, “Superman” also attracted political discourse at home. Some right-wing commentators criticized the movie as “woke” after Gunn described the superhero from Krypton as “an immigrant.” On X, the White House posted an image of President Donald Trump as Superman.

Direction

In “Superman,” which cost about \$225 million to make, Gunn steers the Man of Steel in a drastically different tonal direction than in previous iterations from filmmaker Zack Snyder. Skipping the Kansas origin story, the film instead picks up with Superman (David Corenswet) after his first defeat. Rachel Brosnahan plays Lois Lane and Nicholas Hoult is Lex Luthor.

The “Superman” debut didn’t come close to besting the \$166 million launch for Snyder’s “Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice,” in 2016. But it did open higher, not accounting for inflation, than Snyder’s “Man of Steel.” That film debuted with \$116 million in 2013.

But while Snyder’s films were often unloved by crit-

ics, largely good reviews greeted Gunn’s “Superman.” On Rotten Tomatoes, it scored 82% fresh — the best for the franchise since the first two movies with Christopher Reeve: “Superman” (1978) and “Superman II” (1980). Audiences gave it an “A-” CinemaScore.

“Superman” faced sizeable competition too. Last week’s top film, “Jurassic World Rebirth,” slid to second place with \$40 million. With “Superman” soaking up many large-format screens, Universal Pictures’ seventh “Jurassic” film slipped a steep 57% from its opening weekend. Starring Scarlett Johansson, “Jurassic World Rebirth” got off to a thunderous \$318.3 million global start. In two weeks, it’s amassed \$529.5 million worldwide.

Also still in the mix is Apple Studios’ biggest box-office success yet, “F1.” Joseph Kosinski’s Formula One action thriller, starring Brad Pitt, came in third with \$13 million in its third weekend. The film, distributed by Warner Bros., has collected \$393.4 million globally in three weeks. But it also carries a hefty price tag of roughly \$250 million, plus at least \$100 million in promotion.

With final domestic figures being released Monday, this list factors in the estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at US and Canadian theaters, according to Comscore:

1. “Superman,” \$122 million; 2. “Jurassic World Rebirth,” \$40 million; 3. “F1: The Movie,” \$13 million; 4. “How to Train Your Dragon,” \$7.8 million; 5. “Elio,” \$3.9 million; 6. “28 Years Later,” \$2.7 million; 7. “Lilo & Stitch,” \$2.7 million; 8. “Mission: Impossible — The Final Reckoning,” \$1.5 million; 9. “M3gan 2.0,” \$1.4 million and 10. “Materialists,” \$720,498.

Meli’sa Morgan and Jimmy Avance. The gala will also feature a preview performance of the upcoming orchestral tour, “The Voice of Whitney: A Symphonic Celebration,” conducted by William R. Langley.

“This year marks Whitney’s fortieth anniversary and our fourth Annual Legacy of Love Gala and we are delighted how the foundation has developed and expanded over the past four years,” co-host Pat Houston said in a statement. She is Houston’s sister-in-law and the executor of her estate. Houston died in February 2012 at age 48. “Though Whitney is known worldwide for her exemplary talent in music and entertainment, one of the things she loved more than anything was supporting children and our youth. She always reached back to various communities globally.”

In addition to Pat Houston, the gala will be hosted by Entertainment Tonight’s Kevin Frazier. Clive Davis, CCO of Sony Music, is honorary chair. (AP)

Variety

NEW YORK: No one could replace the inimitable talent that was **Whitney Houston**. But when you need someone to sing her timeless tracks, the great EGOT (that’s Emmy, Grammy, Oscar and Tony winner) Jennifer Hudson has proven time and time again that she’s up for the job.

Hudson will headline the fourth annual Whitney Houston Legacy of Love gala on Aug. 9, presented by The Whitney E. Houston Legacy Foundation and Primary Wave Music. The event, held at the St.



Houston

Contestants highlight struggles of Black women

‘Love Island’ renews debate on racial bias, misogynoir

LOS ANGELES, July 14, (AP): It used to be that dating was as simple as deciding between dinner, a trip to the movies or an arcade. Now, understanding the dating scene has become intermingled with smartphones, matchmaking apps and one’s ability to navigate thorny social issues like racial preference in a mate.

“Love Island,” a widely popular international reality television franchise, is emblematic of the complexities of modern dating. It has also sparked heated discussions among fans about the desirability of Black women and darker-complexioned people both on and off air.

The show, which aired the finale of the seventh season of its US version Sunday and is airing the 12th season of its UK version, casts conventionally attractive “islanders” who are generally in their early to late 20s for a six- to eight-week stay in a luxury villa. Men and women compete for long-lasting relationships and a cash prize.

But as the show’s daters face challenges meant to test their bonds, as well as elimination by villa mates or by fans’ vote, notions of who is and isn’t desirable frequently come up for viewers and contestants alike. In the end, many fans are left with the perception that racial bias, colorism and misogyny are especially inescapable for Black women on reality dating shows.

“The diversity in the UK one is terrible,” said Oghosa Ovi-enrioba, a content creator from London. “It’s very anti-Black.”

It’s not simply that Black women are picked last for coupling or eliminated first on the UK or US versions of the show. Many fans say there’s a recurring theme of suitors dumping or ditching Black female contestants when there is



This image released by Peacock shows Cierra Ortega in an episode of ‘Love Island USA.’ (AP)

a fairer skinned option. Black female contestants have also complained of not doing well on the show when they don’t lower their standards for intimacy with a suitor, as though they are lucky to even be considered dating material among more desirable mates.

Even with these viewer frustrations, Ovi-enrioba said she prefers “Love Island USA.”

“I feel like the dark skin Black women on that show always find men who fit their vibe, who respect them, who are attracted to them, desire them, treat them like queens,” she said.

In the UK version, fans have counted multiple instances where Black female contestants were left as the last choice when couples were picked, or they were first to get eliminated and dumped from the villa. Many have also noted that it took eleven seasons before a darker-complexioned Black woman was declared the winner.

Now in its 12th season, “Love Island” UK is still dogged by allegations of male contestants’ bias against Black women. After 23-year-old Alima Gagigo, a Black woman, chose to couple up with 26-year-old Blu Chegini, a white man, he said, “I’ll be honest, on paper, you’re not my type.”

Gagigo responded, “Of course,” as if those were words she was not surprised to hear.

There is no evidence that Chegini was referring to Gagigo’s race or ethnicity. But the exchange was enough to confirm what some in audience felt was an implicit bias against Black women in the villa.

“Love Island’s only stipulation is that applicants are over 18, single and looking for love. Our application and casting process is inclusive to all and we are always aiming to reflect the age and diversity of our audience on the show,” a show spokesperson for “Love Island UK” said.

JaNa Craig, a contestant on “Love Island USA’s” beloved sixth season, which aired last summer, landed a spot in the final four couples by the end of the competition alongside Kenny Rodriguez, who entered the villa 13 days into the season. Her bubbly personality made her a fan favorite.

Although she initially worried about how viewers felt about her, the positive audience reaction culminated in her being

deemed the “baddest girl in Love Island history,” which means hot or beautiful in slang terms. Still, she felt some male contestants may not have been interested in her and Serena Page, another Black female contestant, because of their skin complexion. Page went on to win that season of “Love Island USA.”

“The very first time I felt special is when the very first guy picked me because he had three options. Other than that, I always felt like I was getting the short end of the stick,” Craig said. “Even though we know our worth and we know we’re beautiful, we still felt like - not good enough.”

Ultimately, Craig felt proudest when she heard from other Black women who said they appreciated her representation on the show, given the perception that Black women are less desirable on dating shows.

“I felt honored by the amount of Black girls that were like, ‘JaNa, you inspire me,’” she said.

“Love Island USA” producer Peacock, which on Sunday debuted a spinoff to its popular Season 6 season, titled “Love Island: Beyond the Villa,” declined comment for this story.

Fans’ and contestants’ concerns about Black women’s representation on the show reflect a real-world anti-Black and misogynistic views of Black women, commonly referred to as misogynoir. Scholars describe it as both implicit and explicit contempt for Black women, much of it rooted in racist stereotypes that are perpetuated in popular culture and mass media. While “Love Island” contestants are not being outright racist to Black female competitors, many viewers feel the interactions Black women have had on the show have been laced with implicit bias.

Music



Bad Bunny performs during his first show of his 30-date concert residency at the Coliseo de Puerto Rico José Miguel Agrelot, in San Juan, Puerto Rico, Friday, July 11. (AP)

Puerto Ricans hope for change

Bad Bunny sings about turmoil, identity

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico, July 14, (AP): In a small bookstore in the Caribbean’s largest mall, dozens of people gathered on a recent evening for the launch of a slim dictionary. Its title is “The ABC of DMF,” which is short for “DeBÍ TIRAR MAs FOToS,” the newest album from Puerto Rico’s latest prodigious son, Benito Antonio Martínez Ocasio, better known as Bad Bunny.

The mostly older crowd flipped through the pages, seeking to understand more about Puerto Rico’s culture, the places, phrases and references in Bad Bunny’s music.

The singer has elevated the global profile of the island, a US territory, to new heights, promoting its traditional music, denouncing its gentrification and challenging its political status.

It was an unexpected opportunity for an island that for years has cried out about its territorial status, dwindling affordable housing, high cost of living, chronic power outages, medical exodus and fragile economy. Pleas for change have been largely pushed aside, but Puerto Ricans are optimistic that Bad Bunny’s new album and his series of 30 concerts that began Friday means they’ll finally be heard.

“He’s going to bring change, and there’s a young generation who’s going to back him,” said Luis Rosado, 57, who this week attended the dictionary launch at the urging of his son, who lives abroad.

Ten minutes before the first concert on Friday, a giant billboard on stage lit up with the words, “Puerto Rico is a colony since Christopher Columbus ‘discovered’ the island during his second trip to the New World in 1493.”

The crowd that filled the 18,000-capacity coliseum whooped.

“This album has sparked a conversation around the world about our situation as a colony,” said Andrea Figueroa, a 24-year-old professional athlete who said foreigners have started to ask her about Puerto Rico and its issues, something she hopes might lead to change.

Those born on the island of 3.2 million inhabitants

are US citizens but cannot vote in US presidential elections, and they have one representative in Congress with limited voting powers.

Figueroa said the album resonated with her because her father is one of thousands forced to leave the island in search of work as the economy crumbled. It’s a sentiment Bad Bunny sings about in “What happened to Hawaii,” with the lyric, “He didn’t want to go to Orlando, but the corrupt ones kicked him out.”

The song taps into concern that the Puerto Rican identity is eroding amid an influx of people from the US mainland, many of them attracted by a 2012 law that allows Americans to move to the island and pay no taxes on capital gains if they meet certain conditions.

Hundreds of Americans also snapped up properties in Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria struck the island as a powerful Category 4 storm in 2017, forcing more than 100,000 people to leave.

Drowned

“They want to take the river away from me and also the beach; they want my neighborhood and the grandma to leave,” Bad Bunny sang on Friday as the crowd drowned out his voice.

The artist spent half of Friday’s concert singing from the porch and roof of a traditional Puerto Rican home that served as a second stage, where he wonders about its fate aloud because it’s been rented: “Do good people live there? Is it an Airbnb?”

The mostly young crowd booed loudly, flinching at their reality on an island where the housing price index increased by almost 60% from 2018 to 2024 and where short-term rentals have surged from some 1,000 in 2014 to more than 25,000 in 2023.

However, they cheered upon seeing Los Angeles Lakers superstar LeBron James emerge from the house as a surprise guest.

The song hit Carmen Lourdes López Rivera especially hard. She is the vice president of the Community Board Association of La Perla, an impoverished community once known for being Puerto Rico’s big-

gest heroin distribution point.

Investors with deep pockets have long sought to buy up the area, which is perched on a hill with deep turquoise waters lapping below a massive 16th-century fort popular with tourists.

“They have always said they want to kick us out of here,” she said. “We’re going to fight for what belongs to us.”

The effect of Bad Bunny’s album and concerts is already being felt.

More than 35,000 hotel nights have been booked during the normally slow summer season, with the concerts expected to attract more than 600,000 visitors, generate more than \$186 million and create more than 3,600 jobs, according to government officials.

Beyond that, Bad Bunny’s use of folkloric music like bomba and plena has revived interest in those musical traditions. Dozens of newcomers have requested classes and are seeking out teachers, said Jorge Gabriel López Olán, 28, an experienced drummer.

“And it’s very necessary, isn’t it? To understand where we come from and where our music and culture come from,” he said.

On Friday, Bad Bunny fans sported long ruffled skirts traditionally worn to dance bomba, while others donned straw hats known as a “pava,” worn by “jíbaros,” Puerto Rican peasants. Musicians and dancers wore the same outfits on the main stage, which at one point even featured live chickens.

Interest has surged to the point where universities including Princeton and Yale have launched courses on Bad Bunny. Albert Laguna, a Yale professor, described Bad Bunny’s residence as a powerful move: “Instead of me going to the world, right, I’m going to start here.”

There is even renewed interest in the Puerto Rican crested toad, the island’s sole indigenous toad species that is under threat and was featured in a video as part of Bad Bunny’s newest album.

Singer embraces risks

Saadiq talks solo tour, Beyoncé’s work ethic

LOS ANGELES, July 14, (AP): Raphael Saadiq has always admired the boldness of stand-up icons like Dave Chappelle and Eddie Murphy who commanded the stage alone with only their stories.

Now, the three-time Grammy winner is taking a similar leap, stepping into the spotlight solo for his own one-man show tour, announced last Tuesday. The intimate No Bandwidth tour will pull back the curtain on Saadiq’s life and music, weaving never-before-told stories with performances spanning Tony! Toni! Toné!, Lucy Pearl and his solo catalog.

The tour kicks off in Sacramento on Sept. 7 that’s expected to run into mid-October. It’ll mark a return to the stage that began with a recent limited four-city sneak peek in New York, Los Angeles and his hometown of Oakland.



Raphael Saadiq poses for a portrait on Monday, June 30, 2025, in Los Angeles. (AP)

It’s been a high note kind of year for Saadiq, who won a Grammy for his work on Beyoncé’s “Cowboy Carter,” wrote “I Lied to You” for Ryan Coogler’s “Sinners” and is preparing the rerelease of his 2004 solo album “Ray Ray” through his Vinyl Club, a membership that reissues his catalog.

In a recent interview with The Associated Press, Saadiq reflected on it all, including who he thinks should headline the Super Bowl halftime show and how he’s honoring the legacy of his late brother, D’Wayne Wiggins, who died in March.

AP: Is doing the one-man show feel like your taking a risk or more of a spiritual enlightenment?

Saadiq: I felt like it was more of a spiritual type of quest, and I thought it was a risk. But I like taking risks. I’m totally confident about being on the stage, but I definitely got to give props to people who do one-man shows. Comedians have a glass of water and a stool. I’ve always wanted to do that.

AP: What inspired you?

Saadiq: I was really inspired by Mike Tyson’s “Undisputed Truth.” I watched Mike’s show. It wasn’t like I looked at it and said “I could do it if Mike Tyson did it.” Mike Tyson’s one-man show made it look difficult, but it was so good. It pulled me into Mike’s life. Then that’s when I said “I want to do a one-man show.” It took this long, so it was therapy to do it.

AP: You were recruited by Ludwig Göransson – who scored “Sinners” – to write the film’s pivotal track “I Lied to You.” What did you pull away from that experience?

Saadiq: Being that I score film already, what you learn is when you work with people like Ludwig and Ryan is the art of storytelling through music and visuals. You got to love the process. Working with Ryan and Ludwig, you’re listening to two perspectives. One person scores, one person writes and shoots. It’s like having a super team with those two guys. Adding me to the equation, it should only get better.

Ludwig is an amazing composer, guitar player, producer. Ryan’s from my hometown. He’s a good dude. Solid, great storyteller and you want to show up for a movie that’s deeply rooted in blues and gospel and tradition because this is going to go for generations for other people to see what this music was about. I was honored that I could contribute.

AP: You worked on “Cowboy Carter” tracks like “Texas Hold ‘Em,” “Bodyguard” and “16 Carriages.” How was being apart of the album’s process and seeing Beyoncé in full work mode?

Saadiq: It was amazing, lucky, fun. Besides the whole country thing, just being a part of Beyoncé’s critical thinking, it was great for me. I never meet too many people that can work harder than me. That’s somebody who can. I was excited about the energy of her whole team. It would be like playing football for the Jacksonville

Jaguars as a receiver and you get traded to the Kansas City Chiefs and got Patrick Mahomes throwing to you. That’s how I felt. You just knew you was in a new camp and everybody on the team is like “Let’s get ready to go.”

AP: What stood out to you about Beyoncé being such a hard worker?

Saadiq: I watched her organize the storyboard. The vision board is nuts. Her vision board is crazy. When I saw her vision board, it blew me back. Then I saw the show before doing my one-man show too.

You need a challenge. You need to go be courageous. You need to like, you need to make some new challenges for yourself. That’s what I always wanted to do.

AP: You curated and performed a Bay Area tribute melody with a 14-piece band for the NBA All-Star Game in February. Next year’s Super Bowl will be played there in Santa Clara. Who do you think should be the halftime performer?

Saadiq: As far as power, it’s got to be some Metallica things happening. In a stadium, you’re supposed to be a power band, and they got the biggest records that would resonate all over TV. I would say Metallica to be honest. I wouldn’t even say myself in that. But I could definitely be a part of some things for the Super Bowl. But if you want to bring the urban side, I would say Too Short. Those are biggest in the Bay for me.

AP: How did the death of your brother D’Wayne shift the focus of your music?

Saadiq: It didn’t really shift anything when I think about music. But the blessing in the music is we got a chance to tour all together before one of us was gone. We got together to talk and have some camaraderie ... and got the chance for all the fans to see us all together the way the group was really meant to be, because we spent a lot of years where we weren’t together.

AP: What did you learn from your brother personally and professionally that you are carrying forward?

Saadiq: One thing I took from my brother was the music. Period. He was the person who played guitar. Wake up with the guitar. Walking outside calling and trying to put bands together. I took that from him. Growing up in school, he left every school on fire for me. He blazed a trail for me, then I started blazing it for him. His two kids are like that with me. I’m blazing it for them.

But now they blazing it for me. My nephew (Dylan Wiggins) is working with Frank Ocean, The Weeknd. So many people I can’t keep up with them. Everything that’s instilled in me and Dwayne is now instilled in Jaden (Wiggins). He’s a beast. He plays bass and guitar. He’s producing and playing with bands. I’m trying to keep everyone going forward, not backwards.



Rihanna arrives at the premiere of ‘Smurfs’ on Sunday, July 13, at Paramount Studios in Los Angeles. (AP)



Members of K-Pop group NCT DREAM pose for photos during their album release presentation for the 5th studio album ‘Go Back To The Future,’ in Seoul, South Korea, July 14. (AP)

AI therapist is here

Can chatbots really help improve mental health?

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

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By Pooja Shree Chettiar
Texas A&M University

Recently, I found myself pouring my heart out, not to a human, but to a chatbot named Wysa on my phone. It nodded - virtually - asked me how I was feeling and gently suggested trying breathing exercises.

As a neuroscientist, I couldn't help but wonder: Was I actually feeling better, or was I just being expertly redirected by a well-trained algorithm? Could a string of code really help calm a storm of emotions?

Artificial intelligence-powered mental health tools are becoming increasingly popular - and increasingly persuasive. But beneath their soothing prompts lie important questions: How effective are these tools? What do we really know about how they work? And what are we giving up in exchange for convenience?

Of course it's an exciting moment for digital mental health. But understanding the trade-offs and limitations of AI-based care is crucial.

AI-based therapy is a relatively new player in the digital therapy field. But the U.S. mental health app market has been booming for the past few years, from apps with free tools that text you back to premium versions with an added feature that gives prompts for breathing exercises.

Headspace and Calm are two of the most well-known meditation and mindfulness apps, offering guided meditations, bedtime stories and calming soundscapes to help users relax and sleep better. Talkspace and BetterHelp go a step further, offering actual licensed therapists via chat, video or voice. The apps Happify and Moodfit aim to boost mood and challenge negative thinking with game-based exercises.

Cognitive

Somewhere in the middle are chatbot therapists like Wysa and Woebot, using AI to mimic real therapeutic conversations, often rooted in cognitive behavioral therapy. These apps typically offer free basic versions, with paid plans ranging from US\$10 to \$100 per month for more comprehensive features or access to licensed professionals.

While not designed specifically for therapy, conversational tools like ChatGPT have sparked curiosity about AI's emotional intelligence.

Some users have turned to ChatGPT for mental health advice, with mixed outcomes, including a widely reported case in Belgium where a man died by suicide after months of conversations with a chatbot. Elsewhere, a father is seeking answers after his son was fatally shot by police, alleging that distressing conversations with an AI chatbot may have influenced his son's mental state. These cases raise ethical questions about the role of AI in sensitive situations.

Whether your brain is spiraling, sulking or just needs a nap, there's a chatbot for that. But can AI really help your brain process complex emotions? Or are people just outsourcing stress to silicon-based support systems that sound empathetic?

And how exactly does AI therapy work inside our brains?

Most AI mental health apps promise some flavor of cognitive behavioral therapy, which is basically structured self-talk for your inner chaos. Think of it as Marie Kondo-ing, the Japanese tidying expert known for helping people keep only what "sparks joy." You identify unhelpful thought patterns like "I'm a failure," examine them, and decide whether they serve you or just create anxiety.

But can a chatbot help you rewire your thoughts? Surprisingly, there's science suggesting it's possible. Studies have shown that digital forms of talk therapy can reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression, especially for mild to moderate cases. In fact, Woebot has published peer-reviewed research showing reduced depressive symptoms in young adults after just two weeks of chatting.

These apps are designed to simulate therapeutic interaction, offering empathy, asking guided questions and walking you through evidence-based tools. The goal is to help with decision-making and self-control, and to help calm the nervous system.

Challenge

The neuroscience behind cognitive behavioral therapy is solid: It's about activating the brain's executive control centers, helping us shift our attention, challenge automatic thoughts and regulate our emotions.

The question is whether a chatbot can reliably replicate that, and whether our brains actually believe it.

"I had a rough week," a friend told me recently. I asked her to try out a mental health chatbot for a few days. She told me the bot replied with an encouraging emoji and a prompt generated by its algorithm to try a calming strategy tailored to her mood. Then, to her surprise, it helped her sleep better by week's end.

As a neuroscientist, I couldn't help but ask: Which neurons in her brain were kicking in to help her feel calm?

This isn't a one-off story. A growing number of user surveys and clinical trials suggest that cognitive behavioral therapy-based chatbot interactions can lead to short-term improvements in mood, focus and even sleep. In randomized studies, users of mental health apps have reported reduced symptoms of depression and anxiety - outcomes that closely align with how in-person cognitive behavioral therapy influences the brain.

Several studies show that therapy chatbots can actually help people feel better. In one clinical trial, a chatbot called "Therabot" helped reduce depression and anxiety symptoms by nearly half - similar to what people experience with human therapists. Other research, including a review of over 80 studies, found that AI chatbots are especially helpful for improving mood, reducing stress and even helping people sleep better. In one study, a chatbot outperformed a self-help book in boosting mental health after just two weeks.

While people often report feeling better after using these chatbots, scientists haven't yet confirmed exactly what's happening in the brain during those interactions. In other words, we know they work for many people, but we're still learning how and why. (AP)

Injectable could target cancer and diabetes next

New weekly shot to transform Parkinson's care

CANBERRA, July 14, (Xinhua): Australian scientists have developed a weekly injectable drug that could transform care for the more than 8.5 million people worldwide living with Parkinson's disease.

The new weekly injectable maintains steady levels of key Parkinson's medications for seven days, potentially replacing multiple daily pills and improving both treatment consistency and patient quality of life, scientists at the University of South Australia (UniSA) said on Monday.

Hailed as a game-changer for Parkinson's care, the biodegradable formulation is injected under the skin or into muscle, steadily releasing medication to ensure consistent therapeutic levels and reduce the burden of frequent dosing, especially for elderly patients or those with swallowing difficulties, according to the UniSA study.

"Our goal was to create a formulation that simplifies treatment, improves patient compliance, and maintains consistent therapeutic levels of medication," said lead researcher Professor Sanjay Garg from UniSA's Center for Pharmaceutical Innovation.

The new weekly injectable for Parkinson's disease delivers steady doses of key medications, levodopa and carbidopa, over seven days, using biodegradable polymers for controlled, sustained drug release, said the research published in Drug Delivery and Translational Research, an official journal of the United States Controlled Release Society.

Lab tests showed over 90 percent of levodopa and 81 percent of carbidopa were released within a week. The implant degrades by more than 80 percent during this period and demonstrated no significant toxicity in safety evaluations.

"We're not just improving how the drug is delivered; we're improving patients' lives," Garg said, adding the new formulation is delivered with a fine needle, reducing discomfort and eliminating the need for surgical implants.

Researchers say the injectable could be adapted for other chronic diseases, such as cancer and diabetes, with clinical trials and commercial plans underway.



This photo provided by Axiom Space shows the private crew of four, in dark suits, from left, Axiom mission commander Peggy Whitson, Hungary's Tibor Kapu, India's Shubhanshu Shukla and Poland's Slawosz Uznanski-Wisniewski, during a farewell ceremony aboard the International Space Station on Sunday, July 13. (AP)

Indian, Polish, Hungarian astronauts return

Private mission crew heads back to Earth

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla., July 14, (AP): The International Space Station's first visitors from India, Poland and Hungary headed back to Earth on Monday, wrapping up a private mission and catching a ride home with SpaceX.

Their capsule undocked from the orbiting lab and aimed for a splashdown the next morning in the Pacific off the Southern California coast.

The short, privately financed mission marked the first time in more than 40 years that India, Poland and Hungary saw one of their own rocket into orbit. The three astronauts were accompanied by America's most experienced space flier, Peggy Whitson, who works for Axiom Space, which chartered the flight. They launched from NASA's Kennedy Space Center on June 25.

India's Shubhanshu Shukla, Poland's Slawosz Uznanski-Wisniewski and Hungary's Tibor Kapu conducted dozens of experiments during their stay. They also fielded calls from their countries' prime ministers as well as schoolchildren.

"We will spread the word in our countries that these things are within our reach. These things are possible even for smaller countries like ours," Kapu said during Sunday's farewell ceremony, which ended in an emotional group hug.

Shukla noted that "it's truly a miracle" when humanity comes together for a common goal.

"The sky is no longer the limit. We can explore space," added Uznanski-Wisniewski.

Uznanski-Wisniewski took special pride in the first pierogies in space. He took up the cabbage and mushroom-stuffed dumplings, which were freeze-dried in advance for easy cooking in zero gravity.

Their three countries shared the cost of the mission, paying more than \$65 million apiece.

It was Axiom's fourth station trip since 2022. The Houston company's clientele includes the wealthy as well as countries seeking representation in space. NASA embraces commercial spaceflight, helping to set the stage for private space stations in the works by Axiom and others, as well as lunar landers.

China's scientific milestone

Telescope hunts Big Bang's oldest ripples

BEIJING, July 14, (Xinhua): High on a ridge 5,250 meters above sea level in southwest China's Xizang Autonomous Region, a new eye onto the infant universe has blinked open.

Scientists at the Institute of High Energy Physics (IHEP) under the Chinese Academy of Sciences announced Sunday that their AliCPT-1 telescope has captured its first crisp images of the moon and Jupiter at 150 GHz, a milestone that marks the formal opening of China's first hunt for primordial gravitational waves.

The ripples -- faint whispers from the dawn of time -- may hold the key to explaining how the universe began.

Imagine the universe as a newborn; the primordial gravitational waves would be its very first cry. Born from quantum fluctuations in spacetime during the epoch of cosmic inflation, these elusive signals are the most pristine ripples ever etched into the fabric of the cosmos.

Primordial gravitational-wave detection is believed to be a critical test of cosmic origin, probing inflation and quantum gravity.

"If we successfully detect primordial gravitational waves, we will glimpse the universe in its very first instant," said Zhang Xinmin, a researcher at the IHEP.

"At the same time, it can drive breakthroughs in cutting-edge technologies like cryogenic superconducting detectors and low-temperature readout electronics, thus propelling cosmology into an era of unprecedented precision," Zhang added.

Led by the IHEP, the telescope was built in eight years by a 16-member global consortium including China's National Astronomical Observatories and Stanford University.

Placed on the roof of the world, the telescope is designed to escape atmospheric water vapor that would drown the whisper of primordial gravitational waves.

Only four sites on Earth are known to be viable for such observations: Antarctica, Chile's Atacama Desert, the Qinghai-Tibetan Plateau and Greenland, said Liu Congzhan, a project manager of the telescope experiment.

The moon and Jupiter experiment is just the beginning, said Li Hong, also a researcher at IHEP. "As the Northern Hemisphere's first high-altitude primordial gravitational-wave observatory, the telescope fills a gap for China and, together with devices in Antarctica and Chile, completes a global, complementary network."

Sewage tests

Polio continues to cripple Pak

ISLAMABAD, July 14, (Xinhua): Wild poliovirus type 1 has been detected in sewage samples from 11 sites across Pakistan, health authorities said on Sunday.

A total of 24 sewage samples were tested in June. Of these, 13 were found negative, while 11 samples confirmed the presence of poliovirus.

Authorities attributed the declining virus circulation to improved surveillance and high-quality vaccination campaigns nationwide.

As part of the ongoing eradication efforts, special immunization drives will be conducted from July 14 to July 18 in parts of the northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province and the northern Gilgit-Baltistan region, targeting more than 150,000 children. A follow-up campaign will also be carried out in Islamabad and its twin city Rawalpindi, aiming to vaccinate over 160,000 children.

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Health clinic: Tanzanian Minister of Health Jenista Mhagama has officially inaugurated the Royal International Patients and Master Health Check-up Clinic at the Benjamin Mkapa Hospital in the national capital of Dodoma, aimed at providing high-end medical services to international patients.

Speaking at the launching ceremony on Thursday, Mhagama urged regional hospitals to establish international-standard health services to attract tourists seeking both leisure and quality healthcare.

She emphasized the importance of promoting these services through hospital communication desks.

"Health services in Tanzania are beginning to attract patients from neighboring countries. We must seize this opportunity to improve and appeal to even more people," she said.

She also called for enhanced use of digital health systems to reduce treatment costs, especially for patients referred to other hospitals. "There's no reason for patients to repeat tests at every hospital. We need interconnected systems to share test results without extra cost," she added.

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Food insecurity: About 1.4 million Namibians, representing about 45 percent of the population, are still facing food insecurity following a severe El Nino-induced drought that hit the country during the last farming season, Prime Minister Elijah Ngurare has said.

Ngurare told the parliament on Thursday that Namibia continues to experience an alarming increase in the frequency and intensity of climate-induced disasters, with the 2023/2024 drought the most severe one in the recent history of the country.

"The El Nino phenomenon and extremely below-normal rainfall recorded during the 2023/2024 agricultural season resulted in a widespread crop failure, depleted rangelands, and acute water shortage across all 14 regions," he said.

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Kim seals first major title with epic eagles at Evian

Gotterup wins Scottish Open for spot at Portrush

NORTH BERWICK, Scotland, July 14, (AP): Chris Gotterup came up with the clutch shots on the biggest stage he has faced Sunday, taking down crowd favorite Rory McIlroy with a 4-under 66 in a two-shot victory in the Scottish Open that gives him another week of links golf.

Gotterup got a spot in the British Open at Royal Portrush, with Nicolai Hojgaard and Matti Schmid also taking the final positions through the International Qualifying Series.

Gotterup's lead was down to one over McIlroy and England's Marco Penge, but McIlroy missed a 12-foot birdie at the par-5 16th and Gotterup hit a right-to-left putt from 10 feet in the heart of the cup for a two-shot lead with two to play.

He didn't blink the rest of the way on the course after his final birdie, winning by two over McIlroy (68) and Penge (66) for his second PGA Tour title. Gotterup finished at 15-under 265 at The Renaissance Club.

Scottie Scheffler, the world's No. 1 player coming off a two-week break, had a 67 to tie for eighth. It was his 10th consecutive tournament finishing eighth or better, a streak that began in the Houston Open.

Grace Kim delivered one stunning shot after another in the Evian Championship, starting with an eagle to force a playoff and another eagle to beat Jeeno Thitikul on the second extra hole to make her first LPGA Tour win a major title.

Kim, whose 2-foot eagle putt on the par-5 18th in regulation gave her a 4-under 67, looked to be just as surprised as everyone else when she rolled in a 12-foot eagle putt to win the playoff. The 24-year-old Australian calmly placed her hand over her mouth



Chris Gotterup of the USA on day four of the Scottish Open 2025 at The Renaissance Club, North Berwick, Scotland. (AP)

and stood still before doubling over and breaking into a smile.

On 18 in regulation, Kim blasted a fairway metal onto the green. The ball rolled back down the slope to 2 feet for eagle to tie for the lead. Thitikul's birdie putt for the title missed right. She shot 67 and joined Kim at 14-under 270, one ahead of English amateur Lottie Woad (64) and Minjee Lee (68).

Thitikul had to make an 8-foot birdie putt to extend the playoff. Playing the 18th for the third time, Kim again delivered another beauty over the pond and onto the green to about 12 feet.

American Talor Gooch won LIV Golf Andalucia for his second LIV Golf title in three visits to Valderrama and fourth overall on the Saudi-funded tour.

Gooch closed with a 1-under 70 to finish at 8 under, a stroke ahead of Spanish star Jon Rahm (65). Rahm led Legion XIII to its third team title of the season.

Gooch has a record 13 trophies - four regular-season individual wins,

seven regular-season team wins, one team championship in 2022 with 4Aces and one individual championship in 2023.

Abraham Ancer was third at 5 under after a 66.

Bryson DeChambeau closed with a 74 to tie for 30th at 3 over.

William Mouw overcame a seven-stroke deficit Sunday to win the ISCO Championship for his first PGA Tour title, shooting a 9-under 61 and waiting nearly two hours to see if his 10-under 270 total would hold up.

Mouw won when third-round leader Paul Peterson - who was playing the 10th hole at Hurstbourne Country Club when Mouw finished - missed a 55-foot birdie try from the front fringe on the par-4 18th.

Mouw won in his 20th start on the PGA Tour. The 24-year-old former Pepperdine player received a two-year exemption and a PGA Championship spot next year, but not a spot in the Masters.

Peterson shot a 69 to finish a stroke back in the opposite-field PGA Tour event also sanctioned by the European tour.

Mouw birdied the first three holes and added two more on Nos. 7-8 in a front-nine 30. He birdied Nos. 10, 11, 13 and 17 on the back nine in the lowest score in his brief PGA Tour career.

Steve Allan became the first wire-to-wire winner in Dick's Sporting Goods Open history, closing with a 6-under 66 for a four-stroke victory.

Allan finished at 18-under 198 at En-Joie Golf Course for his second PGA Tour Champions victory of the season. The 51-year-old Australian opened Friday with a 63 for a two-shot edge and had a 69 on Saturday to take a one-stroke lead over Boo Weekley into the final round.

After playing the first seven holes Sunday in 1 under with two birdies and a bogey, Allan birdied five of the next six and parred the last five. He also won The Galleri Classic in late March at Mission Hills in Rancho Mirage, California.



Grace Kim, of Australia, celebrates with her trophy after winning the Evian Championship women's golf tournament, in Evian, eastern France. (AP)

New Zealander fastest driver to win four Cup Series races in 34th start

Van Gisbergen continues road course reign with victory at Sonoma Raceway

SONOMA, Calif., July 14, (AP): Another road course win was so expected for Shane van Gisbergen that Trackhouse Racing had extra tires ready for his Sonoma Raceway victory celebration.

Van Gisbergen won for the third time in five race and second straight on Sunday when he dominated on the California road course. The New Zealander once again showed he's in a completely different class on road and street courses than his rivals as he led 97 of 110 laps to win from pole at Sonoma Raceway.

He celebrated with the traditional burnout, then his Trackhouse crew changed the tires on the No. 88 Chevrolet so he could do a second smoke-inducing spin on his way to victory lane. He also kept with his own tradition and kicked a rugby ball into the grandstands.

"It means everything. That's why I race cars. I had an amazing time in Australia, and then to come here and the last couple weeks, or years, actually, has been a dream come true," said van Gisbergen. "I've really enjoyed my time in NASCAR. Thanks, everyone, for making me feel so welcome. I hope I'm here for a long time to come."

All three of his wins this year have been from pole - which tied him with Jeff Gordon for a NASCAR record of three consecutive road course victories from the top starting spot. Gordon did it between the 1998 and 1999 seasons.

He joins Christopher Bell, Denny Hamlin and Kyle Larson as the only drivers with three wins this season and this one moved him into third for play-off seeding. Van Gisbergen was 33rd in the standings and not yet qualified for the playoffs just five weeks ago.

Victory number four for van Gisbergen - who stunned NASCAR in 2023 when he popped into the debut Chicago street course race from Australian V8 Supercars and won - seemed a given before teams even arrived at the picturesque course in California wine



Shane van Gisbergen (88) leads the first lap during a NASCAR Cup Series auto race at Sonoma Raceway in Sonoma, Calif. (AP)

country. His rivals have lamented that "SVG" has a unique braking technique he mastered Down Under that none of them - all oval specialists - can ever learn.

That win in Chicago two years ago led van Gisbergen to move to the United States for a career change driving stock cars for Trackhouse Racing. He and Ross Chastain have pumped energy into the team over this summer stretch with Chastain kicking it off with a Memorial Day weekend victory at the Coca-Cola 600.

Van Gisbergen is the fastest driver to win four Cup Series races - in his 34th start - since Pamelli Jones in 1969. He's also the winningest driver born outside the United States.

"It's unreal. To do Chicago, an experience that I really enjoyed, and never thought it would lead to more let alone moving over here and doing things," he said. "It's been amazing, everything that I hoped it could ever be."

The Sonoma win made it four victories for Trackhouse in eight weeks. Van Gisbergen was second from pole in Saturday's Xfinity Series race.

Chase Briscoe was second in a Toyota for Joe Gibbs Racing.

"I never played basketball against Michael Jordan in his prime, but I feel like that's probably what it was like," said Briscoe after not being able to pass van Gisbergen on two late restarts - the last with five laps remaining.

"That guy is unbelievable on road

courses. He's just so good. He's really raised the bar on this entire series."

Briscoe was followed by Chase Elliott in a Chevrolet for Hendrick Motorsports. McDowell in a Chevy for Spire Motorsports was fourth and Christopher Bell in a Toyota for Joe Gibbs Racing was fifth.

The mid-season tournament that pays \$1 million to the winner is down to four drivers.

Alex Bowman finished 25th and eliminated Ty Dillon, who finished 26th. Tyler Reddick (11th) knocked out Ryan Preece (16th). John Hunter Nemechek knocked out teammate Erik Jones as they finished 21st and 22nd, and Ty Gibbs, with a seventh-place finish, eliminated Zane Smith.

Fever beats Bueckers and Wings

Sparks snap 13-game losing streak against Connecticut

LOS ANGELES, July 14, (AP): Kelsey Plum scored 18 of her 23 points in the second half, Azura Stevens finished with 21 points and 11 rebounds and the Los Angeles Sparks beat Connecticut 92-88 on Sunday to snap a 13-game losing streak against the Sun.

Connecticut lost to the Sparks for the first time since an 80-76 home loss on Aug. 28, 2020.

Rickey Jackson scored 19 points and Dearica Hamby added 17 points for Los Angeles (7-14).

Bria Hartley had a season-high 25 points and rookie Saniya Rivers scored a career-high 20 for Connecticut (3-18). Jacy Sheldon added 13 points and Aneeshah Morrow 10.

Morrow scored inside to give Connecticut an eight-point lead with 1:46 left in the first half but Jackson made a layup, Julie Allemand hit two free throws and Jackson made another bucket to make it 49-47 at halftime. Stevens scored eight points - including two 3-pointers - before Plum capped a 10-1 spurt with a layup that made it 57-50 with 6:47 left in the third quarter and the Sparks never again trailed.

Fever 102, Wings 83

In Indianapolis, Caitlin Clark had 14 points, 13 assists and a career-high-tying five steals. Kelsey Mitchell scored 20 points and the Indiana Fever beat rookie Paige Bueckers and the Dallas Wings in the first matchup between the past two No. 1 overall picks in the WNBA draft.

Bueckers made 9 of 15 from the field and finished with 21 points, four rebounds and four assists.

Clark, on a minutes restriction in her third game back from lower-body injuries, had her second career game with at least 10 points, 10 assists and five steals and became just the fifth player in WNBA history with multiple such games.

The Fever had a franchise-record-tying 30 assists.

Liberty 79, Dream 72

In New York, Leonie Fiebich scored 21 points and the New York Liberty rallied from a 19-point deficit in the first half to beat the Atlanta Dream.

Breanna Stewart added 18 points



Indiana Fever's Caitlin Clark (22) goes to the basket against Dallas Wings' JJ Quinerly (11) during the second half of a WNBA basketball game in Indianapolis. (AP)

and 10 rebounds for the Liberty (14-6).

Fiebich's hot shooting helped rally New York from an 11-point halftime deficit. Her consecutive 3-pointers near the end of the third quarter gave the Liberty their first lead since early in the game. New York was up 60-58 early in the fourth quarter before using a 12-2 run to take its biggest lead of the game.

Kennedy Burke had five points during the burst and Nyara Sabally hit a 3-pointer that made it 70-60 with 5 minutes left.

Atlanta (12-9) was able to get within four, but could get no closer.

Mystics 74, Storm 69

In Seattle, Brittney Sykes scored 10 of her 19 points in the fourth quarter, Sonia Citron added 17 points and the Washington Mystics beat the Seattle Storm.

Kiki Iriafen finished with 10 points and 10 rebounds for Washington (11-10) and her six double-doubles this season are tied with Chamique Holdseclaw for franchise's single-season rookie record.

Ezi Magbegor scored a season-high 19 points, Nneka Ogwumike added 16 and Skylar Diggins had 10 for the Storm. Tiffany Mitchell, who was signed by Seattle on Thursday after the nine-year veteran was waived by Las Vegas on June 30, finished with 12 points.

River Plate cruises past 10-man Platense

BUENOS AIRES, July 14, (Xinhua): River Plate began its Argentine Primera Division Clausura campaign with a 3-1 victory over 10-man Platense.

Facundo Colidio gave his side the lead at Monumental

Stadium by cutting inside and rifling a 30-yard drive into the far corner.

Ronaldo Martinez equalized with a thumping header after Guido Mainero's inswinging cross from the right wing.

Maximiliano Salas restored River's advantage shortly after, sliding home from the edge of the six-yard box following a series of one-touch passes.

Platense suffered a further blow in the 75th minute as Marcos Portillo was sent off for a violent challenge on Gonzalo Montiel.

Substitute Miguel Borja put the result beyond doubt in stoppage time, beating the offside trap to run onto Gonzalo Martinez's through ball and finishing clinically into the near corner.

Earlier, Boca Juniors and Argentinos Juniors played out a goalless draw in their Buenos Aires derby. Argentinos Juniors controlled two thirds of the total possession but could only manage four

WASHINGTON, July 14, (Xinhua): China's Wang Chuqin swept Japan's Tomokazu Harimoto in the men's singles final, while university teacher and former World Cup winner Zhu Yuling returned to the top by defeating Chen Yi in a clash of female giant-killers at the WTT US Smash in Las Vegas.

Wang, who became China's first left-handed men's singles world champion earlier this year, gave little chance to the third-seeded Harimoto, who has a reputation for struggling against left-handed opponents.

Displaying confidence and control, the second-seeded Wang dominated with wide-angled shots and



Wang Chuqin (right) of China, winner for men's singles and Zhu Yuling of China's Macao, winner for women's singles, pose with their trophies during the awarding ceremony after their final match at the WTT United States Smash 2025 in Las Vegas, the United States. (Xinhua)

steady rallies, securing an 11-3, 11-6, 12-10, 11-8 victory.

"I kept level-headed ei-

ther in lead or trailing," said Wang. "I felt so relieved when the tournament was over. I need a short break

and come back again." Zhu, once a key player on the Chinese national team and now representing Macao, China, used her experience, strong backhands and unpredictable rhythm changes to overcome a two-set deficit and defeat Chen 7-11, 8-11, 11-7, 11-5, 11-9, 11-8 in 56 minutes.

Zhu had previously stepped away from the sport to recover from cancer, pursue academic studies, become a professor at Tianjin University, and manage her family business. She returned to competitive play last year and upset world No. 2 Wang Manyu on her way to the final. Chen, 20, had earlier eliminated several top seeds, including

reigning world champion Sun Yingsha.

"This isn't a typical clash of speed and power," said Zhu. "We battled against each other in terms of patience, tenacity, spin, offense and defense."

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Rise of local coaches highlights growth

Kuwait's homegrown coaches lead handball clubs to new heights

By Khaled Al-Enezi
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 14: The 2024–2025 handball season marked a notable rise in the presence and performance of Kuwaiti national coaches across local and international competitions. Their growing impact reflects not only a positive shift in coaching development but also the success of homegrown talent in achieving competitive and honorable results.

Among the standout figures this season is Hussein Habib, head coach of Burgan's first handball team. Taking over from Algerian coach Said Hijazi at the beginning of the season, Habib made an immediate impact – strengthening team cohesion and dramatically improving performance.

Under his leadership, Burgan achieved a historic runner-up finish in the Premier League, securing a spot in the upcoming Asian Club Championship for the first time in the club's history. Habib's close relationship with the players and the full backing of the club's management were key factors in this breakthrough.

Habib's coaching journey includes a successful stint with Al-Arabi in 2014, where he led the team to promotion to the Premier League. He later served as assistant coach at Al-Qadsiya in 2019, before coaching Sulaibikhat in 2022. In 2023, he returned to Al-Qadsiya as head coach, leading them in the AFC Club Championship, and then joined Burgan in 2024. He recently renewed his contract with Burgan for another season.

Reflecting on the season, Habib said: "Our target was to reach the podium and qualify for the Asian Club Championship. With the support of the management and dedication from the players and staff, we achieved that goal."

He credited the signings of Yasuhira and Stipe Mandalinich for play-

ing a crucial role in securing second place five rounds before the end of the league.

Habib outlined several objectives, including maximizing the participation of local players in league matches, de-



Hussein Habib

veloping talent for the national team, and competing in the Asian Cup. He highlighted the season's major positives, such as:

- A historic runner-up finish
- Wins over every team except Ku-



Yaqoub Al-Moussawi

wait Club

- A fast-paced attacking style
- A season completed without major injuries
- Among the challenges, he noted:
- A lack of depth at the right-back position
- A mental dip after securing second place
- Physical fatigue and underperformance in the Federation Cup due to the absence of strong alternatives
- Another national coach who found success this season is Yaqoub Al-Moussawi, head coach of Al-Salmiya's handball team. Under his leadership, the Sky Blues achieved:
- Runner-up at the 39th Arab Club Championship
- Third place in the Super Cup
- Third place in the 2023–2024 Federation Cup
- Third place in the 2024–2025 Cup Secured Premier League status for next season
- Al-Moussawi began his coaching

career as an assistant with Al-Salmiya in 2019–2020, before taking over as head coach in the 2022–2023 season, where he immediately led the team to a runner-up finish in the Cup.

He also voiced concern about the decision to allow three professional players per team, criticizing the rule as unbalanced given the lack of financial rewards in the league and the limited resources of clubs to attract multiple foreign players.

Also earning praise is Waleed Salmeen, who led Sulaibikhat to a fourth-place finish in the Premier League – ensuring their participation in the top tier next season.

His steady guidance helped the team retain their league status despite stiff competition.

The upcoming season will feature eight teams, including league champions Al-Qadsiya and newly promoted sides from the First Division, promising an even more competitive landscape for Kuwait handball.

back through structured preparation and squad reinforcements.

The club has already strengthened its roster with a mix of international and local signings, including Tunisian Hazem Haj Hassan, Malian Moriba Dialli, Ghanaian Robin Akwa, and Congolese Losoko, along with Othman Al-Dosari, a former Al-Salmiya player. The club is also in negotiations with several other targets to complete its lineup.

Al-Yarmouk is planning an overseas training camp in August, which will feature a series of friendly matches to fine-tune the squad ahead of the new campaign.

England thumps Wales to set up quarterfinal clash with Sweden



England's Georgia Stanway, left, challenges Wales' Jess Fishlock during the Women's Euro 2025, Group D, soccer match between England and Wales at Arena St. Gallen in St. Gallen, Switzerland. (AP)

France eliminates Netherlands and top tough group

ST. GALLEN, Switzerland, July 14, (AP): Another rampant England performance saw the defending champion demolish Wales 6-1 and book its spot in the quarterfinals of the Women's European Championship.

England had bounced back from losing to France in its opener by routing the Netherlands 4-0 and it raced into a 4-0 halftime lead against Wales following goals from Georgia Stanway, Ella Toone, Lauren Hemp and Alessia Russo.

Substitutes Beth Mead and Aggie Beever-Jones added more in the second half either side of Hannah Cain's stylish consolation for Wales.

The result saw Sarina Wiegman's team advance as runner-up in Group D, ensuring England a potentially easier path to the final, after France beat the Netherlands 5-2 to win the group. Wales and the Netherlands are eliminated.

England will play Sweden in the quarterfinals and could then face either Norway or Italy.

Had they won the group, the Lionesses would have encountered Germany before a possible semifinal against World Cup winner and tournament favorite Spain, which plays host nation Switzerland in the last eight.

England beat Sweden 4-0 in the Euro 2022 semifinals, although the two subsequent matches between the two nations have ended in draws.

It was always going to be a tall order for Wales, on its tournament debut, to beat the reigning champion. It had lost nine of its 10 previous matches against England, only managing one draw against its neighbor and historic rival.

And the challenge for Wales became even harder when England was awarded a penalty – by the video assistant referee – after Carrie Jones tripped Stanway just inside the area.



Netherlands' Chasity Grant vies for the ball with France's Selma Bacha, right, during the Women's Euro 2025, Group D, soccer match between the Netherlands and France at St. Jakob-Park in Basel, Switzerland. (AP)

Stanway sent the penalty into the bottom left corner to give England a 13th-minute lead and a disaster in defense allowed the Lionesses to double that tally eight minutes later.

An attempted clearance came off Stanway and fell to Russo, who rounded the Wales goalkeeper before rolling it across for Toone. The Manchester United forward's first attempt was blocked by Wales defender Lily Woodham but she lashed the rebound into the top right corner.

Toone turned provider in the 30th, running onto a pass from Lauren James and crossing for Hemp to head in from a tight angle at the back post.

Inspired by Delphine Cascarino's stunning six-minute spell in the second half, France surged past the Netherlands 5-2 to reach the quarterfinals of the Women's European Championship.

France's third straight win ensured it won Group D, ahead of England, which routed Wales 6-1 to finish runner-up.

The French would have been eliminated by a three-goal loss and, when the Netherlands led 2-1 at one stage, rued a bad miss by

Cascarino shooting over an unguarded goal.

But the San Diego Wave winger responded with a devastating burst of running and shooting to settle the game.

Cascarino said she had been "really frustrated in the first half because I barely touched the ball. So I was determined to do much better in the second half."

First, Cascarino stole the ball from the Dutch at halfway and ran directly at the defense to set up Marie-Antoinette Katoto for a neat finish in the 61st.

Cascarino was even better three minutes later, taking a high ball 50 meters (yards) from goal and dribbling directly at goal to unleash a rising shot from outside the penalty area.

In the 67th, Cascarino scored with a well-placed shot when the ball came to her after Katoto's shot struck the inside of both posts. Sakina Karchaoui added a penalty in stoppage time.

Describing Cascarino as a star, France coach Laurent Bonadei said: "At some point you have to light the fire so she can show her full potential."

A nervous evening became a

coronation for France as the top team in the toughest group at Euro 2025.

France returns to Basel to face Germany on Saturday, with the winner on a path to play Spain in the semifinals. Spain plays host nation Switzerland in the quarterfinals on Friday in Bern.

England gets two fewer days rest before playing Thursday against Sweden in Zurich. The winner of that game goes on to Geneva for a semifinal against Norway or Italy, who meet Wednesday in Geneva.

The Netherlands, champion at Euro 2017, goes home. Wales is also eliminated.

It was also the end for Netherlands coach Andries Jonker, who has not hidden his unhappiness at being told months ago he would leave after the tournament.

rlands attacked early and often, knowing three and probably more goals were needed to advance. Still, Vivianne Miedema and her 100 career national-team goals were left on the bench.

The Dutch had a dangerous cross in the first minute, forced a save from France goalkeeper Pauline Peyraud-Magnin in the second, and Lineth Beerensteyn's pace in the center was always a threat.

It left space for the fast France attack to exploit and the Netherlands trailed midway through the half.

But within four minutes there was fresh hope. Victoria Pelova lashed in a rising shot when the ball came to her from Peyraud-Magnin's save of a volleyed shot by Chasity Grant.

Pelova was key to the go-ahead goal in the 41st. Her cross across the goalmouth came quickly at France defender Selma Bacha who played the ball off her own left leg into the net.

Captaining France on her 30th birthday, Sandie Toletti opened the scoring in the 22nd minute.

Toletti was found in space outside the Dutch penalty area by Katoto and she bounced a right-foot shot from 15 meters (yards).

Al-Arabi and Yarmouk begin preparations for the season

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 14: Al-Arabi and Al-Yarmouk are set to kick off their training sessions this evening as they begin preparations for the new season.

Al-Arabi, under the leadership of newly appointed Portuguese coach Marco Alves, will begin its training ahead of a busy preseason. Alves replaces Nasser Al-Shatti, who has taken charge of Al-Salmiya for the upcoming season.

The Green Falcons will train locally before departing on July 25 for a 12-day training camp in the UAE, where they are scheduled to play three friendly matches. Following the UAE camp, Al-Arabi will head to the Maldives to face Maziya Sports & Recreation Club in the AFC Challenge League play-off on August 12—a pivotal match that will determine which team progresses to the group stage.

Meanwhile, Al-Yarmouk, now under the guidance of Dhafer Al-Adwani, will begin training at Abdullah Al-Khalifa Stadium in preparation for the Zain First Division League, set to begin on September 14. After being relegated from the Premier League last season, Al-Yarmouk is focused on a strong come-



Dhafer Al-Adwani

Triple signing boosts Sulaibikhat squad

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 14: Sulaibikhat Handball Club has completed a significant triple signing, acquiring Abdullah Al-Hammadi, Hussein Jarkhi, and Bader Khalil to reinforce its first team ahead of the 2025–2026 season.

With ambitions to surpass last season's achievements, the club has focused on recruiting talented players who can help drive the team toward its goals.

Earlier, Sulaibikhat renewed the contract of first-team coach Walid Salmeen, following his commendable leadership that ensured the team's continued presence in the Premier League. Additionally, the club brought on Ahmed Abdul Latif as the new goalkeeper coach.

The club also extended contracts for foreign professionals Karl Thom (Estonia) and Nouri Ben Halima (French-Algerian). However, the contract with Estonian player Denir Janima was not renewed, and the club is actively searching for a third foreign professional to complete the squad.

Training will commence in early Au-



Abdullah Al-Hammadi

gust, with two weeks of local preparation followed by an overseas training camp planned in Bosnia or Montenegro. The camp will feature several friendly matches as part of the club's comprehensive preparations for the upcoming season.

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Chelsea's Cole Palmer (10) dribbles away from Paris Saint-Germain's Fabian Ruiz (8) battle for the ball during the Club World Cup final soccer match between Chelsea and PSG in East Rutherford, N.J. (AP)

Sports

Chelsea brushes aside PSG to win Club World Cup

Trump watches as Palmer stars with a brace

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J., July 14, (AP): Cole Palmer scored twice and fed João Pedro for a goal as Chelsea overwhelmed Paris Saint-Germain in the first half and beat the European champions 3-0 in the final of the first expanded Club World Cup.

Palmer had almost identical left-footed goals from just inside the penalty area in the 22nd and 30th minutes, then sent a through pass that enabled João Pedro to chip goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma in the 43d for his third goal in two starts with the Blues.

A 23-year-old who joined Chelsea from Manchester City two years ago, Palmer scored 18 goals this season.

PSG finished a man short after João Neves was given a red card in the 84th minute for pulling down Marc Cucurella by his hair. After a testy final few minutes in a game with six yellow cards, the teams needed to be separated as PSG coach Luis Enrique and Donnarumma pushed João Pedro near the center circle.

A heavy favorite who had outscored opponents 16-1, PSG had been looking to complete a quadruple after winning Ligue 1, the Coupe de France and its first Champions League title.

Before a tournament-high crowd of 81,188 at MetLife Stadium that included U.S. President Donald Trump, Chelsea showed the energy of a fourth day of rest after its semifinal, one more than PSG. Trump was booed when he walked on the field for the postgame awards, then posed with Chelsea players after he and FIFA president Gianni Infantino handed the trophy to captain Reece James.



President Donald Trump, sixth from right, watches as Chelsea's Reece James (24) lifts the trophy following the Club World Cup final soccer match between Chelsea and PSG at MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford, N.J. (AP)

Chelsea had finished fourth in the Premier League and won the third-tier UEFA Conference League. The Blues took the world title for the second time after 2021, when it was an seven-team event. The Blues earned

\$128,435,000 to \$153,815,000 in prize money, the amount depending on a participation fee FIFA has not disclosed.

PSG had not lost by three goals since a 4-1 Champions League defeat

at Newcastle in October 2023.

Chelsea went ahead in the 22nd after goalkeeper Robert Sánchez kicked the ball downfield and Nuno Mendes mis-hit his header 15 yards past the midfield stripe toward his own goal.

Malo Gusto's shot was blocked by Lucas Beraldo and rebounded to Palmer, who ended PSG's streak of 436 minutes without conceding.

Palmer doubled the lead in the 30th when he ran onto a long ball from Levi

Colwill, cut inside before shooting.

Chelsea heads into the 2025-26 season, which starts in less than five weeks, believing it can challenge Liverpool, Manchester City and Arsenal for the Premier League title.

'No appreciation after 11 years'

Hamdan bids emotional farewell to Al-Arabi, joins Jordan's Al-Ahli

KUWAIT CITY, July 14: Al-Arabi and Kuwait national team player Hassan Hamdan have officially announced his departure from the Green Falcons, marking the end of an 11-year chapter with the club. The 24-year-old defender shared the news via a heartfelt statement on his personal social media account, signaling a definitive break from the team amid ongoing tensions.

Hamdan opened his message with a striking quote: "Evil plotting only befalls its own people," hinting at internal conflicts that led to his departure.

"I remained silent out of respect for the fans," Hamdan continued. "I've spent 11 years at the Green Falcons, playing alongside teammates who felt like brothers. I gave everything for the club and its supporters – even risking my life during one match without hesitation."

He reflected on his journey with Al-Arabi, describing it as a mix of "sadness, joy, victory, defeat, fatigue, sacrifice, and selflessness," before re-

vealing the ordeal that ended his career at the club. "They cut off my only source of income and tried to damage my reputation. I endured it all without any recognition. I did everything in my power to resolve the issue, but no one listened."

Concluding his statement, Hamdan emphasized that he had followed all legal procedures under FIFA regulations: "I put my trust in God and adhered to every legal step. My contract with Al-Arabi has officially ended. The love of the fans will always stay with me."

Following his statement, it was confirmed that Hamdan has received an official offer from Jordan's Al-Ahli Club, who secured his player card through FIFA. His move effectively rules out any chance of returning to Al-Arabi.

The conflict reportedly stems from a contested five-year contract offer by Al-Arabi, which Hamdan refused to sign. In response, the club filed a complaint against him with accusations of

fraud and deception.

Despite the controversy, Hamdan has received an outpouring of moral support from current and former Al-Arabi players and officials.

Bandar Al-Salama wrote, "Wishing you success, my friend. The memories we shared were beautiful. You were a true asset to the club." Al-Salama recently underwent successful knee surgery in Dubai and will begin his rehabilitation soon.

Hussein Ashkanani also expressed his appreciation: "Thank you for everything. I wish you all the best – you're a great addition to any team."

Former Al-Arabi vice president Ahmed Al-Najjar added, "This is not the end – it's a new beginning."

Former star Hussein Al-Moussawi said, "I played with Hassan for three seasons. He's a loyal, high-character player. Thank you for your dedication."

Hamad Al-Qallaf echoed similar sentiments: "May God grant you success, my brother, wherever you go."

Qadsiya begins preparation under returning Maaloul

Zayed signs extension at Kuwait Club

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 14: Kuwait Club has officially renewed the contract of midfielder Faisal Zayed for one more season as part of its ongoing preparations for the 2025–2026 sports season.

Zayed, who joined Kuwait Club from Al-Jahra seven seasons ago, has become a key figure in the team's midfield. His renewal adds to a list of other retained talents, including Ahmed Al-Dhafiri, Mohammed Fareeh, Reda Hani, Saud Al-Hoshan, Mohsen Falah, and Mohammed Al-Rashed.

The club has also strengthened its squad by re-signing veteran goalkeeper Khaled Al-Rashidi – who previously played for Al-Qadsiya, Al-Arabi, and Al-Salmiya – and recently represented the national team. Additionally, head coach Nebojsa Jovovic of Montenegro has renewed his contract for a second consecutive season.

Fresh off a dominant season, the "Whites" are aiming to maintain their winning momentum. Last year, Kuwait Club clinched the Zain Premier League, Crown Prince Cup, and the Super Cup, while also reaching the final of His Highness the Amir Cup, which was postponed from its scheduled date of June 16 due to regional circumstances.

Tunisian coach Nabil Maaloul is expected to arrive in Kuwait today to lead Qadsiya in its preparations for the upcoming season. The team is scheduled to hold its first training session tomorrow, with the new Zain Premier League campaign kicking off on September 12.

The club's technical and administrative staff is working swiftly to complete their foreign player roster. Contracts with Moroccan Ismail Khafi, Nigerian Daniel Gibola, and



Zayed challenging for the ball with an opponent.

Algerian Hussein Dhiri have been terminated, while the status of Libyan Mohamed Soula and Moroccan Mehdi Berahma remains unresolved.

Newly promoted Al-Shabab continues to enhance its squad with local talent. The club has signed former Kuwait Club midfielder Hussein Al-Harbi, in addition to earlier acquisitions including goalkeeper Saud Al-Qanaei and players Ahmed Ghazi, Mohammed Khalil, Yaqoub Al-Tararwah, Shaheen Al-Khamis, and Dhahi Al-Shammari.

Relegated side Khaitan has made significant moves in the transfer market by signing five foreign players – two from Tunisia, two from Brazil, and one from Ghana – in preparation for the First Division, which begins on September 14.

Training will commence the day after tomorrow at Nasser Al-Osaimi Stadium, under the guidance of Tunisian coach Hatem Al-Mouddeb. The team will then head to Cairo, Egypt, by August 15 for a training camp featuring four friendly matches.

Bashir gets the final wicket in agonizing fashion for India

England's thrilling 22-run victory seals series lead

LONDON, July 14, (AP): England beat India by 22 runs in the Lord's test on the fifth and final day and took a 2-1 lead in their five-test series on Monday.

Spinner Shoaib Bashir got the final wicket in agonizing fashion for India, when Mohammed Siraj played on.

He defended the ball but it spun back and dribbled into his leg stump, knocking off the bail.

India, in pursuit of a winning target of 193, was on the verge of imminent defeat at 112-8 at lunch.

But Ravindra Jadeja shepherded the tail to threaten a miracle win. He dragged his side to within sight of victory but they were all out for 170 and Jadeja was left stranded on 61 not out after facing 181 balls.

A new-ball show by Jofra Archer and captain Ben Stokes in the morning drained the tension and hastened India's demise from 58-4 overnight in its second innings.

A fiery Archer took 3-55 and



England's players celebrate their win against India on the fifth and final day of the third cricket test match between England and India at Lord's cricket ground in London. (AP)

an impressive match haul of five wickets in his first test in 4 1/2 years.

Stokes bowled two incredible spells of nine overs in the morning (1-18) and 10 straight in the afternoon (1-14). His reward was to

dismiss India's set batter Lokesh Rahul and break the ninth-wicket partnership between Jadeja and Jasprit Bumrah that was just starting to worry England.

England, which chased down 371 at Headingley, rebounded

from being outclassed at Edgbaston, where it lost by 336 runs.

India set itself 193 to win at Lord's but the top order collapsed for the first time in the series. It started the day already dented on 58-4 and lost Rishabh Pant, Rahul and Washington Sundar in the first 40 minutes. India was 112-8 at lunch, still a long 81 runs away from glory and staring at defeat.

The Dukes ball then lost its hardness but England was relentless without giving away any free runs.

Jadeja and Bumrah dropped India's target below 80, 70, 60 and 50 but after combining for 35 runs in 22 overs, Bumrah hacked at a Stokes short ball and top-edged to mid-on. Bumrah scored 5 in 54 balls.

Jadeja then also did his best to keep scoring while protecting No. 11 batter Siraj. After tea, they added seven runs in five overs with the second new ball imminent, and were unlucky in the end.

Modric lands in Italy to sign with Milan after 13 seasons at Madrid

MILAN, July 14, (AP): At age 39, Luka Modric is going to try and help restore seven-time European champion AC Milan to glory after one of the most disappointing Rossoneri seasons in recent memory.

The 2018 Ballon d'Or winner landed in Italy on Monday for a medical with Milan after saying goodbye to Real Madrid following 13 highly successful seasons in Spain. He was expected to a sign a one-year contract later, with an option for a second season.

Modric grew up supporting Milan because his idol and fellow Croat, Zvonimir Boban, played for the club in the 1990s.

Modric announced in May that he was leaving Madrid after helping the Spanish powerhouse to 28 titles: six European Cups, six Club World Cups, five European Super Cups, four Spanish leagues, two Copas del Rey and five Spanish Super Cups.

Milan finished eighth in Serie A last season and missed out on a spot in Europe.

The Italian club rehired Massimiliano Allegri as coach after the season, replacing the fired Sergio Conceicao.

Allegri won the Italian league for the first time with Milan in 2011, then guided Juventus to five straight titles from 2015 to 2019.

Allegri reportedly called former Madrid and Milan coach Carlo Ancelotti to ask about Modric's form. Then new Milan sporting director Igli Tare traveled to Croatia's training camp last month to seal the deal with Modric.

The deal was made before the Club World Cup but Modric couldn't join his new club until he finished playing for Madrid at the tournament in the United States.

Madrid was beaten 4-0 by Paris Saint-Germain in the semifinals in Modric's final match with the club.