



Page 16



50°C HEATWAVE SCORCHES KUWAIT, IRAN

Blistering temps test Mideast and Europe

This is the new normal, scientists warn



Photo by Mohammad Morsi

In a battle against the unforgiving Kuwait heatwave, a man seeks fleeting relief with water.

KUWAIT CITY/TEHRAN/ATHENS, July 21, (Agencies): A brutal and far-reaching heatwave is scorching regions across the Middle East and Europe this week, with Kuwait, Iran, Greece, and Türkiye battling record-breaking temperatures, raging wildfires, and intensifying climate emergencies. Meteorological officials warn that these extreme conditions, driven by global climate change, could persist through the week, posing severe risks to public health, infrastructure, and energy systems.

Kuwait is currently enduring some of the most extreme weather this year, with daytime temperatures soaring between 49°C and 52°C, and nighttime lows offering little relief – hovering between 32°C and 35°C. Acting Director of the Meteorological Department, Dhirar Al-Ali, announced that the intense heat is being driven by a low-pressure system extending from the Indian monsoon, combining with a hot, dry air mass and strong, persistent northwesterly winds.

“These winds are generating widespread dust storms, reducing horizontal visibility to under 1,000 meters in open areas,” Al-Ali told the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA). “Sea conditions remain hazardous, with wave heights frequently exceeding six feet.”

Wind speeds are forecast to increase between Tuesday and Wednesday, ranging from 15 to 60 kilometers per hour, further worsening conditions. Officials have urged residents to avoid unnecessary outdoor activities and take precautions as the punishing heatwave continues through the end of the week.

In neighboring Iran, temperatures have also climbed above 50°C in several regions, with the capital Tehran reaching at least 40°C on Sunday. The country is grappling with its hottest period of the year, prompting closures of all government offices, banks, and businesses in the capital province on Wednesday to conserve energy.

Continued on Page 5

Private sector loses 4,694 Kuwaitis

Expat numbers surge in Kuwait's workforce

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: Official statistics issued by the Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI) showed an increase in the number of expatriate workers in the government and private sectors over the past year and a half, while the number of national workers in the private sector decreased and slightly

increased in the government sector.

The newspaper obtained a copy of the statistics; indicating that the number of Kuwaitis working in the government sector by mid-2025 reached 392,943 compared to 397,790 by the end of 2023 -- a decrease of 4,847.

In contrast, the number of expatriate workers in the government sector increased from 111,147 in December 2023 to 127,046 in mid-2025 -- an increase of 15,899.

crease of 15,899.

In the private sector, the statistics revealed the departure of 4,694 citizens over the course of one year and a half; decreasing from 72,231 at the end of 2023 to 67,537 in the middle of this year.

According to the statistics, the private sector witnessed a massive increase in the number of expatriates from 1,562,492 to 1,695,767 – an increase of 133,275.

Newswatch

ABU DHABI: The eighth UAE aid ship, “Khalifa” departed on Monday from Khalifa Port in Abu Dhabi, heading to Al-Arish Port in Egypt.

According to Emirates News Agency (WAM) the ship forms part of the UAE's ongoing humanitarian support for the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip. (KUNA)

GAZA: Israeli occupying forces killed 134 Palestinians and injured 1,155 others in the Gaza Strip over the past 24 hours amid the nonstop aggression on the enclave, according to Gaza health authorities.

The latest fatalities have raised the death toll from Israeli occupation attacks to 59,029 martyrs and those injured to 142,135 since the Israeli occupation launched its aggression on the Palestinian territory on October 7, 2023, the health authorities said in a press release. (KUNA)

BEIRUT: Lebanese President Joseph Aoun on Monday handed the US Presidential Envoy Thomas Barrack a draft comprehensive memorandum for the implementation of Lebanon's pledges, from the November 27, 2024 Declaration, through the Lebanese government's ministerial statement, and particularly through the President's inaugural address. (KUNA)

56 workers illegally registered under 4 companies

Kuwait authorities bust ‘visa-for-cash’ network

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: The Inspection Unit at the Residency Affairs Investigation General Department in the Ministry of Interior uncovered a new case involving a citizen who abused his authority to obtain residency permits in exchange for money.

In a press statement on Monday, the ministry revealed that the department received information about a citizen authorized to sign on behalf of 25

companies who used four companies to illegally register workers.

The ministry stated that the total number of workers registered under the four companies reached 56, including three who violated the Residency Law and another three who violated visa conditions. It added that some of these workers are employed in a company other than the one through which they obtained their residency.

It disclosed that when the accused was summoned and questioned about the information provided, he admitted that he facilitated the issuance of residency permits in exchange for money; which he received through two intermediaries -- Syrian and an Indian. The accused said the workers paid around KD350 to KD1,200 for facilitating the issuance of residency permits without having any work.

It also confirmed that based on the results of the investigation, all parties involved were referred to the competent authority to take the necessary legal action against them.

This is part of the ongoing security efforts to combat human trafficking and visa trading.

NSN ‘game-changer’ as Kuwait pushes digital defense frontiers

KUWAIT CITY, July 21, (KUNA): Deputy Chief of Staff of the Kuwaiti Army Air Vice Marshal Sabah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah underscored on Monday the importance of National Security Network project (NSN) on improving the military communication system and securing fully integrated digital environment.

In a statement by the General Staff, the remarks came during his visit, where he was briefed on the unit's responsibilities, ongoing technical projects, and future development plans.

Air Vice Marshal Sabah praised the professionalism and dedication of the Signal Corps personnel, stressing the need for timely execution of the network upgrade in line with top security and technical standards.

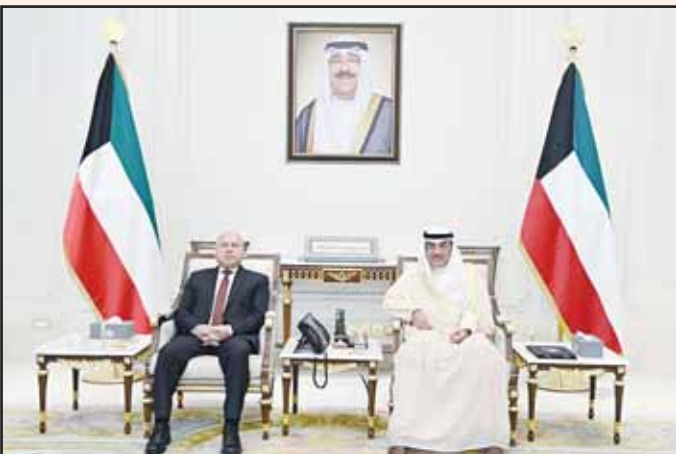
He emphasized the importance of regularly testing the system across various operational scenarios, as well as called for continued coordination with the relevant authorities and to keep up with rapid technological developments in the sector.

Continued on Page 5



Army General Staff photo

Deputy Chief of Staff of the Kuwaiti Army Air Vice Marshal Sabah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah during his visit to the Signal Corps.



Crown Prince Diwan photo

HH the Crown Prince receives Egypt's Deputy Prime Minister.

Crown Prince receives Egypt Deputy PM

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received on Monday at Bayan Palace Egyptian Deputy Prime Minister for Industrial Development and Minister of Transport and Industry Lieut-General

Kamel Abdulhadi Al-Wazir and his accompanying delegation.

Minister of Public Works Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan and Egypt's Ambassador to Kuwait Osama Shaltout attended the reception. (KUNA)



PM Diwan photo

HH the Prime Minister receives the Indian Ambassador to Kuwait.

PM receives Indian Ambassador

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace on Monday Indian Ambassador to Kuwait Dr. Adarsh

Swaika. Attending the reception was Acting head of His Highness the Prime Minister's Diwan Sheikh Khaled Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Sabah. (KUNA)



Ministry of Interior photo

Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior shakes hands with the Ambassador of Armenia to Kuwait.

1st Deputy PM, Armenian envoy tackle security, bilateral relations

KUWAIT CITY, July 21, (KUNA): First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah, met on Monday, with the Ambassador of Armenia to Kuwait, Dr. Arsen Arakelyan, to discuss issues of mutual interest.

According to a press release by the Ministry of Interior's General Department of Relations and Security Media, the talks focused on enhancing security coordination and combating crime, and Kuwait's ongoing efforts to strengthen international cooperation.

Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef praised the strong relations between Kuwait and Armenia, reaffirming Kuwait's commitment to expanding bilateral cooperation, particularly in the field of security.

Continued on Page 5



2 Al-Jarallah: Media key in promoting dialogue, openness



8 Kuwait Finance House releases its fifth sustainability report

9 Kuwait's GDP grows 1% in Q1 after seven quarters of decline

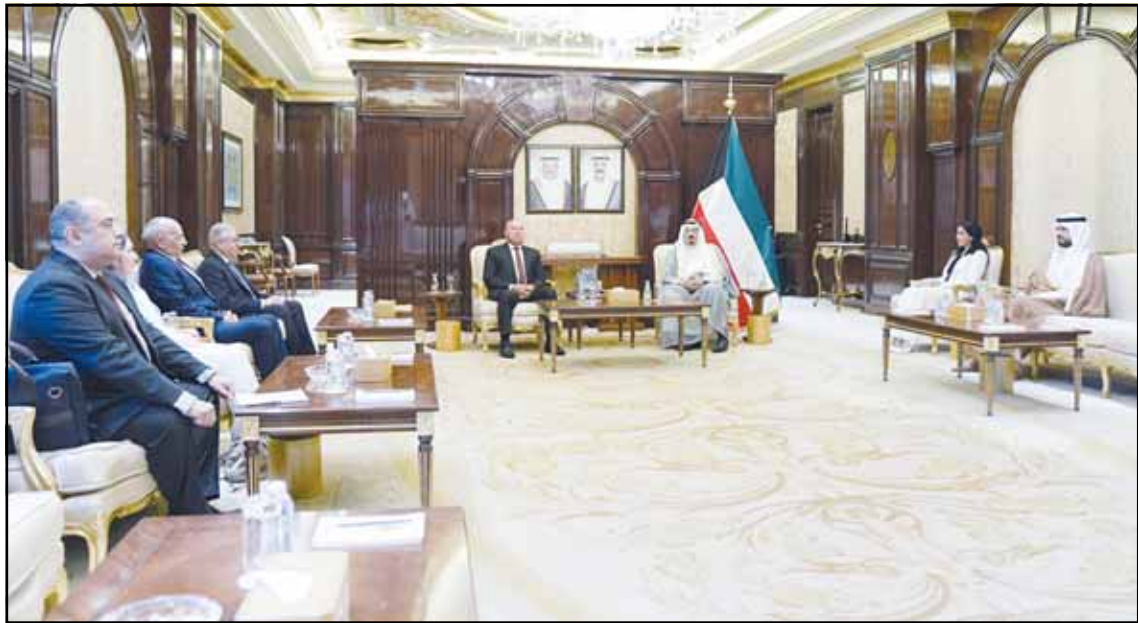
9 KIB wins 'Excellence in Innovative Corporate Banking – MENA 2025'

Prayer Timings			
Fajr	03:30	Asr	15:29
Sunrise ..	05:01	Maghrib ..	18:47
Zohr	11:54	Isha	20:16

Local

Weather			
Expected weather for next 24 hrs:			
By Day: Very hot and dusty with moderate to fresh northwesterly wind, with speeds of 22-55 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.			
By Night: Hot to rather hot and dust will subside gradually			
with light to moderate freshening at times northwesterly wind, with speeds of 12-40 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.			
Station	Max Exp	Min Rec	
Kuwait City	49	36	
Kuwait Airport	49	36	

Abdaly	49	30
Jahra	50	34
Salmiyah	44	35
Ahmadi	44	34
Nuwaisib	49	33
Wafra	48	35
Salmiyah	48	29
Managish	50	32



PM Diwan photo
His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah receives Egyptian Deputy Prime Minister for Industrial Development and Minister of Transport and Industry Lt. Gen. Kamel Abdulhadi Al-Wazir and his accompanying delegation.

Kuwait PM receives Egyptian Deputy PM

KUWAIT CITY, July 21, (KUNA): His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received on Monday at Bayan Palace Egyptian Deputy Prime Minister for Industrial Development and Minister of Transport and Industry Lieut-General Kamel Abdulhadi Al-Wazir and his accompanying delegation. Minister of Public Works Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan, Deputy Chief of Prime Minister Diwan Sheikh Khaled Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Sabah and Egypt's Ambassador to Kuwait Osama Shaltout attended the reception.

Other Voices

A stronger future with our French friends

By Nasser Al-Hajeri

Last week, His Highness the Amir of the State of Kuwait, Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, made an official visit to France, underscoring the depth of the long-standing relationship between the two nations. The visit, which coincided with France's National Day celebrations, carried both symbolic weight and practical outcomes, reaffirming Kuwait's strong and trusted ties with France.

A highlight of the visit was the signing of two important declarations of intent between the State of Kuwait and the French Republic. These agreements reflect a shared vision for deepened cooperation and set the tone for the next phase of bilateral engagement.

The first declaration focused on the Strategic Investment Partnership for 2025–2035, a forward-looking framework aimed at enhancing economic collaboration and identifying key sectors for joint investment and long-term growth. This agreement is expected to pave the way for closer cooperation in areas such as infrastructure, innovation, energy, and other sectors of mutual interest.



Al-Hajeri

The second declaration was centered on strengthening cooperation in the cultural field, with a special focus on commemorating the upcoming 65th anniversary of Kuwaiti-French diplomatic relations in 2026. Culture has long served as a bridge between Kuwait and France, and this declaration reaffirms both nations' commitment to promoting dialogue, artistic exchange, and heritage preservation.

Both declarations were officially signed by Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Abdullah Al-Yahya, and France's Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs, Jean-Noël Barrot, during the Amir's visit. The ceremony was a moment of mutual respect and shared ambition, reflecting the enduring spirit of collaboration that has defined Kuwaiti-French relations since their establishment in 1961.

The visit also included high-level discussions between His Highness the Amir and French President Emmanuel Macron, as well as other senior French officials. The engagements underscored the strength and continuity of the Kuwaiti-French relationship, which has been built on decades of trust, cooperation, and mutual understanding.

As both nations look to the future, these declarations of intent offer a clear roadmap for cooperation and mutual benefit. They serve not just as diplomatic milestones, but as a reminder of what can be achieved through shared values, visions, and a commitment to long-term partnership.

Al-Jarallah: Media key in promoting dialogue, openness



Editor-in-Chief of Al-Seyassah and Arab Times newspapers Ahmed Al-Jarallah, Ambassador Dr. Arsen Arakelyan, Advisor Hamada Al-Amir and colleague Bassam Al-Qassas.



Photos by Samer Shaqair
Editor-in-Chief of Al-Seyassah and Arab Times newspapers Ahmed Al-Jarallah in talks with the Armenian Ambassador Dr Arsen Arakelyan.

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: Dean of Kuwaiti journalism and Editor-in-Chief of Al-Seyassah and Arab Times newspapers Ahmed Al-Jarallah met with Ambassador of the Republic of Armenia to Kuwait Dr. Arsen Arakelyan at his office, during which they discussed ways to strengthen media cooperation between the two sides.

They exchanged views on the role of the media in building bridges of communication among peoples and enhancing cultural understanding between Kuwait and Armenia. They also tackled the importance of responsible press coverage in highlighting bilateral relations and expanding areas of cooperation.

Arakelyan praised the role played by Al-Seyassah and Arab Times newspapers in supporting diplomatic efforts, as well as their balanced coverage of the activities of the Armenian Embassy and the positive image it reflects in terms of rapprochement between the two friendly countries.

He expressed his admiration for the analyses and articles published by Al-Seyassah. He revealed: "I share the articles of the Editor-in-Chief with the Armenian press; because they reflect a balanced vision and present a rational, open and respected discourse."

On the other hand, Al-Jarallah affirmed the

commitment of the Kuwaiti media to open channels of communication with diplomatic missions in Kuwait. He said the media remains a key partner in promoting the concepts of dialogue and openness among different cultures.

He also lauded the efforts of the embassy in supporting joint cooperation, asserting that Al-Seyassah has always been a national platform open to all voices contributing to the promotion of understanding and peace among peoples.

Also present at the meeting were Director of Legal Affairs Department at Al-Seyassah Attorney Hamada Al-Amir and colleague Bassam Al-Qassas.

MEW gets CAPT approval to link external sites, NDCC

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: The Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy has obtained approval from the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) to issue a tender for linking the external sites of the ministry with the National Data Control Center (NDCC), say sources from the ministry.

Sources indicated that this tender is included in the contracts of the ministry for the current fiscal year and are scheduled to be implemented by the Planning, Training and Information Systems Sector. Sources revealed that the tender is for linking

the external branches with the data center in the main ministry building and the NDCC in order to allow the exchange of information and provision of electronic services.

Sources pointed out that "subject to the approval of CAPT, the tender will be announced and a date will be set for specialized companies to submit their bids, select the winning bid and implement the project in accordance with the regulations."

Sources added the ministry intends to install five main power transformer stations for the Automobile Circuit Project -- Rawda Block Three, Kabb C, cow farms, Sharq Block Four and Al-Arabi Club; in addition to supplying and extend-

ing the necessary underground cables to feed the five planned stations through two tenders: the first for the stations and the second for the cables. Sources said the two tenders aim to provide the energy needed to expand the high-voltage and ultra-high-voltage electrical networks resulting from the increased demand for electricity in the aforementioned areas, as well as to provide electricity continuously throughout the day.

Moreover, the ministry also confirmed the start of electricity connection in Al-Mutlaa Residential City (N1 District - parts of Block One; in cooperation with the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW). It reiterated that it is now receiving applications to connect electricity to 251 plots.

Training on AI to assist handicapped students

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: Deputy Director General of the Educational Services Sector at the Public Authority for Disability Affairs (PADA) Afnan Al-Husseini has confirmed the conclusion of the pilot phase for training people with disabilities on artificial intelligence and virtual reality technologies.

This is included in the 'Partners for their Employment' initiative; which is being implemented through the coordinated efforts of PADA, Kuwait University, Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA), and several partners in the public and private sectors.

Al-Husseini confirmed that the actual training for the seventh batch will start in October, following the signing of the memorandum of understanding (MoU) between the participating parties to strengthen cooperation and support the members of the initiative.

Al-Husseini explained that the initiative aims to improve the performance of students with disabilities, and enable them to integrate into society and the labor market by providing them with the latest artificial intelligence and augmented virtual reality technologies, thereby, keeping pace with modern developments and meeting their training and educational needs.

By Abdulrahman Al-Shammari

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: The Curriculum and Program Development Center at the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) has finalized a major project to revamp the curricula at the College of Basic Education in order to improve the quality of teacher preparation and align higher education outputs with national development goals.

Reliable sources revealed that the updated curriculum sheets for all subjects have been completed and

are scheduled for implementation in the 2026/2027 academic year.

Sources said the project will ensure alignment between teacher education programs and general education requirements; thereby, improving the readiness and competency of graduates to play their roles in the education sector effectively. Sources confirmed it is included in the educational reform initiative that focuses on updating academic content based on the latest scientific research, enhancing practical and applied skills of the students, introducing modern and student-centered teaching strategies, promoting analytical

thinking and problem-solving, expanding field training and school-based experience, supporting national identity and values through curricula, and integrating e-learning, digital tools and distance education

Sources added that academic committees were formed, consisting of faculty members, curriculum experts and subject directors from the Ministry of Education to align the new curricula with national priorities and international standards. "A clear implementation timeline has been established, alongside intensive faculty training programs to support the transition and promote best teaching practices," sources affirmed.

Private sector shows upturn

Gov't support vital: MoF

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: Official statistics from the Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI) revealed that the number of private companies reached 175,673 in the first half of 2025 -- 57,408 of which operate as sole proprietorships and 82,948 operate as headquarters.

The newspaper obtained a copy of the statistics; stating that the number of company branches reached 35,360 while the number of service providers in the private sector totaled 371.

The statistics also confirmed that 25,840 companies are under investigation, 6,613 have expired licenses; one company was closed and three are unlicensed. The total number of companies -- including those operating, under study, closed and unlicensed -- reached 208,220.

A source from the Ministry of Finance (MoF) confirmed that the increase in the number of private companies in recent years is the fruit of governmental efforts to support the private sector. The source stressed that the ministry is intensifying efforts, in coordination with other ministries, to diversify sources of income by allowing the private sector to contribute to the realization of development objectives.

The source indicated that the ministry provides numerous services to the private sector; such as supporting the salaries of national workers, removing companies that demonstrate good faith from the blacklist, and continuing to amend laws to better serve the private companies, encourage investment and attract foreign capital.

The source added that one of the most important policies of the ministry at present is opening doors for the private sector to be a partner in economic development, in line with Kuwait Vision 2035 and as per the directive of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah Al-Sabah to push the private sector forward.

Nepalese, Lankans on rise

Sharp decline in number of Filipino house-help: report

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: The domestic labor market has undergone remarkable changes over the past year with a sharp decline in the number of Filipino domestic workers and rise in the number of workers from other nationalities, particularly the Nepalese and Sri Lankans, reports Al-Rai daily.

According to the report of the Central Statistical Bureau covering data up to March 31, 2025; a total of 44,085 Filipino domestic workers left the country. Compared to the same period in 2024, this means 25 percent drop in the Filipino domestic workforce.

In contrast, around 21,000 Nepalese and 14,000 Sri Lankans entered the domestic labor sector with Nepalese workers alone increasing by 61 percent over the year. The report also stated a significant rise in the

number of domestic workers from Mali and Benin. The number of female workers from Mali doubled, while Benin recorded an increase of 3,737 workers.

Meanwhile, the number of Indian male domestic workers declined by more than 35,000 -- dropping from 248,000 in March 2024 to 212,000 in March 2025.

Another remarkable change was the emergence of Sudanese workers among the top 10 nationalities in the domestic labor sector -- with 1,353 workers -- most of whom are men; while Pakistani workers dropped out of the top 10 list.

These figures confirm the changing dynamics in labor supply and demand among the domestic workforce; possibly driven by recruitment policies, regional labor agreements, and economic conditions in both source and host countries.

'Rights of disabled children priority'

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousuf issued eight ministerial decisions granting the disabled children of Kuwaiti women married to non-Kuwaitis the right to be treated as Kuwaiti citizens for life, reports Al-Jarida daily.

This move is in line with Article Three of Law No. 8/2010 on the rights of persons with disabilities.

In a related development, acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior Major General Ali Al-Adwani issued two decisions to treat minor children of Kuwaiti women married to non-Kuwaitis as Kuwaiti citizens until they reach adulthood.

These decisions are part of the ongoing efforts of the ministry to support the rights and welfare of families headed by Kuwaiti women, particularly those whose children have special circumstances.

DGCA looking forward to further co-op. with Japan in civil aviation

KUWAIT CITY, July 21, (KUNA): Chairman of the Kuwaiti Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) Sheikh Humoud Mubarak Humoud Al-Jaber Al-Sabah said Sunday that the DGCA looks forward to promoting cooperation with Japan in civil aviation.

Sheikh Humoud made the remarks while welcoming Japanese Ambassador to Kuwait Kenichiro Mukai to discuss bilateral cooperation in the field of civil aviation, the DGCA said in a press release.

He underlined the importance of deepening the distinguished ties between both friendly countries, praising Japan's advanced experience in technology and aviation industry, it said.

For his part, the Japanese Ambassador expressed his appreciation to the Kuwaiti official for his hospitality, saying that his country is interested in furthering cooperation with the State of Kuwait in aviation, in a way that contributes to exchanging expertise and achieving integration in the fields that concern both sides.

diwaniya



A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

The Chinese experience on a golden platter ... go forward, grab opportunity

“A HIGH-LEVEL Chinese government delegation is currently visiting the country to discuss cooperation on implementation of several important projects, including environmental protection, afforestation expansion, combating sand encroachment, and supporting the development and rehabilitation of ecosystems”, columnist and PhD in Plant Philosophy **Dr. Reem Ahmad Al-Hazeem** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“There is no doubt that China has achieved extraordinary progress in recent decades economically, politically, scientifically, and technologically. In what seems like the blink of an eye, it has transformed from a poor developing nation into a global superpower in many fields, though I stop short of saying “all” fields to avoid overstatement.

“This development has included rapid economic growth, technological advancement, rising living standards, improved infrastructure, and the expansion of international trade.

“Agriculture has been at the forefront of this progress, receiving a significant share of attention due to China’s massive and rapidly growing population, as well as the evolving global consumption patterns.

“Agriculture in China is considered a vital sector, forming a substantial part of the national economy and employing millions of workers. China is the world’s largest agricultural producer and exporter, producing vast quantities of staple crops such as rice, wheat, and corn, which are exported to numerous countries worldwide.

“Not all producing countries are necessarily major exporters, but they prioritize meeting domestic demand and ensuring food security. For thousands of years, China has relied on traditional methods such as rainfed agriculture and terraced farming on mountain slopes to sustain its agricultural output.

“Today, China is witnessing tremendous advancements, outpacing many countries on multiple fronts, despite facing significant challenges, including rapid population growth, high consumption demands, and the ongoing effects of climate change.

“Nevertheless, China remains firmly committed to developing its agricultural sector by embracing cutting-edge technologies such as organic and per-urban farming, smart agriculture, hydroponics, and aeroponics. It has also made significant strides in modernizing its irrigation systems.

“As a result, China stands as a major player in global agricultural trade, exerting considerable influence on international markets through its massive levels of both production and consumption. It plays a pivotal role in controlling many global supply chains, extending from seed planting to harvest, and on to



Dr. Al-Hazeem

wholesale and retail distribution by land, air, and sea, reaching markets in all parts of the world.

“There is no doubt that China is advancing toward a new era of renaissance, steadily solidifying its position on the global stage, largely due to the rapid growth of its agricultural economy in recent years. This remarkable progress has sparked optimism and renewed global interest in the unique qualities of the Chinese development model, particularly its integration of modern science and technology.

“China’s sheer size and scale are enough to amplify the impact of its reform and opening-up policies. It continues its relentless ascent, especially in the agricultural sector, where it has applied the theory of power transformation, channeling vast investments into advanced technologies, artificial intelligence, robotics, supersonic aviation, and other cutting-edge innovations.

“Farmers in China are now using the latest smartphone applications to remotely control and optimize fertilizer application by adjusting timing and quantities, and managing other equipment installed on their land. These smart systems have significantly reduced labor and time, conserved water and fertilizer, and boosted crop yields.

“We hope to make the most of the Chinese delegation’s visit, through technology exchange, training programs, expanded field inspections, and other collaborative initiatives. This is a rare and invaluable opportunity, carrying essential benefits that can contribute to our growth and progress, precisely what we need at this time.

“It is my hope that Kuwait does not come away from this visit empty-handed. The Chinese experience in land and marine rehabilitation, smart agriculture, sustainability, and the fight against desertification and climate change has been offered to us on a golden platter to guide us, God willing, toward a greener and more sustainable future.”

Also:

“Flexible financial laws, both technical and regulatory, that keep pace with global economic developments are essential for creating a safe and stable environment for domestic and foreign investments. The adoption of well-crafted legal frameworks is a cornerstone in enhancing investor confidence, which in turn drives investment activity within a country”, Kuwaiti lawyer **Abdul Rahman Al-Houthi** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“Kuwaiti legislation plays a pivotal role in building an investment-friendly environment, particularly through its regulation of the capital market. As a fundamental pillar of the national economy, the capital market helps stimulate investment and provides financing for a wide range of development projects.

“It is well established in the field of economics that for capital markets to function efficiently and transparently, a strong legal environment is essential,

one that protects the rights of all parties and provides regulations to ensure market fairness and build investor confidence.

“A review of Kuwaiti capital market laws reveals that they not only protect local investors but also aim to attract foreign investment. Several regulations have been amended to facilitate the entry of foreign investors and provide them with legal protection, thereby enhancing Kuwait’s position as a regional financial hub.

“The Capital Markets Authority Law No. 7/2010 and its amendments form the primary legislative framework governing the Kuwaiti stock market. This law established the Capital Markets Authority as an independent regulatory body responsible for overseeing the market, monitoring financial activities, and ensuring compliance with relevant laws and regulations.

“The amendments to the law have strengthened investor protection by enhancing transparency and disclosure requirements. Listed companies are now obligated to disclose their financial statements periodically and to promptly report any material information that may impact share prices. These enable investors to make informed and timely decisions.

“The law criminalizes the use of non-public information for investment gains and imposes strict penalties on individuals found guilty of such practices. It also establishes mechanisms to ensure transparency in share offerings and to prevent market manipulation or misleading promotional activities.

“In terms of grievance and litigation procedures, the Capital Markets Authority Law provides a clear framework for investors to file complaints and appeals either through the Capital Markets Authority or the Capital Markets Court, a specialized judicial body dedicated to resolving stock market-related disputes.

“An important aspect of Kuwaiti law is the protection of small investors and the prevention of undue dominance by large investors in the market. This is achieved through strict oversight of fictitious buy and sell orders, as well as close monitoring of investment funds to ensure they are managed according to professional standards that protect investors’ capital.

“In this context, the efforts of the Capital Markets Authority to promote investment awareness are commendable. Through educational programs and initiatives, the authority empowers individuals to better understand the risks associated with investing.

“There is no doubt that investment and financial activities require the continuous development of the legal framework governing them, both inside and outside the stock exchange. This development should be in line with international standards and technological advancements, supporting the state’s development goals and reinforcing Kuwait’s position on the map of leading and influential financial markets.”

— Compiled by Mahmoud Attiyeh/Simi K.Kutty



KUNA photo
Deputy Chief of Staff of the Kuwaiti Army, Air Vice Marshal Sabah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah receives Defense Attache of the Chinese Embassy in Kuwait.

Kuwait, China to up defense ties and military cooperation

KUWAIT CITY, July 21, (KUNA): Deputy Chief of Staff of the Kuwaiti Army, Air Vice Marshal Sabah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah held talks on Sunday with the Defense Attache of the Chinese Embassy in Kuwait to boost bilateral defense ties and military cooperation.

In a statement by the General Staff, the meeting aimed at reinforcing regional stability, exchanging expertise

as well as supported the development of sustainable defense industries aligned with both countries’ national interests.

In the meeting, both sides reaffirmed their firm belief in the role of defense diplomacy for building long-term strategic partnerships that contribute to regional security, stability, and a future based on cooperation and peace.

Stranger than fiction ... How thousands got citizenship?

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: With the revocation of citizenship from 440 individuals in a single case recently, the total number affected in the largest case to date has reached 1,060, following the revocation of citizenship from 620 people in related cases, reports Al-Rai daily.

Informed sources described this case as a “cluster bomb.”

They explained that the new case, which the Nationality Investigation Committee resolved recently, is connected to previous cases and described it as “stranger than fiction”.

The case involves a father whose sons are older than him by eight, ten, and eleven years respectively. It includes 440 individuals, all linked to earlier cases involving 620 people whose citizenship had previously been revoked.

The father, born in 1940, had 22 children registered under him, including seven forged children: the first (A) born in 1948, the second (R) born in 1951, the third (F) born in 1953, the fourth (Kh) born in 1954, the fifth (A) born in 1951, the sixth (M) born in 1953, and the seventh (H) born in 1950.

The father himself had obtained Kuwaiti citizenship through forgery and subsequently added forged individuals to his file. Investigations and evidence revealed that these forgers had completely different four-part Gulf names, but their fathers’ and grandfathers’ names were identical for all of them in Kuwait.

These forgers were considered brothers in Kuwait, but in their

actual Gulf country, they were strangers with no familial connection other than belonging to the same tribe.

The forged father’s file includes 24 people falsely registered as his 13 sons and 11 daughters. These 13 sons, in turn, have a total of 416 individuals registered as their sons and daughters.

In 2024, Army Intelligence arrested a soldier on suspicion of forgery. It was discovered that he held Gulf documents under a name completely different from his Kuwaiti name. He admitted that his father was related to a Kuwaiti citizen and provided Army Intelligence with his father’s real documents. The file was then transferred to the Nationality Investigation Department. After confirming the documents were forged, his citizenship and that of his children were revoked.

Investigators also examined the file of his uncle (his father’s brother) who held Kuwaiti documents. They summoned the father’s seven living brothers, who admitted that their father had added fake children to the records, though these were actually his real sons. DNA testing confirmed that the seven were indeed siblings.

However, all eight individuals registered as children on their late father’s file were investigated. DNA tests proved these eight children were not biologically related to the man they were registered as sons of. The man, born in 1940, was found to be one of the eight forgers and was excluded from the list of heirs.

Plan to tackle delay in pre-2020 appeals

Courts timings increased

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: The Court of Cassation, chaired by Counselor **Dr. Adel Bouresli**, has announced the launch of an extensive plan to address appeals filed before January 1, 2020 by increasing the number of appeals review chambers and introducing evening chambers.

Counselor Bouresli urged litigants and lawyers wishing to expedite appeals submitted prior to this date to file expedited requests through the Supreme Judicial Council’s website - www.sjc.moj.gov.kw

He explained that requests may also be submitted in person at Office No. 119, 18th floor, in the new Palace of Justice building, starting from August 3.

The Court of Cassation’s regular morning chambers will continue handling appeals filed after January 1, 2020.

In line with the recommendations of the committee formed by the Supreme Judicial Council, two additional chambers and evening chambers have been established specifically to address the backlog of older appeals.

Counselor Bouresli further explained that the Minister of Justice was contacted on March 18, 2024, to request an increase in the number of appeals review chambers. This request was made in the interest of expediting proceedings and was submitted to the Civil Service Council for approval. Following the Council’s approval, and as part of the official plan for the upcoming 2025–2026 judicial season, in coordination with the Ministry of Justice, the Court Clerks Department has been tasked with listing the backlogged appeals in preparation for their referral to the designated review chambers.

Trio to be deported

7 years jail in tampering with, forging utility bills

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: The Criminal Court, presided over by Judge Abdulaziz Al-Kulaib, has sentenced three Arab expatriates to seven years in prison with hard labor, followed by deportation after serving their sentences, for forging official documents and illegally canceling electricity and water bills in exchange for money.

The court issued the ruling after confirming that the convicted individuals had manipulated the electronic system of the Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy to falsify utility bills owed by several citizens, including a businessman, in return for illicit payments.

Case documents revealed that the defendants, who held positions at a company contracted with the ministry, exploited their access to the system by entering false data to erase amounts owed by consumers. Their actions caused significant harm to public funds, resulting in financial losses amounting to thousands of Kuwaiti dinars.

Registration open

KFF, PAAET in deal to train ‘high-schoolers’

By Abdulrahman Al-Shammari

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: The Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET), in cooperation with the Kuwait



Al-Ghareeb

Fire Force (KFF), announced the opening of registration for holders of a high school diploma or its equivalent. Registration is open for those eligible to enroll in a series of specialized training courses for the first training year of 2025/2026.

The registration opened Sunday, July 20 and will continue until Tuesday, July 29.

Kuwait Fire Force (KFF), Public Relations and Information Manager Brigadier Mohammad Al-Ghareeb attended the meeting.

PAAET explained that the available courses include the following specializations: ■ Military Administration Sergeant (for both boys and girls), ■ Network and Workshop Technical Sergeant (for boys), ■ Military Warrant Officer Sergeant (for girls), ■ Public Relations and Media Sergeant (for girls).

Those interested in registering are invited to visit PAAET’s official website to view the full announcement and detailed requirements for each specialization.

Public safety first

3 beauty salons shut for using old products

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: The Ministry of Commerce and Industry closed three beauty salons in Jahra Governorate after discovering large quantities of expired hair dyes and cosmetic products, reports Al-Anba daily.

This is part of the ongoing efforts of the ministry to protect consumers and address commercial violations.

The closure decision was taken as per the recommendation of the Reports Committee after an inspection campaign conducted by the Commercial Control Department, under the supervision of Director Faisal Al-Ansari. He affirmed that consumer safety is a non-negotiable priority and stressed that the law will be enforced equally.

Al-Ansari also underscored the need for businesses and commercial establishments to comply with the regulations governing their operations.

He stressed that the inspection teams will remain vigilant and take firm action against any violation that compromises the commercial sector or endangers the public.





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Al-Mishari issues new construction guidelines for public radio stations

12-meter safety buffer mandated around towers

By Inaas Awadh
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: Minister of State for Municipal and Housing Affairs Abdullatif Al-Mishari issued a ministerial decision on the organization of construction work and the attached tables.

The decision -- which was published in the Official Gazette, 'Kuwait Al-Youm' -- included two articles. Article One stipulates amending Paragraph Eight of Item Four of Table No. 17 regarding the requirements and specifications for the

establishment of public radio communications stations in different areas, attached to the regulations for construction work issued through Ministerial Resolution No. 206/2009 to be as follows: "The distance between the nearest point from the border of the station fence or the tower fence and the nearest point from the borders of any building for private residences, private and government schools and kindergartens of all kinds, centers for people with disabilities, nurseries, chalets, farms and

barns must not be less than 12 meters."

Article Two obligates the competent authorities to implement the resolution and activate it from the date of its publication in the Official Gazette.

Meanwhile, the Technical Committee in the Municipal Council, headed by Munira Al-Amir, will hold its sixth meeting for the fourth term on Tuesday to discuss various items on its agenda; most especially the request of Kuwait Flour Mills and Bakeries Company to utilize the points of sale in bakery sites designated for the company by adding activities like the retail sale of all food products manufactured by the company -- cold and hot drinks, pies, pastries and sweets, as well as an oven bakery and Iranian bread bakery.



Al-Mishari



KUNA photo

The small flamingo in Kuwait ... a rare appearance during summer.

Rare flamingos spotted during Kuwait summer

Kuwaiti photographer Abdul Majeed Al-Shatti on Saturday spotted small flamingos in Kuwait during the summer, which is a rare sight, and its presence during this time bodes mild temperatures.

Flamingos are beautiful birds of large size, which is the dominant type in Kuwait and is called the great flamingo, the other type is the small flamingo that differs in size and beak color.

With the approach of mid-summer, some migratory seabirds, including flamingo, begin to return to Kuwait, where they were spotted in small numbers late July and early August during the past years, as this bird stays in the country until late March and feeds on small marine creatures that are widely spread in Kuwait Bay. (KUNA)

MoE opens bonus complaint window online

KU, PAAET exclusion sparks outcry

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

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: Former head of Kuwait Teachers Association and former high schools supervisor Mutab Al-Otaibi criticized the Higher Education minister's decision to exclude the children of Kuwaiti women married to non-Kuwaitis, Gulf nationals and Bedouns from the admissions plans of Kuwait University (KU) and the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET); considering it "an academic setback that harms the reputation of education in Kuwait."

Al-Otaibi explained on his X account that international university rankings are based on certain criteria; particularly academic reputation, quality of scientific research, and diversity of students and academic staff.

He pointed out that excluding the above-mentioned categories weakens one of the most important global indicators -- cultural diversity and international openness.

He wondered if the relevant authorities realized the seriousness of this

decision for the future of Kuwaiti academic institutions, or whether it is an extension of the state of confusion and haste that characterized a number of recent government decisions. He called for a swift review and amendment of the decision.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Education announced Sunday that it has started receiving complaints regarding the excellent job performance bonus electronically for employees assigned at the head office, the central departments and general departments in the educational districts.

In a press statement, the ministry revealed that the period for receiving complaints started Sunday and will continue until Sept 17 -- including Fridays and official holidays -- through its website (www.moe.edu.kw). It added that the final lists will be approved on Sept 18.

The ministry clarified that when submitting a complaint due to change in status, secondment to the ministry or financial differences in grade, job title or supervisory position; documents proving the accuracy of the data must be attached in a single PDF file. It called on everyone to adhere to the specified deadlines to ensure the speedy completion of grievance procedures and the disbursement of dues.

Registration runs through July 26

Higher Education OKs vacancy plan for external scholarships

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

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research Dr. Nader Al-Jalal has approved the external scholarship vacancy plan for academic year 2025/2026.

This plan is for Kuwaiti students who graduated from high school (unified system) or its equivalent in the Science and Literature sections, and obtained their high school diploma in the academic years (2023/2024) and (2024/2025).

Undersecretary of the ministry Lamia Al-Malhem explained that registration will start on Tuesday and continue until July 26 through the official website of the ministry.

Al-Malhem explained that the decision is in accordance with the directives and commitment of the minister to provide the largest possible number of opportunities for Kuwaiti students wishing to complete their university studies under the



Dr. Al-Jalal

external scholarship plan. She urged the interested students to review the courses included in the plan, verify the academic description of each course, and the admission requirements of the universities.

She affirmed that the courses were included in accordance with the percentages approved in the annual scholarship plan. She said the students accepted into the annual scholarship plan or excellence scholarship for academic year 2024/2025, and wish to apply under the vacancy plan; must first withdraw from their current scholarships to be eligible for registration. She stressed the importance of adhering to the conditions and deadlines, as well as the need for students to select a maximum of eight preferences; taking into account the conditions for each course in each country, and to attach all documents to prevent the exclusion of any incomplete application.

She said the criteria for comparison in the vacancy plan include the equivalent average for Medicine and engineering specializations, high school average for the rest of the specializations, order of preference and the number of available seats, according to the agreements concluded with universities in the scholarship countries.

27 new buildings set for handover

MoE begins major overhaul of aging schools nationwide

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: The Educational Facilities and Planning Sector at the Ministry of Education initiated a comprehensive plan to renovate and modernize dilapidated school buildings, reports Al-Rai daily.

The initiative includes extensive upgrades to deteriorated facilities; such as full replacement of flooring, roofing and external walls, as well as complete refurbishment of sanitary systems -- all these are aimed at improving the quality of the educational environment.

An engineering sector source informed the daily that the plan already entered the implementation phase and covers a number of schools in various educational districts.

"These are old schools in need of major renovation; including classrooms, laboratories and service areas. Effective maintenance contract execution has played a vital role in launching the initiative during the summer break," the source added.

The source also disclosed ongoing coordination between the ministry and the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) to receive 27 newly built schools in South Abdullah Al-Mubarak,

covering all four educational levels. He said the initial handover committee will include engineers from the Farwaniya District's Engineering Affairs Department, which was tasked to inspect the buildings and document observations on the construction firms prior to signing the official handover report.

"These new schools will be covered under four types of contractual guarantees: construction, insulation, building and air conditioning. Guarantees range from two to five years, with some construction warranties extending up to 10 years, depending on contract terms -- excluding damages due to misuse," the source explained.

He confirmed as well that the educational districts are working closely with the Supplies and Warehouses Department to ensure the schools are ready for operation. "This includes the provision of air conditioning, water, cleaning services, school and office furniture, IT equipment, photocopyers, fax machines and computers; while the school clinics will be fully equipped with medical supplies and staffed with nurses. Internet connectivity will be activated to support digital learning," he added.

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Shagaya bid deadline set

By Mohammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: The Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) set Aug 5 as the deadline for submitting bids for the 400/132/11 kV Shagaya Z main transformer station (renewable energy project), say sources from the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy.

Sources said all interested specialized companies are invited to participate in the bidding, in accordance with applicable frameworks and regulations.

Sources pointed out this is one of the vital projects that the ministry is keen on implementing to add 3,000 megawatts to the electricity grid.

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Kuwait expands Nat’l ID Centers to serve citizens better

By Munif Naif
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: Director of the National Identity Centers at the General Department of Citizenship and Travel Documents Colonel Nasser Saad Al-Khudair says there are currently seven National Identity Centers operating in all governorates, including two in the Ahmadi Governorate - one in Jaber Al-Ali and another

in Sabah Al-Ahmad City. Plans are underway to establish a new center in Mutlaa to further facilitate services for citizens. In a televised interview on Al-Akbar TV, Colonel Al-Khudair explained that the National Identity Centers in all governorates of Kuwait provide a wide range of services, including the issuance and renewal of passports, issuance of citizenship certificates for individuals reaching the age of 18, is-

Services now streamlined via Sahel app

suaunce of birth and death certificates, and the registration of newborns under their fathers’ Kuwaiti citizenship files. Many of these services are also accessible through the Sahel application. The “Newborn’s Journey” application has significantly simplified procedures for citizens who previously had to visit up to seven different government agencies to complete related transactions. The process now begins at the hospital, where the parent receives a notification through the Sahel application to name the newborn. This is followed by another notification confirming the issuance of the newborn’s civil ID number and birth certificate. The newborn can then be seamlessly added to the father’s citizenship file and food supply file, and is eligible for the child social allowance at the father’s workplace. All of these steps are now completed simultaneously, in coordination with the relevant government authorities, through the Sahel application. Meanwhile, Colonel Al-Khudair said if a citizen loses their Kuwaiti passport while abroad, the process, which used to take several days in the past, has now been streamlined, as citizens can obtain an emergency entry document through the Sahel application and return to Kuwait on the same day. He highlighted that the passport renewal office at Kuwait International

Airport in T4 terminal operates 24/7 on a shift system, enabling citizens to renew their passports within minutes. Colonel Al-Khudair added that citizens over the age of 21 can apply for passport renewal through the Sahel app and will receive a notification when their new passport is ready, after which it can then be collected from the nearest National Identity Center via an automated machine, without the need to interact with any employee.

Proposal aims to cut delays Council member Al-Amir seeks digital system for plan reviews

By Inaas Awadh
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: Municipal Council member Munira Al-Amir on Monday submitted a proposal to adopt and activate an electronic system for reviewing engineering plans submitted to the Kuwait Municipality in order to expedite procedures and achieve the highest levels of accuracy and transparency.



Al-Amir

In her proposal, Al-Amir pointed out that establishing an integrated electronic system will enable the review of engineering plans submitted to the Municipality in a fully digital manner, along with the issuance of the technical report related to each plan through the same system, without the need for paperwork or traditional reviews. She asserted that the proposal achieves several goals simultaneously; such as expediting the procedures, saving valuable time, reducing long waiting periods, and raising the level of accuracy that is characteristic of electronic work in general. She said digital review relies on clear standards and reduces human error, ensuring accurate and complete technical reports

with minimal human intervention or interpretation of regulations and systems. She stated that her proposal includes the creation of a comprehensive electronic archive of approved plans, which can be easily referenced and its data analyzed to develop future policies and decisions. She affirmed that the proposal takes into account the integration of existing systems, as this new system can be directly linked with the electronic submission system that the Municipality is currently using. She believes this will accelerate the documentation cycle and reduce the timeframe for completion, stressing all these goals are worth striving for. She added that the proposed system can be customized to be in line with the requirements and regulations of the Municipality within a flexible and secure digital environment. She suggested that electronic systems must be programmed according to their intended objectives, and efforts must be exerted to ensure their effectiveness so that they can be utilized as planned. She added her proposal is in line with the digital transformation strategy of the State and it is a crucial step toward developing municipal performance, improving the quality of public services, and enabling citizens and investors to complete their transactions efficiently and smoothly.

By Reem Al-Daraawy

KUWAIT CITY, July 21, (KUNA): The State of Kuwait, throughout the past decades, pursued humanitarian operations in the region and the world, relieving peoples in need or suffering from crises and disasters.

The Kuwaiti aid, of diverse forms namely cash, necessities and various materials, has been dispatched and delivered by State institutions and private associations to peoples, communities and countries in need, particularly at times of crises and catastrophes, in various corners of the globe. The State of Kuwait is deeply committed to the norms and noble objectives of the United Nations Charter, notably with respect of boosting and safeguarding human rights. It substantiated sympathetic rhetoric with action, partaking in international human rights events, partnerships with UN agencies and NGOs for contributions to action for aiding others and enhancing communities’ quality of life.

In appreciation for its help for stricken nations over the past decades, the UN, on September 9, 2014, honored the State of Kuwait with the title, “The Center for Humanitarian Action.” Simultaneously, it graciously honored the late Amir, Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, with the designation, “The Leader for Humanitarian Action.”

Kuwait, with a leadership placing humanitarian action on top of State priorities, has been a major contributor to the UN agencies namely the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). On May 12, 2024, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, during a meeting with UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres, affirmed the commitment to pursue humanitarian initiatives on the global stage, while the UN chief lauded the country’s leading role in this respect.

Kuwait, through State departments, public welfare societies, Kuwait Fund For Arab Economic Development (KFAED), Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS), Kuwait Society for Relief and various private institutions provides assistance to countries and communities suffering from various poverty, crises, hardships, natural disasters or epidemics.

In January 2019, the KRCS, upon Amiri instructions, provided urgent aid, worth USD 1.5 million, to Syrian refugees at Al-Rukban camp (southern Syria) and shanty towns neighboring Lebanon. In the same year, Kuwait donated USD five million to the UNHCR to cover costs of aiding the Syrian refugees in countries adjacent to Syria.

Also in the same year, the KRCS launched an urgent humanitarian convoy, made up of five trucks loaded with 100 tons of necessary supplies, to relieve displaced peoples in Yemeni governorates, as part of the campaign, “Kuwait on your Side.” Moreover, Kuwait donated one million euros to re-equip a hospital in the Italian town of Norcia that had suffered a devastating earthquake and donated USD 250 million for Yemen during the UN-launched

Global impact earns UN recognition



Part of the humanitarian aid that the State of Kuwait has provided and continues to provide around the world.

“Yemen Humanitarian Response” conference, held in Geneva.

In April 2019, Kuwaiti Red Crescent Society dispatched a planeload of relief supplies to Iran in the aftermath of devastating floods. In July the same year, Kuwait donated USD five million to the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). In the month later, it granted USD three million to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) to boost the food security in Syria.

In September 2019, Kuwait donated USD 11 million for the International Committee of the Red Cross’s “humanitarian response for Yemen’s campaign.” In October, it donated USD 12 million to the UNHCR to back up its programs in Yemen, while the KRCS signed a cooperation agreement with Kenya Red Cross Society for aid in the humanitarian and relief sectors.

In November, Kuwait declared voluntary contributions for the year 2020 with the UN agencies and funds, namely those engaged in humanitarian and development schemes -- at a value of USD 6.4 million.

Despite the hardships emanating from the coronavirus pandemic, Kuwait had not stopped the humanitarian assistance and aided, in 2020, a number of countries in need for medical and food supplies.

In January 2020, the KRCS distributed relief supplies to victims of floods and torrential rain in Djibouti. And in February, 2020, Kuwait Society for Relief, signed a USD 1.33 million grant accord with the UNHCR to help the displaced in Yemen and Iraq.

In August the same year, the KRCS launched a donation campaign for the Lebanese people in the aftermath of the Beirut port explosion and dispatched aircraft bearing medicines, wheelchairs, milk for children and blood bags.

In December, 2020, the KRCS sent a planeload of 40 tons of humanitarian aid to Sudan after the country witnessed floods and heavy rain. In January, it sent an aircraft boarding medical supplies and blankets to Lebanon.

In July 2021, the KRCS sent a planeload of medical equipment to Tunisia to aid the Tunisian people

cope with the coronavirus pandemic.

In January 2022, the KRCS signed with the ICRC a cooperation agreement to relieve the Muslim Rohingya settling in shantytowns in Bangladesh. And in March, 2022, it signed an accord with the World Food Program to offer urgent aid for the Afghan people.

In March 2022, Kuwait sent a military plane carrying 33 tons of relief and medical supplies to Poland to aid Ukrainians who had taken up refuge in the nation due to the Russian military operation in their country.

In May 2022, Kuwait Society for Relief signed an agreement with the Afghan Red Crescent Society to back up the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan.

In August 2022, the KRCS delivered urgent medical supplies to the hospitals in Gaza that were suffering from severe shortage of drugs due to the Israeli aggression on the strip and launched the “Gaza in our hearts” campaign to collect donations for the Palestinians in Gaza.

In September 2022, Kuwait dispatched a cargo of 75 tons of food and housing supplies to some 1,000 families harmed by floods and torrential rain in Sudan.

In February 2023, Kuwait launched a campaign dubbed “Kuwait on your side” to give a hand to victims of a destructive earthquake that struck Türkiye and Syria. The Ministry of Social Affairs, in coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Information, raised donations via Kuwait Television collecting KD 7.20 million (USD 7.67 million).

In the same month, the Red Crescent signed a cooperation deal with the ICRC, valued USD one million, to assist victims of an earthquake that hit South Türkiye and North Syria.

In May 2023, Kuwait Red Crescent Society organized the “Relieve Sudan” campaign and in June, the State of Kuwait pledged to contribute with USD six million during the Sudan donors’ conference, hosted by the UN in Geneva.

In September 2023, Kuwait dispatched the first plane of a multi-aircraft aerial relief bridge to Libya, boarding 40 tons of equipment, medical and relief supplies to aid victims of the Storm Daniel.

In October 2023, the Kuwaiti Red Crescent handed over medical supplies to the health department in Gaza.

In November, 2023, the KRCS signed with the Egyptian Red Crescent Society a cooperation protocol to buy food and medicines worth USD one million for the Palestinians in Gaza. The two societies also signed an agreement, in December, to build a field makeshift hospital in Gaza at a cost exceeding USD two million.

In February 2024, the KRCS distributed urgent aid to Lebanese families and Syrian refugees who were affected with flood of Al-Kabeer River in North Lebanon.

In March 2024, a team of Kuwait surgeons and consultants arrived in the Egyptian town of Al-Arish in preparation to enter Gaza and provide medical care for the Palestinians. In the same month.

In the same month, the KRCS sent a planeload of relief aid to the Marka International Airport, in Amman, with ten tons of materials destined for the brothers in Gaza.

In April, 2024, the KRCS declared signing a memorandum of understanding with Palestine Red Crescent Society to provide mobile medical aid in the West Bank, marginalized and isolated areas in the region.

In the same month, the Kuwaiti society signed an executive contract, worth USD four million, with the Turkish Istanbul-based Foundation for Human Rights and Freedoms and Humanitarian Relief (IHH) to organize the third relief journey to Gaza. In May, the Kuwait Red Crescent Society inked with Al-Hussein Cancer Foundation (Jordan) to provide treatment for patients and deliver medical equipment to the foundation.

In the same month, the KRCS signed a cooperation accord with the Pakistan Red Crescent Society for coordination in the humanitarian sphere.

In July, the KRCS signed an agreement with the Sudanese counterpart for the same purpose, and in July, it signed an agreement with Sudanese counterpart for a water project at a refugee camp.

In September, it signed an accord with the Sudanese counterpart to respond to emergency humanitarian conditions amid devastating floods.

October (2024) witnessed arrival of the largest Kuwaiti relief ship at Port Sudan in the North of Sudan -- with 2,500 tons of relief supplies onboard worth USD 1.2 million.

In December 2024, Kuwait dispatched the first planeload of relief supplies to Syria with 20 tons of materials onboard. The air aid bridge to Syria persisted for several weeks until 2025.

In April 2025, Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) Signed an agreement, worth USD 2.5 million, with the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), to support the humanitarian fund for Somalia (2025-2026).

In the same month, KFAED signed a grant agreement worth USD two million to contribute to a water project in Gaza.

In May 2025, KAFED signed a memorandum of understanding with Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), simultaneously with a visit to Tokyo by His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

The MoU aimed at expanding cooperation at the development level and exchanging expertise in the execution of sustainable development ventures.

In July, 2025, KFAED signed two MoUs with the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office for Great Britain and North Ireland to provide joint humanitarian aid to peoples affected with strife in Sudan and Somalia, worth USD ten million (USD five million for each).

Moreover, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had launched the electronic network for humanitarian action in line with the approach to boost the humanitarian action sustainably.

Consulate of the Arab Republic of Egypt will be closed on Thursday

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: The Consulate of the Arab Republic of Egypt in Kuwait has announced that it will be closed on Thursday -- July 24, 2025 -- in observance of the July 23 Revolution Day, reports Al-Anba daily. Normal operations will resume on Sunday -- July 27, 2025 -- and services will continue through the appointment booking system of the consulate.

The consulate affirmed that it remains reachable for emergency and death-related cases only through Hotline: 90029100.

Continued from Page 1

Blistering temps

State-run media report that dam reservoirs supplying Tehran have plummeted to “their lowest levels in a century,” prompting urgent appeals from local authorities for residents to slash water use by 20%. In Borazjan, a city in southern Bushehr province, thermometers recently registered 50°C (122°F) – the highest in the nation in the past 24 hours.

Government spokesperson Fatemeh Mohajerani urged the public to stay indoors during midday hours, limit electricity and water consumption, and remain alert to health advisories. Iran has announced heat-related public holidays in previous years, and the frequency of such measures is increasing as the region faces more frequent climate shocks.

Further west, Europe is also reeling from a punishing heatwave as hot air from North Africa forms a persistent heat dome over southern and southeastern Europe. Greece is experiencing its first prolonged heat event of the summer, with temperatures expected to peak at 44°C in some areas. The National Herald, a Greek daily, described the capital Athens as “hotter than hell.”

The extreme heat has triggered severe wildfires, especially on the island of Crete, where over 1,000 residents were evacuated after flames consumed forests and olive groves. Near Athens, new fires continue to creep dangerously close to populated areas.

In Türkiye, 761 wildfires have erupted across the country since June 26, particularly in the western Izmir Province. The fires have claimed at least two lives and destroyed large tracts of farmland and forested areas.

Elsewhere across Europe, authorities have reported at least eight heat-related deaths in countries including Spain and Italy. Energy grids are under strain, and hospitals are reporting increased admissions due to heatstroke and dehydration.

Experts say the current weather pattern is part of a broader shift driven by climate change. “We are currently under the influence of a strong high-pressure system that’s trapping hot air from northern Africa over the region,” said Clare Nullis, spokes-

person for the World Meteorological Organization. “As we can see, it’s having a major impact on the way we live.”

The EU-funded Copernicus Climate Change Service has sounded the alarm, projecting that “damage to the built environment from extreme weather events is expected to increase tenfold by the end of the century.” The agency stressed the urgent need for adaptation, including changes in urban design, water management, early warning systems, and climate-resilient infrastructure.

With meteorologists forecasting more dangerous temperature spikes throughout the summer, the heatwave that is currently scorching Kuwait, Iran, Greece, and beyond may be only a glimpse of what’s to come. “Adaptation is required across all sectors and governance levels,” Copernicus warned, “and actions must address both current climate impacts and protect against future risks.”

As the full force of summer bears down, officials across the Middle East and Europe are racing to respond to the escalating crisis – one that scientists say the world must learn to live with, and prepare for, as the planet continues to warm.

1st Deputy

For his part, Arakelyan expressed his gratitude for the warm welcome and emphasized Armenia’s desire to deepen cooperation with Kuwait across various sectors.

Both sides expressed their eagerness to continue working together in ways that reflect the depth of their bilateral ties and serve mutual interests.

NSN ‘game-changer’

During the visit, he was also presented with a detailed overview of the (NSN) upgrade project, which is considered a strategic initiative to strengthen secure and reliable communication channels across military and security agencies through advanced infrastructure and technologies that meet the highest standards of network protection.



KUNA photos
Kuwait’s charitable efforts through charitable societies continue to provide humanitarian and relief aid. (File photo)



In this photo taken March 28, 2016, a rainbow arcs up from the rushing waters of Dillon Falls as the early morning sunlight shines on the Deschutes River near Bend, Ore. (AP)

1 killed, 2 missing after group swept over Oregon waterfall

One person was killed and rescuers continued searching on Sunday for two others after a group of people were swept over an Oregon waterfall, authorities said.

The group went over Dillon Falls on the Deschutes River about 10 miles from the city of Bend, Oregon, on Saturday afternoon, the De-

schutes County Sheriff's Office said.

Three people were rescued from the river and taken by ambulance to a hospital in Bend. One person died at the scene, the sheriff's office said.

Search efforts for the missing went into Saturday evening and resumed Sunday morning, said Sgt. Josh Barker with the sheriff's office.

Further details - including the victims' identities and how the group got swept over the falls - were not immediately released.

Dillon Falls, which is within Deschutes National Forest, features a large drop followed by a series of rapids that surge through a narrow gorge of lava rock. (AP)

‘Most Americans consider Joe to be yesterday’s news’

Republicans can’t stop talking about Biden

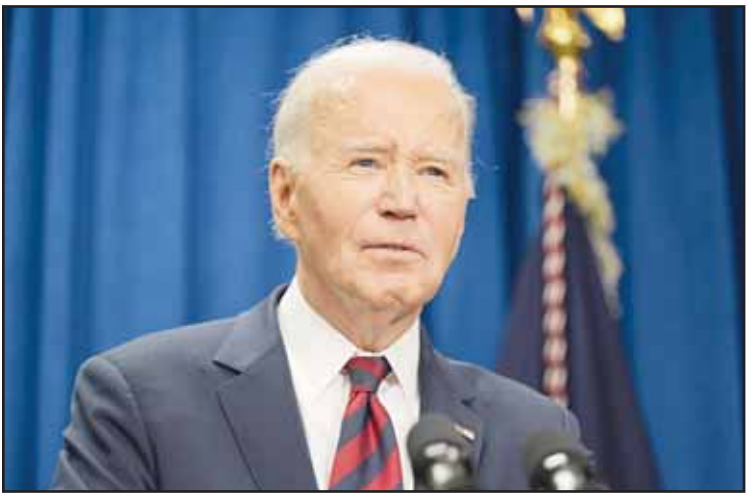
ATLANTA, July 21, (AP): It’s been six months since Joe Biden left the Oval Office. Republicans, including President Donald Trump, can’t stop talking about him.

The House has launched investigations asserting that Biden’s closest advisers covered up a physical and mental decline during the 82-year-old Democrat’s presidency. The Senate has started a series of hearings focused on his mental fitness. And Trump’s White House has opened its own investigation into the Biden administration’s use of the presidential autopen, which Trump has called “one of the biggest scandals in the history of our country.”

It all fits with Trump’s practice of blaming his predecessors for the nation’s ills. Just last week, he tried to deflect criticism of his administration’s handling of the Jeffrey Epstein sex trafficking case by casting blame on others, including Biden.

Turning the spotlight back on the former president carries risks for both parties heading into the 2026 midterms. The more Republicans or Democrats talk about Biden, the less they can make arguments about the impact of Trump’s presidency - positive or negative - especially his sweeping new tax cut and spending law that is reshaping the federal government.

“Most Americans consider Joe Biden to be yesterday’s news,” Repub-



Former US President Joe Biden speaks to the media in North Charleston, SC on Jan 19. (AP)

lican pollster Whit Ayres said.

Seeking to avenge his 2020 loss to Biden, Trump mocked his rival’s age and fitness incessantly in 2024, even after Biden dropped his reelection bid and yielded to then-Vice President Kamala Harris.

He and other Republicans seemed poised to spend the summer touting their new tax, spending and policy package. But Trump, now 79 and facing his own health challenges, has refused to let up on Biden, and his allies

in the party have followed suit.

Republican Rep. Derrick Van Orden of Wisconsin called the Biden White House’s use of the autopen “a massive scandal,” while Republican Rep. Nick Lalota insists his New York constituents “are curious as to what was happening during President Biden’s days.”

White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt recently confirmed the administration would pursue an investigation of the Biden administration’s use of the presidential autopen.

Trump’s influence dials up uncertainty in several states

2026 Senate map tough for Democrats, but Republicans have own headaches

WASHINGTON, July 21, (AP): US Republicans are encountering early headaches in Senate races viewed as pivotal to maintaining the party’s majority in next year’s midterm elections, with recruitment failures, open primaries, infighting and a president who has been sitting on the sidelines.

Democrats still face an uphill battle. They needs to net four seats to retake the majority, and most of the 2026 contests are in states that Republican President Donald Trump easily won in November.

But Democrats see reasons for hope in Republicans’ challenges. They include a nasty primary in Texas that could jeopardize a seat Republicans have held for decades. In North Carolina and Georgia, the party lacks a clear field of candidates. Trump’s influence dials up the uncertainty in several states as he decides whether to flex his influential endorsement to stave off intraparty fights.

Republicans stress that it remains early in the cycle and say there is plenty of time left for candidates to establish themselves and Trump to wade in.

Democrats have long dreamed of winning statewide office in this ruby red state. Could a nasty GOP primary be their ticket?

National Republicans and Senate strategists are worried that state Attorney General Ken Paxton, who is facing a bevy of personal and ethical questions, could beat Sen. John Cornyn for the nomination.

They fear Paxton would be a disastrous general election candidate, forcing Republicans to invest tens of millions of dollars they would rather spend elsewhere.

But Cornyn has had a cool relationship with Trump over the years, while Paxton long has been a loyal Trump ally. And Paxton raised more than three times as much as Cornyn in the second quarter, \$2.9 million compared with \$804,000, according to Federal Elections Commission reports.

Rep. Wesley Hunt of Texas is also weighing a run.

Will Trump be persuaded to endorse or will he choose to steer clear?

The surprise retirement announcement by two-term Sen. Thom Tillis has set off a frenzied search for a replacement in a state widely seen as Democrats’ top pickup opportunity. He had repeatedly clashed with Trump, including over Med-



The US Capitol on July 16, in Washington. (AP)

icaid changes in the tax cut bill, leading the president to threaten to back a primary challenger.

All eyes are now on Lara Trump, the president’s daughter-in-law, who is mulling whether to run in her home state as other potential candidates stand by.

Having a Trump on the ballot could boost a party that has struggled to motivate its most fervent base when Donald Trump is not running. But Lara Trump currently lives in Florida and has so far sounded muted on the prospect.

Others possible contenders include RNC chair Michael Whatley, who led North Carolina’s GOP before taking the national job, and first-term Reps. Pat Harrigan and Brad Knott.

Democrats are waiting on a decision from former two-term Gov. Roy Cooper, seen as a formidable candidate by both parties in a state Trump carried by just 3.2 percentage points last year.

Republicans see Georgia and the seat held by Democrat Jon Ossoff as one of their top pickup opportunities next year. But the party remains in search of a well-known challenger after failing to persuade term-limited Gov. Brian Kemp to run.

A growing potential field includes Reps. Buddy Carter, Mike Collins and Rich McCormick, Insurance Commissioner John King and Derek Dooley, a former University of Tennessee football coach.

Ossoff took in more than \$10 million in the second quarter of the year, according to FEC filings, after raising \$11 million from January through March. He ended June with more than \$15.5 million cash on hand.

Republicans hope the retirement of Democratic Sen. Gary Peters and a crowded, expensive Democratic primary, will help them capture a seat that has eluded them for more than three decades. Here, too, all eyes are on Trump.

Republicans are rallying around former Rep. Mike Rogers, who came within 20,000 votes in 2024 of ending that losing streak. But other Republicans could complicate things. Rep. Bill Huizenga has said he is waiting for guidance from the president on whether he should run against Rogers.

Democrats have their own messy primary, with state Sen. Mallory McMorrow up against Rep. Haley Stevens, state Rep. Joe Tate, and former Wayne County Health Director Abdul El-Sayed.

They were pleased to see that, even without any declared challengers, Rogers’ main campaign account raised just \$745,000 during the second fundraising quarter, lagging behind both Huizenga and several Democrats. (He brought in another nearly \$779,000 through a separate joint fundraising committee.) McMorrow, by comparison, raised more than \$2.1 million.



A public bus stop looks damaged after a Russian air attack in Kyiv, Ukraine on July 21. (AP)

High-level talks held on support for Ukraine

Russia launches major aerial attack on Kyiv

MOSCOW, July 21, (AP): Russia unleashed one of its largest aerial assaults on Ukraine in recent months, only hours before the UK and Germany are to chair a meeting to discuss US President Donald Trump’s plans for NATO allies to provide Ukraine with weapons.

The attack killed two people and wounded 15, including a 12-year-old, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said.

In Kyiv’s Shevchenkivskiy district, a drone struck the entrance to a subway station where people had taken cover. Videos posted on social media showed the station platform engulfed by smoke, with dozens of people inside. Kyiv Mayor Vitalii Klitschko said the station had to be ventilated in what he called an “enhanced mode.”

The heaviest strikes hit Kyiv’s Darnytskyi district, where a kindergarten, supermarket and warehouse facilities caught fire.

French Foreign Minister Jean-Noël Barrot arrived in Kyiv on Monday and visited some of the damage.

The hourslong drone and missile assault on Kyiv overnight into Monday underscored the urgency of Ukraine’s need for further Western military aid, especially in air defense, a week after

Trump said deliveries would arrive in Ukraine within days.

The virtual meeting will be led by British Defense Secretary John Healey and his German counterpart Boris Pistorius. Healey said U.S. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth and NATO leader Mark Rutte, as well as NATO’s Supreme Allied Commander Europe, Gen. Alexus Grynkewich, will attend the meeting of the Ukraine Defense Contact Group.

Moscow has intensified its long-range attacks on Ukrainian cities, and analysts say the barrages are likely to escalate as Russian drone production expands.

In an shift of tone toward Russia, Trump last week gave Moscow a 50-day deadline to agree to a ceasefire or face tougher sanctions.

At Monday’s meeting, Healey was expected to urge Ukraine’s Western partners to launch a coincidental “50-day drive” to get Kyiv the weapons it needs to fight Russia’s bigger army and force Russian President Vladimir Putin to the negotiating table, the U.K. government said in a statement.

Trump’s arms plan, announced a week ago, involves European nations sending American weapons to Ukraine via NATO - either from existing stock-

piles or buying and donating new ones. The U.S. president indicated discussions were partly focused on advanced Patriot air defense systems and said a week ago that deliveries would begin “within days.”

But last week various senior officials suggested no transfers had yet taken place.

NATO’s Grynkewich told The Associated Press on Thursday that “preparations are underway” for weapons transfers to Ukraine while U.S. Ambassador to NATO Matthew Whitaker said he couldn’t give a time frame.

Germany has said it offered to finance two new Patriot systems for Ukraine and raised the possibility of supplying systems it already owns and having them replaced by the U.S.

But delivery could take time, German Chancellor Friedrich Merz suggested, because “they have to be transported, they have to be set up; that is not a question of hours, it is a question of days, perhaps weeks.”

Other Patriot systems could come thanks to Switzerland, whose defense ministry said Thursday it was informed by the U.S. Defense Department that it will “reprioritize the delivery” of five previously ordered systems to support Ukraine.

Europe

Rescuers free injured cave explorer in Italy: Rescuers on Monday freed a cave explorer who was injured by falling rocks some 40 meters (more than 130 feet) below the surface in Italy’s northwestern Piedmont region while on an outing with a group of friends, according to Italy’s mountain rescue corps.

The 63-year-old man who sustained a head injury was brought to the surface by crews who used explosives to widen the cave at key junctures. They also passed through two 15-meter vertical shafts and a series of narrow winding passages.

Medical teams reached the injured man after the accident on Sunday and treated him inside a heated tent while the path out was being cleared. He remained in good condition.

The incident occurred in the Abisso Paperino cave system, which extends 170 meters (560 feet) underground near the town of Ormea in Cuneo province. (AP)



This photo, provided on July 21, 2025, by the Italian National Alpine and Speleological Rescue Corps, shows rescue operations outside the cave where a 62-year-old speleologist became trapped on Sunday. (AP)

UK to hold inquiry into violent Orgreave clash: The British government said Monday that it will hold a public inquiry into the “Battle of Orgreave,” a violent confrontation between police and striking coal miners that became a defining moment in the conflict between unions and then-Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher’s Conservative government.

Some 120 miners and police were hurt when officers clashed with miners trying to stop trucks entering the Orgreave Coking Plant in northern England on June 18, 1984. It came three months into a nationwide strike over plans to close two dozen coal pits and lay off 20,000 miners.

The bitter dispute between the National Union of Mineworkers and the government was a decisive moment in Thatcher’s bid to break the power of trade un-

ions and remake the U.K. economy along free-market lines. The strike ended in defeat for the miners after a year and hastened the end of British coal mining, which employed 180,000 people at the start of the strike. Today, no coal mines remain.

Campaigners have long called for an inquiry into why police from across the country were sent to Orgreave and what their orders were. Images of mounted police in riot gear charging stone-throwing miners with truncheons and dogs shocked and divided the nation.

Some 95 picketers were arrested and charged with riot and violent disorder, but all charges were later dropped after evidence from the police was discredited.

The Home Office said the inquiry will be led by Pete Wilcox, the bishop of Sheffield, and start in the fall. (AP)

Albanian court begins corruption trial against former prime minister Berisha

TIRANA, Albania, July 21, (AP): An Albanian court on Monday started the trial on corruption charges of former Prime Minister Sali Berisha, who leads the opposition Democratic Party.

The trial for Berisha, 80, at the Special Court for Corruption and Organized Crime, which covers cases involving senior officials and politicians, also includes his son-in-law and three other people.

In October 2023, prosecutors put Berisha under investigation for allegedly abusing his post to help his son-in-law, Jamarber Maltezi, privatize public land to build 17 apartment buildings in the capital, Tirana.

In September 2024 Berisha was formally charged with corruption in connection with a property deal. He has denied the charges, describing them as political repression ordered by Prime Minister Edi Rama of the left-wing Socialist Party.

On Monday, Berisha reported to the prosecutor’s office, as required every two weeks, but said he did not go to the court where he was represented by his lawyers.

“My presence or not is set from my



Sali Berisha, (center), leader of Democratic Party of Albania, makes statements outside a voting station during a general election where rival Socialist Edi Rama, unseen, is seeking a fourth term as Albania’s prime minister (unseen) in Tirana, Albania on May 11. (AP)

lawyers and naturally in line with the laws,” he told journalists. “That is a session where my lawyers will present their claims.”

Berisha was prime minister from

2005-2013 and served as president from 1992-1997. He was re-elected as a lawmaker for the center-right conservative Democratic Party in the 2024 parliamentary elections.

Hong Kong cancels tropical cyclone alarms

Vietnam races to prepare for Typhoon Wipha as Philippines suffers storm deaths

HANOI, July 21, (Agencies): Vietnam braced for Typhoon Wipha on Monday as coastal provinces were placed on emergency alert and airlines canceled flights ahead of the storm's expected landfall early Tuesday.

The typhoon is forecast to bring powerful winds and heavy rainfall, raising the risk of flash floods and landslides in northern Vietnam's mountainous areas and flooding in urban centers, including Hanoi.

"This is a very strong storm, moving fast, with a wide and dangerous impact on both land and sea," Vietnam Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh said in a directive to government agencies. He ordered all fishing boats, cargo ships and tourist vessels to return to shore and urged the evacuation of people in high-risk areas.

The storm has already proved deadly in the Philippines, where it intensified monsoon rains and killed at least three people over the weekend, including one who drowned and two others struck by falling trees. Philippine officials were checking reports of three more deaths, while seven people, including two children, remained missing. Floods, landslides and debris affected over 800,000 people, with about 90,000 forced to evacuate, authorities

said.

Hundreds of cruise ships have anchored in Vietnam's Ha Long Bay after authorities suspended all tourist boat services due to the storm. A tourist boat capsized there during a thunderstorm over the weekend, ahead of the typhoon's arrival, killing at least 37 people. Ongoing bad weather is expected to complicate the search for the missing.

National carrier Vietnam Airlines and its affiliate Pacific Airlines canceled at least nine domestic flights on Monday, with more delays expected. Budget airline Vietjet canceled 12 flights including international routes to South Korea.

Local authorities have deployed rescue crews and stocked food and medical supplies while working to secure telecommunications infrastructure. State media reported nearly 150,000 hectares (370,658 acres) of aquaculture farms and more than 20,000 floating fish cages could be at risk from flooding and high winds.

Emergency warnings have been sent to millions of residents by text message. Forecasters expect Wipha to make landfall between Hai Phong and Thanh Hoa provinces early Tuesday, with wind gusts reaching up to 166 kil-



People move a boat from the beach ahead of Typhoon Wipha in Thanh Hoa, Vietnam on July 21. (AP)

ometers (103 miles) per hour.

Vietnam is no stranger to tropical storms. But climate experts said such storms were getting stronger due to global warming since warmer ocean waters provide more energy to fuel the storms. This results in increased wind speeds and heavier rainfall.

Last year, Typhoon Yagi killed about 300 people and caused \$3.3 bil-

lion in damage, reducing GDP growth by 0.15%.

Also:

GUANGZHOU: As the impact of Typhoon Wipha, the sixth typhoon of the year, on south China's Guangdong Province gradually weakened, the provincial headquarters for flood, drought and wind control announced the ad-

justment of its emergency response to wind control from Level II to Level IV at 11:00 a.m. Monday.

According to the provincial meteorological observatory, heavy rainfall is expected to continue in cities and counties across southern Guangdong on Monday. Typhoon-induced winds and rainfall will ease substantially across Guangdong starting from Tuesday.

All localities and departments across Guangdong are still urged to maintain heightened vigilance through reinforced 247 duty rotations and interagency coordination meetings, while implementing comprehensive preventive measures against typhoons, heavy rainfall, and potential secondary disasters.

Disaster recovery operations are underway, with prioritized repairs to critical infrastructure including transport networks, power grids, and telecommunications.

Typhoon Wipha made its second landfall near Hailing Island in Yangjiang in Guangdong at around 8:15 p.m. Sunday as a strong tropical storm, bringing a maximum wind speed of 25 meters per second near its center, the provincial meteorological observatory said.

China has a four-tier emergency re-

sponse system, with Level I being the most severe response.

HONG KONG: The Hong Kong Observatory on Monday morning canceled all warning signals for tropical cyclones as Wipha, the sixth typhoon of this year, left the city.

Transportation services are resuming in Hong Kong. The Hong Kong link road of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge reopened to all vehicles from 12:00 a.m. on Monday, said the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region government.

Airport Authority Hong Kong said the three runways and all apron facilities at the Hong Kong International Airport are functioning well. Many flights were rescheduled on Sunday due to the typhoon. From 8:00 p.m. Sunday to 6:00 a.m. Monday, a total of 120 flights arrived and 114 departed.

The Hong Kong Observatory forecast rainstorms and big waves on Monday in the wake of the typhoon and alerted residents to stay vigilant and stay away from the coasts.

By 7:40 p.m. on Sunday, 33 residents had received treatment at public hospitals for injuries caused by rainstorms, local data showed.



In this photo made from video released by the Indonesian National Search and Rescue Agency (BASARNAS), smoke billows from passenger ship KM Barcelona after it caught fire in the waters off Talise Island in North Sulawesi, Indonesia on July 20. (AP)

3 dead, 575 rescued after ship catches fire in Indonesia

The number of people saved from an Indonesian passenger ferry that caught fire at sea rose to 575, rescuers said Monday, but three died and two remained missing.

The KM Barcelona V-A caught fire around midday Sunday while making its regular half-day journey between two ports in North Sulawesi province, from Melonguane to Manado, according to First Adm. Franky Pasuna Sihombing, chief of the Manado navy base.

A coast guard ship, six rescue vessels and several inflatable boats were deployed in the rescue operation,

Sihombing said. The crews pulled many people from the sea and took them to nearby islands, and local fishermen also saved some survivors wearing life jackets as they were drifting in the choppy waters.

Photos and videos circulated on social media showed terrified passengers, mostly wearing life jackets, jumping into the sea as orange flames and black smoke billowed from the burning vessel.

Authorities are still investigating the cause of the fire that began in the ferry's stern and was extinguished within an hour, Sihombing said. (AP)

Bangladesh Air Force training jet crashes into Dhaka school and kills at least 19

DHAKA, Bangladesh, July 21, (AP): A Bangladesh Air Force training aircraft crashed into a school campus in the capital, Dhaka, shortly after takeoff on Monday, killing at least 19 people including the pilot and injuring more than 100, officials said.

According to the military and a fire official, the Chinese-made F-7 BGI aircraft crashed into the campus of Milestone School and College, in the Uttara neighborhood, in the afternoon as students were attending classes.

The Fire Service and Civil Defense said that at least 19 people, mostly students, died and another 116 were rescued with injuries. A significant number sustained burn injuries.

The government announced a national day of mourning on Tuesday, with flags to fly at half-staff across the country.

The military said the jet took off from Bangladesh Air Force Base A.K. Khandaker in Dhaka's Kurmitola neighborhood at 1:06 p.m. local time and crashed soon after, catching fire immediately. It said the aircraft "experienced a technical malfunction," but that a high-level committee within the Air Force would conduct an investigation to determine the cause.



Firemen check the wreckage of a Bangladesh Air Force training aircraft that crashed onto a school campus in Dhaka, Bangladesh on July 21. (AP)

Flight Lieutenant Md. Toukir Islam, made "every effort to divert the aircraft away from densely populated areas toward a more sparsely inhabited location," the military said. "Unfortunately, the aircraft crashed into a two-story building" within the school.

It is the deadliest airplane crash in the Bangladesh capital in recent memory.

Local media indicated most of the injured were students. Relatives panicked at the scene as rescuers, using tricycle rickshaws or whatever was available, transported the injured to local hospitals.

Ishiba's coalition loses majority in Japan's upper house election

TOKYO, July 21, (AP): Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba said Monday he will stay in office to tackle challenges such as rising prices and high US tariffs after a weekend election defeat left his coalition with a minority in both parliamentary chambers and triggered calls for his resignation.

Ishiba's ruling Liberal Democratic Party and its junior coalition partner Komeito were short three seats to maintain a majority in the 248-seat upper house in Sunday's vote. Though the LDP is still the leading party, its ruling coalition is now a minority in both houses of the Diet, or parliament, which makes it difficult for the coalition to pass any legislation.

The loss of a majority in Sunday's election does not immediately lead to a change of government because the upper house lacks power to file a no-confidence motion against a leader. With opposition too fractured to form a united front powerful enough to topple the ruling coalition, Ishiba is under more pressure to step down from ultra-conservative rivals in his own party.

Ishiba said he takes the result seriously but that his priority is to avoid creating a political vacuum and to tackle impending challenges, including the Aug. 1 deadline for a tariff deal with the U.S.



Japan's Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba attends a press conference at the headquarters of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) in Tokyo on July 21, after the prime minister's ruling coalition failed to secure a majority in the upper house in a parliamentary election. (AP)

"While I painfully feel my serious responsibility over the election results, I believe I must also fulfill my responsibility I bear for the country and the people so as not to cause politics to stall or go adrift," Ishiba said. "Chal-

lenges such as global situation and natural disaster won't wait for a better political situation."

His chief tariff negotiator, Economic Minister Ryosei Akazawa, is heading to Washington for his eighth round of talks. The prime minister hopes to reach a mutually beneficial deal and meet with U.S. President Donald Trump "as soon as possible," he said.

Sunday's vote comes after Ishiba's coalition lost a majority in the October lower house election, stung by past corruption scandals, and his unpopular government has since been forced into making concessions to the opposition to get legislation through parliament. It has been unable to quickly deliver effective measures to mitigate rising prices, including Japan's traditional staple of rice, and dwindling wages.

Trump has added to the pressure, complaining about a lack of progress in trade negotiations and the lack of sales of U.S. autos and American-grown rice to Japan despite a shortfall in domestic stocks of the grain. A 25% tariff due to take effect Aug. 1 has been another blow for Ishiba.

At a news conference Monday, Ishiba said his LDP and the Komeito have agreed to stick with their coalition while seeking further cooperation from opposition parties.

Subcontinent

Pakistan arrest 11 over 'honor killing': Police in southwestern Pakistan arrested 11 suspects after a video went viral, showing a young couple murdered for marrying without their families' approval, authorities said Monday.

The disturbing footage caused an uproar in the country, with activists demanding swift justice and a stop to so-called honor killings, where family members target women who don't follow local traditions and culture or decide to marry someone of their choosing.

The video, which surfaced over the weekend on social media and was viewed by The Associated Press, showed a man executing the young couple at close range in daylight as others stood by. Police confirmed the authenticity of the footage, saying the killings happened in the Deghari district in the province of Balochistan, said Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti.

In the video, several men arrive in pickup trucks in a mountainous region, and a young woman, speaking the local language, says she is legally married.

"Come, walk seven steps with me, and then you can only shoot me," she says. It isn't clear what she meant. (AP)

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Air India plane skids off runway, all safe: A domestic flight belonging to the private airline company Air India skidded off the runway amid heavy rains in India's financial

capital Mumbai on Monday, but managed to taxi safely to a parking bay, confirmed an official at the airport.

TV media reports showed minor damage to the aircraft, but all the passengers and crew members were safe.

Flying from Kochi to Mumbai, the domestic flight No. AI2744 faced heavy rains on landing in Mumbai, "resulting in a runway excursion after touchdown," according to the airport official.

He confirmed that the aircraft taxied safely to a parking bay, and all passengers and crew members were safe and had disembarked from the aircraft. "The aircraft has been grounded for checks," added the official.

Media reports quoted a spokesperson of the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport as saying that "there are minor damage reported to the airport's primary runway, 0927. In order to ensure continuity of operations, the secondary runway 1432 has been activated." (Xinhua)

□ □ □

Road accident kills 4 in Afghanistan: At least four people have been confirmed dead and two others were injured in a road accident in northern Afghanistan's Badakhshan province, the provincial police said in a statement Sunday night.

The incident occurred when a truck collided with a tricycle in Madaba region, along the highway linking Faizabad, the provincial capital, with Kasham district. Four commuters of the tricycle were killed on the spot, and two others sustained injuries, the statement added.

Reckless driving was cited as the primary cause of the incident. The injured were shifted to a nearby health center for treatment, it added.

In a similar incident, 11 people lost their lives and four others were critically injured in a highway crash in southern Helmand province a couple of days ago. (Xinhua)

Kenyan activist charged with alleged possession of ammunition

NAIROBI, Kenya, July 21, (AP): The prominent Kenyan activist Boniface Mwangi was on Monday charged with unlawful possession of ammunition in a case stemming from his alleged role in street protests against the government.

Opposition leaders and Mwangi's followers had feared he would be charged with the more serious offense of terrorism.

He was freed on bond immediately after his appearance in court on Monday.

The charge sheet said the suspect possessed three canisters of tear gas without lawful authorization. His attorney, Njanja Maina, told reporters on Sunday that Mwangi never possessed such items.

Mwangi's wife Njeri, in a post on the social media platform X, said on Saturday that security personnel raided their home and took the activist and his electronic gadgets while "talking of terrorism and arson."

The Kenya Human Rights Commission said the ammunition charge was a "trumped-up accusation."

"This pattern of inventing charges to harass and silence activists like Mwangi erodes public confidence in the independence" of the justice system, the civic group said.



Police arrest activist Boniface Mwangi during a protest held to commemorate one month since youths were killed on June 25, outside parliament in Kenya's capital Nairobi, on July 25. (AP)

Mwangi is a well-known pro-democracy activist in Kenya. On X, where he has 2 million followers, he describes himself as "The People's Watchman."

Protesters who have rocked President William Ruto's administration say they want to rid his government of corruption, marked by theft of public

resources and the seemingly extravagant lifestyles of politicians.

They also say that Ruto, in power since 2022, has broken his own promises to working-class Kenyans. The protests started in mid-2024 when Ruto proposed aggressive new tax measures opposed by many Kenyans.

Lat/Am

Ecuador extradites gang leader to US: Ecuador on Sunday extradited to the United States the leader of a violent Ecuadorian gang who relied on hitmen, bribes and military weapons to do business.

José Adolfo Macías Villamar, whose nickname is "Fito," escaped from a prison in Ecuador last year and was recaptured late June. In April, a U.S. Attorney indicted him in New York City on charges he imported thousands of pounds of cocaine into the United States.

Macías "was removed from the La Roca Detention Center under the custody of the National Police and Armed Forces for the appropriate proceedings in the context of an extradition process," Ecuador's government agency responsible for overseeing prisons, SNAI, said in a message sent to journalists.

Details of the handover were not specified.

A photograph released by SNAI showed Macías wearing a T-shirt, shorts, a bulletproof vest and helmet. Several police officers were guarding him at an undisclosed location.

The Ecuadorian will appear Monday before Brooklyn's federal court "where he will plead not guilty," Macías' lawyer Alexei Schacht told The Associated Press via email. After that, he will be detained in a prison yet to be determined, Schacht added.



Macías

The extradition decision came after the United States sent a document to Ecuador offering guarantees for the respect of the rights of the 45-year-old criminal leader. (AP)

□ □ □

Guatemala denies man deported from US: The Guatemalan government on Sunday denied that US authorities deported a Chilean man to the Central American country.

The Morning Call of Allentown, Pennsylvania, reported Luis Leon, 82, a legal permanent resident of the United States who won asylum in 1987, ended up in Guatemala after being handcuffed in a Philadelphia immigration office, where he went to replace his lost green card. The news report relied on family accounts.

The Morning Call reported Sunday that Leon was recovering from pneumonia in Guatemala and didn't plan to return to the United States, according to his granddaughter.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was looking into the circumstances, according to The Morning Call. ICE did not respond to questions from The Associated Press on Sunday.

The Guatemalan Migration Institute said in a statement that it coordinates with ICE on all deportations from the United States and that no one matched Leon's name, age or citizenship.

Guatemala agreed in February to receive people deported from the United States who are from other Central American countries. Its agreement does not extend to Chileans.

The Trump administration has embraced deporting people to countries other than their own, including El Salvador, South Sudan and, last week, the African kingdom of Eswatini. (AP)

Boursa Kuwait closes higher

KUWAIT CITY, July 21, (KUNA): Boursa Kuwait ended Monday's session with the All Share Index rising by 9.14 points (0.11%) to close at 8,611.27, following the trading of around 885.4 million shares through 41,488 transactions, with a total val-

ue of KD 127.2 million (USD 416.3 million). The Main Market Index dipped by 6.41 points (0.08%) to 7,549.31, with 725.2 million shares traded in 31,735 transactions, totaling KD 75.6 million (USD 247.4 million).

Business

Solidifying its leadership in sustainable finance

Kuwait Finance House releases its fifth sustainability report

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) announced the launch of its fifth Sustainability Report, covering the year 2024. This report adheres to global standards, aligns with Sustainable Development Goals, and highlights KFH's journey of over four decades of banking excellence and leadership in Kuwait and the wider region.

Moreover, the report details KFH's performance based on EESG principles, in line with national and sustainable development goals. This latest edition also highlights KFH's adherence to sustainable growth practices and its position as a globally recognized Islamic financial institution in the realm of sustainable finance.

Developed in line with the latest global standards, such as the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) and the Integrated Reporting Framework, the report covers the period from January 1 to December 31, 2024. It serves as a key reference for the bank's performance across the three pillars of sustainability: Environment, Social, and Governance (ESG).

In his message, KFH Chairman, Hamad Abdulmohsen Al-Marzouq said: "Within this report, we reiterate our commitment to embedding the Sustainable Development Goals as a foundational pillar within our operations. To that end, we have successfully continued our efforts to fully integrate sustainability across KFH's operations, thereby ensuring alignment with the bank's overarching mission and core values. We have also enhanced our key governance principles, reaffirmed our commitment to the societies we serve, and consistently offered comprehensive and innovative financial solutions to meet our customers' aspirations. Furthermore, KFH has sustained its pioneering position amidst the ongoing digital transformation, while concurrently enhancing the efficient leveraging of our resources and actively supporting environmental initiatives that yield a demonstrable positive impact."

He added that: "KFH is the first bank to establish a Governance and Sustainability Committee reporting to its Board of Directors. KFH is also the first bank to have designed an integrated sustainability strategy covering the four pillars of economy, environment, society, and governance. In addition, it is the first bank to have established a department assigned to monitor sustainability strategy and promote green finance products."

Al-Marzouq added: "In support of its sustainability vision, KFH continues to promote its governance framework. The Bank has successfully expanded the implementation of its comprehensive governance framework to include the subsidiary banks. This was achieved through integrating risk systems and frameworks and adopting globally recognized best practices. This strategy facilitated the continuation of the seamless integration initiatives at the Group level. As a result, the Group underwent strategic reviews by leading international credit rating agencies, such as Moody's and Fitch, which highlighted the robustness of its risk management frameworks and their positive impact on the Group's asset quality."

Financial growth boosts green finance's positive impact

KFH reported a strong financial performance in 2024,



Hamad Al-Marzouq, KFH Chairman

Al-Marzouq:

- KFH integrates sustainability into operations in line with mission and values

delivering historic results that reinforced its sustainability efforts. The Bank recorded a net profit of KD 601.8 million, an increase of 3% compared to the previous year. Total operating income reached KD 1.6 billion, an increase of 11.6%. KFH further increased its investment in green Sukuk to \$364 million in 2024, a 4% increase compared to last year's investment.

Achieving Environmental Goals and Expanding Clean Energy

In 2024, KFH achieved significant environmental progress as 51% of its new credit cards were released from recycled plastic. Furthermore, KFH holds a LEED Gold Certification for Existing Building – Operations and Maintenance.

Woman and youth empowerment within a motivating work environment

KFH's commitment to social responsibility saw tangible results, with a 4.3% year-over-year increase in the employment of people with disabilities across the Group. In a further move to support the community, 39% of KFH's retail finance portfolio was extended to women. The bank is seeing a growing female workforce, now at 24.5%, with a significant 25.8% of employees under 30. This positive trend, coupled with a drop in voluntary turnover to just 5.52%, highlights a stable and motivating work environment.

An accelerated digital investment and smart banking experience

KFH continues its digital expansion with approximately 10 KFH Go branches currently in operation. This effort has boosted the CX index to 79.5%, showcasing the



Sustainability report 2024

bank's successful strategy in improving service quality and providing secure, smart solutions.

Supporting the national economy and a KD 30 million social contribution

As part of its commitment to supporting the national economy, KFH directed 92.3% of its total procurement spending to local suppliers, aiming to develop national supply chains and stimulate the local market. Social contributions reached about KD 30 million in 2024, covering diverse initiatives in education, health, the environment, youth empowerment, and more.

A more sustainable banking model

The report emphasizes KFH's commitment to sustainability as a core strategic pillar, directly rooted in Islamic banking principles. KFH consistently develops its policies and investments to align with the aspirations of its customers and beneficiaries. This approach ensures a balance between financial growth and environmental and social responsibility, powerfully reflecting its unwavering dedication to Sharia principles.

Dominating awards and rankings in 2024

Reaffirming its prominent regional and global position, KFH earned 47 prestigious awards and rankings at the local and international levels in 2024. These accolades underscore its institutional excellence and leadership in Islamic finance, governance, sustainability, and talent development.

The most notable recognitions include "World's Best Islamic Financial Institution" from Global Finance magazine, "Kuwait's Best Bank" and "Kuwait's Best Bank for ESG" from Euromoney, "Bank of the

Year 2024 – Kuwait" from The Banker and "Corporate Social Responsibility – Middle East" award from EMEA Finance. KFH ranked first in Kuwait by The Banker magazine in terms of growth and return on risk. Moreover, KFH secured the 10th place on Forbes Top 100 Listed Companies (Middle East) and as the top Kuwaiti company by market value and profitability. In human resources, the Bank garnered 13 global awards from the Brandon Hall Group.

World-class rankings and prestigious awards

In recognition of its sustainability efforts, KFH achieved MSCI ESG "A" Rating for its exemplary (ESG) practices and sustainable finance commitment. Additionally, the Bank scooped the "Kuwait's Best Bank for ESG" award by Euromoney Magazine. Also, KFH has been included in the FTSE4Good Index Series.

KFH achieved another milestone being the first bank in Kuwait to receive the GSAS-Gold Level Certification for KFH Auto showroom building.

KFH was honored to participate in the Sixteenth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP16) to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) held in Riyadh. Furthermore, KFH proudly joined the inaugural Global Takaful Alliance agreement in collaboration with the UNDP. The Bank also released its issue of the Carbon Footprint Report, the first of its kind in the Kuwaiti banking sector and continued issuing sustainability reports, representing its solid commitment in environmental leadership and financial banking.

2024 ESG Highlights

Economics

■ KD 16.3 billion operating income, an increase of 11.6%.

■ KD 601.8 million net profit, an increase of 3%.

■ USD 364 million Green Sukuk investment, a 4% increase compared to 2023.

Environmental

■ 51% of credit cards issued in 2024 were made from recycled plastic, a 4.08% increase from 2023.

■ LEED Gold Certification for Operations and Maintenance awarded to one of KFH's branches.

Social

■ 244 people with disabilities employed across KFH Group, marking a 4.3%.

■ 39% of KFH's retail finance portfolio was extended to female clients.

■ 24.5% female participation in the workforce, an increase of 2.1%.

■ 25.8% of employees are under the age of 30.

■ 5.51% voluntary turnover.

■ 10 KFH Go digital branches.

■ 92.3% of total procurement spending is directed to local suppliers.

■ 79.5% CX Index, reflecting a 1.7% increase.

Governance

■ 100% of Board members are non-executive directors

■ 29% of Board members are independent directors

■ 7% female representation on the Board

■ 100% of employees completed anti-corruption training

Investment climate steady in 21 Arab countries

Dhahan: Regional FDI projects decline amid instability

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: The Corporation recommended that a package of recommendations be put in place immediately in the areas of infrastructure, institutions, economics, legislation, and procedures in a bid to improve the investment climate in Arab countries, particularly amid the negative reflections of regional political events and escalating economic challenges on the investment climate.

In the introduction of the 40th Annual Report on the Investment Climate in Arab Countries for 2025, launched by the Corporation today from its headquarters in Kuwait, Dhahan noted that the average Arab ranking in the Composite "Dhahan" Index of investment climate components in Arab countries for 2024, stood at 103rd globally, 24 places behind the global average. Still, the ranking of 13 Arab countries improved in the index.

It elaborated that the stability of this ranking in the index, which covers 158 countries, including 21 Arab ones, and is based on 217 composite and sub-indicators issued by 35 international agencies, came due to the change in the position of Arab countries in the four main groups pertinent to the investment climate, as follows:

- Economic performance indicators (14 main and sub-indicators): The Arab ranking fell by five positions to 100th globally owing to the decline in eight major internal performance assessment indicators and four external dealing indicators. Still, it advanced in two indicators: the gross investments as a percentage of the GDP and the government debt as a percentage of the GDP.

- Political and security performance indicators (33 main and sub-indicators): The Arab average dropped by five positions to 112th globally as a result of the declining Arab ranking in commercial and investment risk assessment indicators. The sovereign rating of six countries: Qatar, Kuwait, Oman, Jordan, Egypt and

Tunisia advanced, while it stabilized in UAE, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Bahrain and Iraq, but declined in Lebanon.

- Legislative and regulatory environment indicators (60 main and sub-indicators): The Arab average stabilized at 112th globally due to its decline in the bilateral investment treaties, while it improved in the indicators of global governance, electronic government, economic freedom, prosperity, bribe risks, corruption perceptions, startups and competitiveness.

- Indicators of production elements (110 main and sub-indicators): The Arab average stood at 103rd globally. It dropped in sustainable development, energy, knowledge and innovation, while it stood in sustainable competitiveness and competitive industrial performance. But it advanced in production capacity, logistics service, energy transition, digital competitiveness, talent competitiveness, government AI readiness, and technology readiness.

At the level of Arab ranking in the Composite Investment Climate Index for 2024, the GCC countries and Morocco continued to lead the Arab average. The UAE came first at the Arab level and 16th globally, followed by Qatar (2nd among Arab countries and 33rd globally), Saudi Arabia (3rd in the Arab world and 40th globally). Kuwait came 4th in the Arab world and 50th globally, Oman had the fifth and 51st places at Arab and global levels respectively, Bahrain had the sixth and 58th at both Arab and global levels respectively and Morocco came seventh in the Arab world and 73rd globally.

Jordan and Algeria were better than the Arab average between 83rd and 94th globally. Twelve Arab countries: Egypt, Tunisia, Iraq, Libya, Lebanon, Djibouti, Mauritania, Syria, Palestine, Yemen, Sudan and Somalia, ranged between 104th and 158th places globally.

The report indicated that the final outcome of the changes in the ranking of Arab countries

in international indicators, which advanced in 13 Arab countries in the index for 2024, was mixed in indicators of foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows into Arab countries during the same year. The value of FDI projects established in the region fell by 38% to \$119 billion in 2024, while FDI flows into Arab countries increased, according to UNCTAD estimates, by 53% to reach \$123 billion in 2024. Egypt made up \$46.6 billion, or 38% of the Arab total, followed by the UAE with \$45.6 billion or 37%, and Saudi Arabia with \$15.7 billion or 13%. Meanwhile, the region's share went up to 8.1% of the global total and 14.2% of the developing countries' total.

However, the report indicated a drop in the volume of inter-Arab investment projects during 2024, particularly in the number of projects, by 17% to 260, and in the Capex by 35% to \$45.5 billion during the same year. This decline is expected to continue through 2025, based on performance indicators for the first quarter of 2025.

In this regard, the Corporation, which is considered the world's first multilateral investment insurance agency and marks its golden jubilee this year and whose cumulative insured operations exceeded \$32 billion by the end of 2024, underlined that it would step up its efforts in providing specialized insurance, research, and advisory services amid the growingly fierce competition to attract investments and open export markets in light of the regional political and economic developments.

Based in Kuwait, the Arab Investment & Export Credit Guarantee Corporation (Dhahan) was established in 1974 as a multilateral institution that comprises all Arab countries and four joint Arab financial institutions. It provides specialized insurance services against credit and political risks with a view to facilitating the inflow of foreign direct investments into Arab countries and promoting Arab exports and imports.



KUNA photo

Saudi Energy Minister with delegates from Greece, France, Germany, and global industry leaders at Green Hydrogen Workshop.

Saudi signs green energy export MoUs with Europe

RIYADH, July 21, (KUNA): Saudi Arabia signed on Sunday a number of agreements and memoranda of understanding through Saudi company ACWA Power with several international partners, aimed at creating a Green Hydrogen and Renewable Energy Export value chain between Saudi Arabia and Europe.

Saudi Ministry of Energy said in a statement that this came during the Renewable Energy and Green Hydrogen Export Workshop, led by ACWA Power under the supervision of the Ministry of Energy, in the presence of Minister of Energy Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman Al-Saud.

The event brought together high-level government representatives from Saudi Arabia, Greece, France, and Germany, alongside executives from global specialized companies and leading national institutions.

These MoUs establish a collaborative framework to assess the market demand and feasibility of developing large-scale renewable energy projects dedicated for export in Saudi Arabia and the creation of a corridor to deliver generated electricity to Europe.

The agreements also aim to develop advanced energy transmission corridors that enhance supply reliability and the efficiency of cross-border energy infrastructure.

This workshop - along with the signed agreements and memoranda of understanding - underscores the Kingdom's leading role in the IMEC project, leveraging its unique geographical location, highlighting the Kingdom's competitive advantages, which make its participation pivotal to the IMEC's success.

In addition, the agreements reflect the Kingdom's pioneering role in enhancing global energy security, advancing regional and international interconnection projects, and driving the transition toward a sustainable and resilient energy future - fully aligned with the objectives of Saudi Vision 2030.

The workshop showcased the Kingdom's progress in diversifying its energy mix and promoting regional and international integration in clean energy-reinforcing its position as a reliable global supplier of energy and a key leader in the economic corridor connecting East and West.

Sonatrach, Sinopec ink MoU on hydrocarbon exploration

ALGIERS, July 21, (KUNA): Algerian energy and hydrocarbons company Sonatrach and the Chinese company Sinopec signed a memorandum of understanding on Sunday aimed at exploring energy resources and establishing a framework for cooperation.

Sonatrach said in a statement that the agreement will allow both parties to discuss the proposed work program with the aim of evaluating and developing hydrocarbon resources in the Gourara and Eastern Berkine

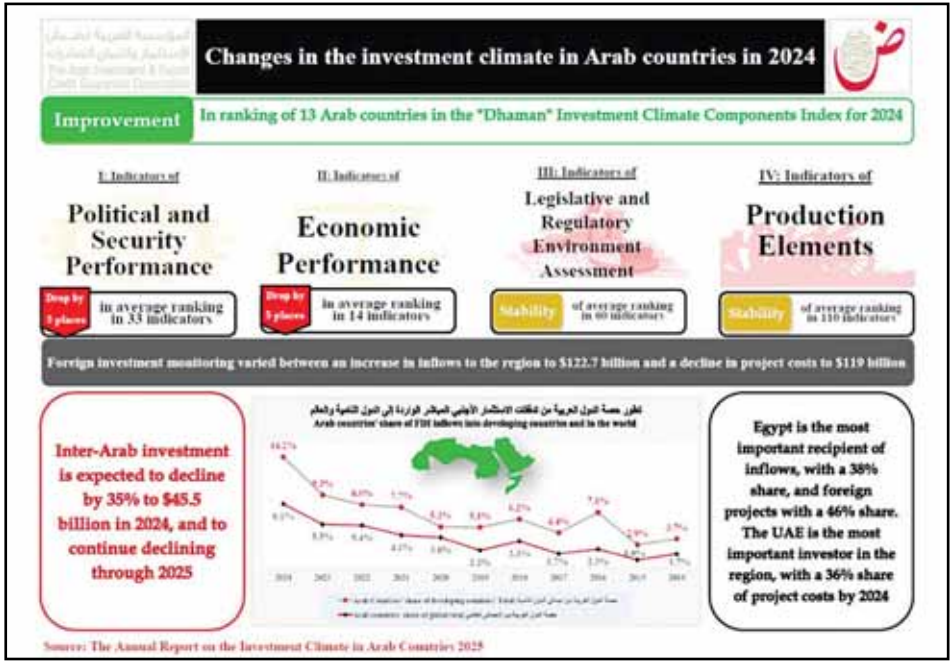
Southern Algiers.

This agreement is the result of a long process of cooperation and joint work, and is expected to open promising prospects for both parties to explore hydrocarbon resources in the two regions, said Sonatrach Chairman Rachid Hachichi.

Sinopec has been operating in Algeria since 2002 under a partnership agreement with Sonatrach aimed at recovering and enhancing the value of the available hydrocarbons in the field.



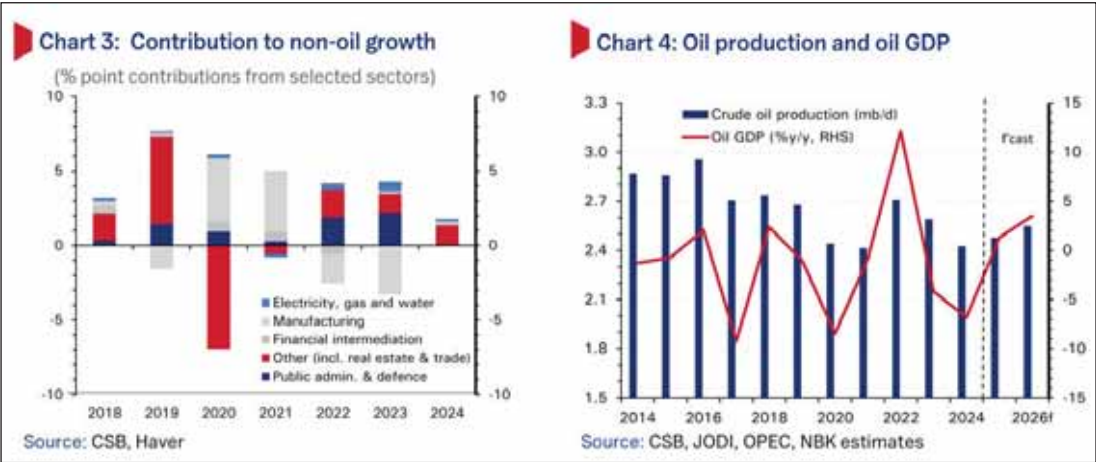
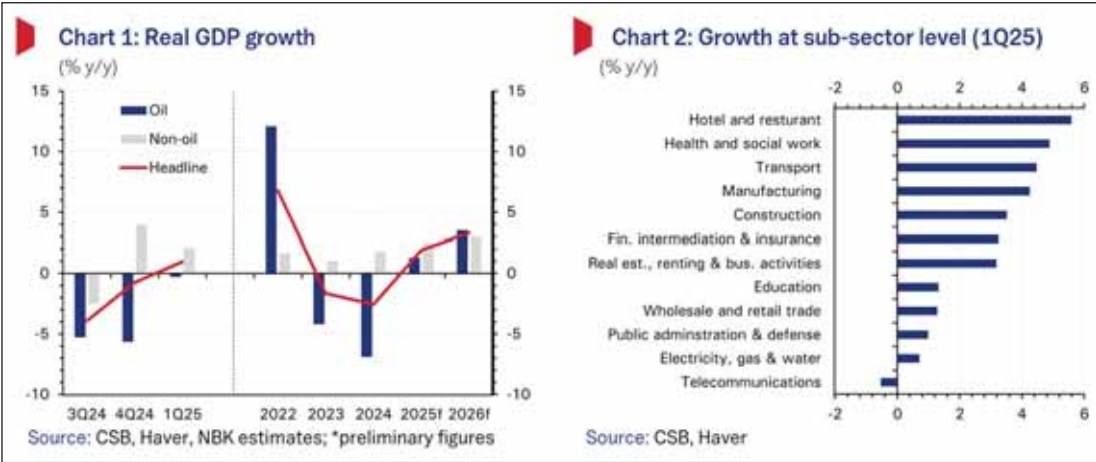
Dhahan report cover 2025.



Dhahan Infographic

Oil output stabilizes

Kuwait’s GDP grows 1% in Q1 after seven quarters of decline



By National Bank of Kuwait

Mascotreliminary official figures show GDP expanding 1% y/y in Q1 2025 following seven consecutive quarters of contraction, helped by a less severe downturn in oil output. With the negative effects of earlier voluntary oil production cuts beginning to fade, oil GDP recorded only a marginal decline, the softest since Q2 2023. Growth in non-oil activity remained positive though eased, weighed by a moderation in the manufacturing, real estate, and transport sectors. The near-term outlook for GDP is one of positive growth, lifted by rising oil production after Kuwait started to restore 135 kb/d of oil output cuts between April and September 2025, while the non-oil sector should also register further steady gains.

Non-oil GDP growth softens in Q1 2025 after strong performance in Q4 2024

Growth in the non-oil sector weakened in Q1 2025, slowing to 2% y/y compared to 4% recorded in the prior quarter. The softer expansion in non-oil activity reflected, among other things, a moderation in the manufacturing sector, where activity grew at a still-solid 4.3% despite a decline in refined petroleum products output but slowed notably from the 12.2% reading registered in Q4 2024. Growth in other sectors including real estate, wholesale & retail trade, transport, and education also slowed. Offsetting the slowdown was stronger expansion in the non-oil economy’s largest seg-

ments: public administration and defense as well as financial intermedia- tion and insurance, which grew 1% and 3.2% y/y, respectively.

Oil sector logs marginal contraction, set to return to growth in Q2

The contraction in oil GDP eased significantly to -0.3% y/y from -5.7% y/y in Q4 2024, registering the softest rate of decline since Kuwait embarked on cutting oil production in Q2 2023 after participating in the voluntary cuts scheme with 7 other OPEC+ members. Kuwait’s oil production averaged 2.415 mb/d in Q1 2025, a 0.7% decline from the same quarter last year, according to OPEC secondary sources. However, oil sector fortunes are set to shift in Q2 2025 and thereafter, after the OPEC-8 member alliance started unwinding the 2.2 mb/d voluntary cut tranche in April 2025. Originally planned to be unwound over the course of 18 months, OPEC+ has accelerated the pace of supply hikes with output now on a path to be fully restored in September, a full year ahead of schedule. For Kuwait, crude production rose by 0.5% q/q in Q2 to 2.426 mb/d and is set to accelerate further to average 2.533 mb/d in H2 2025. With the oil market so far able to absorb the additional OPEC and global supply and oil prices currently holding near \$70/bbl, an upside risk to our oil sector outlook involves the potential unwinding of the outstanding OPEC-8 voluntary cuts (1.66 mb/d), of which Kuwait’s share is 128 kb/d.

Growth heading back into positive territory in 2025

Growth in total GDP is set to remain on a positive trajectory in the near term, buoyed by further steady expansion in non-oil economic activity and increased oil production. Non-oil GDP is set to benefit from the government’s reform drive which includes the recent passing of the debt law that could catalyze the implementation of key development projects and the potential approval of the ‘mortgage’ law later in 2025, which could spur higher household borrowing and consumer spending. Economic indicators for Q2 2025 pointed to a healthy pace of non-oil economic activity. The key ‘output’ and ‘new orders’ balances in the non-oil private sector PMI gauge both averaged a very robust 57+ in Q2 2025, real estate activity continued to expand at a robust pace with earlier price falls in the residential sector abating, while credit growth stood at a healthy 5.5% y/y in May, and could benefit in coming months if interest rates are reduced further.

Nonetheless, there are also downside risks to the outlook. Local consumer spending growth (according to central bank card transactions data) turned negative in Q1 2025, extending the weakening trend now observed for more than a year. The government’s ongoing fiscal consolidation push will also weigh on wage and job growth. Overall, we see GDP growing 1.9% this year, boosted by expansions in both the oil and nonoil sectors of 1.2% and 2.5%, respectively.

ABK hosts exclusive ‘Smurfs’ movie premiere for young account holders

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: As part of its ongoing efforts to strengthen customer loyalty from an early age, Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) hosted a special movie premiere for ABK Heroes account holders and their families. The exclusive screening of the much-anticipated Smurfs movie took place on Thursday, 17 July 2025, at VOX Cinemas, The Avenues, offering young customers a fun-filled experience and creating lasting memories.

The event is part of ABK’s broader vision to engage with the community beyond traditional banking, by providing value-added experiences that help foster long-lasting relationships. Through initiatives like ABK Heroes, the Bank emphasizes the importance of introducing children to positive financial habits in an engaging, interactive environment.

Johair Marafi, General Manager of Retail Banking at ABK, highlighted the Bank’s vision, stating, “At ABK, we believe banking is not just about transactions – it’s about relationships that grow with our customers over time. The ABK Heroes account reflects this belief, by introducing children to essential financial concepts in a way that is fun, interactive, and meaningful. Today’s event is a perfect example of how we are building these rela-



Johair Marafi, General Manager - Retail Banking

tionships early, while showing our young customers and their families that ABK is with them every step of the way.”

The ABK Heroes account is designed for children and youth, providing exclusive benefits, exciting rewards, and opportunities for families to engage with the Bank through educational and entertainment-driven initiatives.

The ABK Heroes account offers customers numerous benefits, including a highest interest rate 2% deposited monthly, 1 free ticket when purchasing a ticket from Vox cinema, merchants discounts, and

more.

By blending financial literacy with engaging experiences, ABK empowers the next generation to develop smart financial habits while fostering a sense of belonging to the ABK community.

Marafi added, “We are proud to see the joy on the faces of our young customers today. It reinforces our belief that a bank’s role extends beyond financial services – it includes supporting families, celebrating milestones, and creating experiences that make a difference. As we continue to grow, ABK remains committed to initiatives that promote financial awareness, community engagement, and lasting customer loyalty and we will witness the organization of more events to interact with customers and increase their banking and financial awareness”.

This initiative reflects ABK’s broader strategic focus on enhancing customer experiences through innovative services, community-driven programs, and a dedication to enriching the lives of its customers. The Bank continues to invest in its retail offerings, ensuring that customers of all ages feel valued and connected to ABK’s vision of being ‘Simpler Banking’ for everyone.



ABK Heroes enjoy VIP Movie Premiere at VOX cinemas.



Digital factory drives banking innovation

KIB wins ‘Excellence in Innovative Corporate Banking – MENA 2025’

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) is proud to announce that it has been awarded the prestigious title of “Excellence in Innovative Corporate Banking Services – MENA 2025” by the Capital Finance International (CFI.co) Awards. This recognition underscores KIB’s notable role in delivering cutting-edge, Shari’ah-compliant banking services, and reflects its strategic commitment to bolstering the banking landscape in Kuwait and beyond.

The CFI.co judging panel commended KIB for its outstanding performance in offering diverse banking solutions, from financing various commercial activities, projects and trade services, to treasury products and bespoke advisory, tailored to the specific needs of corporate customers and aligned with Islamic Shari’ah principles. The award also recognizes KIB’s contribution to advancing economic development by financing major infrastructure projects in alignment with Kuwait’s Vision 2035.

Commenting on the Bank’s latest achievement, Hesham Al Mubarak, General Manager of the Wholesale Banking Department at KIB, stated: “We are very proud of KIB’s continued recognition on the international stage. This award reflects the success of our forward-thinking approach and our unwavering commitment to empowering corporate customers through tailored financial solutions and digital innovation. At KIB, we continue to anticipate the evolving needs of our customers, delivering banking services that are not only compliant with Shari’ah, but also creative and aligned with global standards of excellence.”

Al Mubarak emphasized that KIB has rapidly evolved through substantial investments in digital capabilities and product development. At the core of this advancement is the KIB Digital Factory, an innovation hub designed to attract and nurture top-tier talent focused on developing next-generation banking products and services. Through this initiative,



KIB's Hesham Al-Mubarak, Wholesale Banking General Manager.



‘Excellence in Innovative Corporate Banking Services – MENA 2025’ winner.

KIB has launched specialized digital platforms, upgraded existing channels, and integrated digital tools into core business operations.

Al Mubarak added: “Looking ahead, KIB aims to expand its reach by pursuing new business ventures, offering Banking-as-a-Service (BaaS) to non-banking institutions. The Bank also aims to explore opportunities in non-traditional banking activities and plans to introduce a wider range of investment products, along with additional services and offerings provided by the Treasury Department. Through its innovative financial offerings, KIB is committed to playing a key role in fostering the growth of entrepreneurs and startups, empowering the next generation of businesses to thrive.”

It serves to note that CFI.co is one of London’s most prominent media platforms specializing in covering business, economy, and finance news, while its awards program stands as one of the largest international forums to evaluate and recognize individuals and institutions that have contributed to providing the highest standards of innovation and excellence in the economic and financial sector worldwide.

About KIB
Kuwait International Bank (KIB) is

a bank that operates according to the Islamic Shari’ah, based in the State of Kuwait. Incorporated in 1973, and originally known as Kuwait Real Estate Bank, KIB made the transition to its current Islamic operating model in 2007. In 2018, KIB embarked on a new phase of its journey full of innovation and development. As part of its new strategic direction, the Bank focuses on offering a next-level customer experience under the slogan: “Bank for Life”.

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

Today, KIB has taken concrete steps in implementing its new strategic objectives. The Bank has cemented its role as a key player in the local banking industry and has continued to maintain its strong financial performance; enabling it to be globally recognized for its strong credit rating and financial position.

Less selection, higher prices: How tariffs are shaping the holiday shopping season

NEW YORK, July 21, (AP): With summer in full swing in the United States, retail executives are sweating a different season. It’s less than 22 weeks before Christmas, a time when businesses that make and sell consumer goods usually nail down their holiday orders and prices.

But President Donald Trump’s vacillating trade policies have complicated those end-of-year plans. Balsam Hill, which sells artificial trees and other decorations online, expects to publish fewer and thinner holiday catalogs because the featured products keep changing with the tariff rates the president sets, postpones and revises.

“The uncertainty has led us to spend all our time trying to rejigger what we’re ordering, where we’re bringing it in, when it’s going to get here,” Mac Harman, CEO of Balsam Hill parent company Balsam Brands, said. “We don’t know which items we’re going to have to put in the catalog or not.”

Months of confusion over which foreign countries’ goods may become more expensive to import has left a question mark over the holiday shopping season. U.S. retailers often begin planning for the winter holidays in January and typically finalize the bulk of their orders by the end of June. The seesawing tariffs already have factored into their calculations.

The consequences for consumers? Stores may not have the specific gift items customers want come November and December. Some retail suppliers and buyers scaled back their holiday lines rather than risking a hefty tax bill or expensive imports going unsold. Businesses still are setting prices but say shoppers can expect many things to cost more, though by how much depends partly on whether Trump’s latest round of “reciprocal” tariffs kicks in next month.

The lack of clarity has been especially disruptive for the U.S. toy industry, which sources nearly 80% of its products from China. American toy makers usually ramp up production in April, a process delayed until late May this year after the president put a 145% tariff on Chinese goods, according to Greg Ahearn, president and CEO of the Toy Association, an industry trade group.

The U.S. tariff rate may have dropped significantly from its spring high - a truce in the U.S.-China trade war is set to expire on Aug. 12 - but continues to shape the forthcoming holiday period. Manufacturing activity is way down from a year ago for small- and medium-sized U.S. toy companies, Ahearn said.

The late start to factory work in China means holiday toys are only now arriving at U.S. warehouses, industry experts said. A big unknown is whether tariffs will keep stores from replenishing supplies of any breakout hit toys that emerge in September, said James Zahn, editor-in-chief of the trade publication Toy Book.

In the retail world, planning for Christmas in July usually involves mapping out seasonal marketing and promotion strategies. Dean Smith, who co-owns independent toy stores JaZams in Princeton, New Jersey, and Lahaska, Pennsylvania, said he recently spent an hour and a half running through pricing scenarios with a Canadian distributor because the wholesale cost of some products increased by 20%.

Increasing his own prices that much might turn off customers, Smith said, so he explored ways to “maintain a reasonable margin without raising prices beyond what consumers would accept.” He ordered a lower cost Crazy Forts building set so he would have the toy on hand and left out the kids’ edition of the Anomia card game because he didn’t think customers would pay what he would have to charge.

“In the end, I had to eliminate half of the products that I normally buy,” Smith said.

Hilary Key, owner of The Toy Chest in Nashville, Indiana, said she tries to get new games and toys in early most years to see which ones she should stock up on for the winter holidays. This year, she abandoned her product testing for fear any delayed orders would incur high import taxes.

Meanwhile, vendors of toys made in China and elsewhere bombarded Key with price increase notices. For example, Schylling, which makes Needoh, Care Bear collectibles and modern versions of nostalgic toys like My Little Pony, increased prices on orders by 20%, according to Key.

All the price hikes are subject to change if the tariff situation changes again. Key worries her store won’t have as compelling a product assortment as she prides herself on carrying.

“My concern is not that I’ll have nothing, because I can bring in more books. I can bring in more gifts, or I can bring in just things that are manufactured in other places,” she said. “But that doesn’t mean I’m going to have the best stock for every developmental age, for every special need.”

The retail industry may have to keep taking a whack-a-mole approach

to navigating the White House’s latest tariff ultimatums and temporary reprieves. Last week, the president again reset the rates on imports from Brazil, the European Union, Mexico, and other major trading partners but said they would not take effect until Aug. 1.

The brief pause should extend the window importers have to bring in seasonal merchandise at the current baseline tariff of 10%. The Port of Los Angeles had the busiest June in its 117-year history after companies raced to secure holiday shipments, and July imports look strong so far, according to Gene Seroka, the port’s executive director.

“In my view, we’re seeing a peak season push right now to bring in goods ahead of potentially higher tariffs later this summer,” Seroka said Monday.

The pace of port activity so far this year reflects a “tariff whipsaw effect” - imports slowing when tariffs kick in and rebounding when they’re paused, he said. “For us consumers, lower inventory levels, fewer selections and higher prices are likely as we head into the holidays.”

Smith, who co-owns the two JaZams stores with his partner, Joanne Farrugia, said they started placing holiday orders two months earlier than usual for “certain items that we felt were essential for us to have at particular pricing.” They doubled their warehouse space to store the stockpile. But some shoppers are trying to get ahead of higher prices just like businesses are, he said.

He’s noticed customers snapping up items that will likely be popular during the holidays, like Jellycat plush toys and large stuffed unicorns and dogs. Any sales are welcome, but Smith and Farrugia are wary of having to restock at a higher cost.

“We’re just trying to be as friendly as we can to the consumer and still have a product portfolio or profile that is gonna meet the needs of all of our various customers, which is getting more and more challenging by the day,” Smith said.

Balsam Brands’ Harman said he’d have to resign himself to not having as robust a selection of ornaments and frosted trees to sell as in years’ past. Soon, it will be too late to import meaningful additions to his range of products.

“Our purpose as a company is to create joy together, and we’re going to do our very best to do that this year,” Harman said. “We’re just not going to have a bunch of the items that consumers want this year, and that’s not a position we want to be in.”

Emotional struggle with money influences high-stakes decisions

Why corporate leaders, billionaires need financial therapy



Photo shows Mark Zuckerberg, Jeff Bezos, Sundar Pichai and Elon Musk, arrive before the 60th Presidential Inauguration in the Rotunda of the U.S. Capitol in Washington, Monday, Jan. 20, 2025. (AP)

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

By Prince Sarpong
University of the Free State

Corporate leaders and billionaires are often viewed as visionaries and wealth creators. But beneath the surface, many are trapped in an invisible financial “crisis” - one rooted not in market volatility or poor investments but in their psychological relationship with money.

As a finance professor and editor of the forthcoming book “Financial Therapy for Men,” I study this often overlooked aspect of financial psychology. Money is far more than numbers on a balance sheet - it carries emotional, psychological and social meaning. People’s relationships with money are shaped by childhood experiences, cultural beliefs and personal triumphs and failures. This emotional baggage can influence not only their sense of safety and self-worth but also how they manage power and status.

The field of financial therapy emerged in the mid-2000s to address these dynamics. Drawing from behavioral economics, financial psychology, family systems theory and clinical therapy, it aims to help people understand how their thoughts, feelings and

experiences shape financial behavior. Foundational academic work began at Kansas State University, home to one of the first graduate-level programs in the field.

Since then, financial therapy has gained traction in the U.S. and globally: It’s supported by a peer-reviewed journal and is increasingly integrated into professional practice by financial advisers and licensed therapists. Studies have shown that financial therapy can improve relationships and reduce emotional distress.

Yet much of the field focuses on people who are emotionally open and reflective - neglecting executives, who are often socialized to view themselves as purely rational decision-makers. I think this is a mistake.

Research shows that people often project their unconscious anxieties onto markets, experiencing them as mirrors of competence, failure or control. This means that public valuations and capital flows may carry deeply symbolic weight for corporate leaders.

My research suggests that people at the highest levels of wealth and power have deeply complex emotional relationships with money - but the field of financial therapy has largely overlooked them. This isn’t an accident. It reflects a broader assumption that wealth insulates people from psychological distress. In reality, emotional entanglements can intensify with greater wealth and power - and

research suggests that men, in particular, face distinct challenges. True inclusion in financial therapy means recognizing and responding to these needs.

In a 2023 study - When and why do men negotiate assertively? - Jens Mazei, whose research focuses on negotiations and conflict management, and his colleagues found that men become more aggressive in negotiations when they think their masculinity is being threatened. This was especially true in contexts viewed as “masculine,” such as salary negotiations. In “nonmasculine” contexts, such as negotiations over flexible work and child care benefits, participants weren’t significantly more aggressive when their masculinity was challenged.

On male-coded topics, many men in the study reinforced gender norms by rejecting compromise, using hardball tactics or even inflating financial demands to reassert their masculinity. These behaviors reflect an unconscious need to restore a sense of masculine identity, the researchers suggest. If this reaction occurs in salary negotiations, how might it manifest when the stakes are exponentially higher?

Emerging research in organizational psychology shows that financial stress is linked to abusive supervision, particularly among men who feel a loss of control. Further, traits such as CEO masculinity have been linked

with increased risk-taking, while female CEOs tend to reduce risk. Together, these findings point to a dangerous intersection of psychological stress, masculinity and executive decision-making.

Financial distress doesn’t always look like bankruptcy or bad credit. Among powerful men, it can manifest as overconfidence, rigidity or aggression - and it can sometimes lead to very uneconomical outcomes.

Consider the research on M&A. Most mergers and acquisitions are value killers - in other words, they destroy more economic value than they create - and the field of M&A is deeply male. These two facts suggest that some mergers are driven more by threatened masculinity than by strategic logic. If men become more aggressive in negotiations when their masculinity is threatened, then CEOs and corporate leaders, who are overwhelmingly male, may react similarly when their companies, and by extension their leadership, are challenged.

Target companies rarely take a passive approach to acquisition attempts. Instead, they deploy defensive measures such as poison pills, golden parachutes, staggered boards and scorched-earth tactics. In addition to serving financial goals, these may also act as symbolic defenses of masculine authority.

Mergers and acquisitions, by their nature, create a contest of power be-

tween dominant figures. The very language of M&A - for example, “raiders,” “hostile takeovers,” “defenses” and “white knights” - is combative. This reinforces an environment where corporate leaders may view acquisition attempts as challenges to their authority rather than as just financial transactions.

A growing body of behavioral-strategy research confirms that boardroom decisions are often shaped by emotional undercurrents rather than purely rational analysis. While this research stops short of naming it, the dynamics it describes align closely with what Mazei and colleagues call “masculinity threat.”

This has direct implications for corporate M&A. The overwhelming majority of top CEOs are men, and the language of M&A often evokes siege, power struggles and conquest. In such a symbolic arena, acquisition attempts can trigger deep, emotionally charged responses, as the identity stakes are high. What appear to be strategic financial decisions may actually be reflexive defenses of masculine authority.

On a related note, researchers in behavioral finance have long studied the “endowment effect,” or the tendency for people to value assets more simply because they own them. While the endowment effect has been studied primarily among retail investors making ordinary financial decisions, it could be particularly important for corporate executives and billionaires, who have more to lose.

When combined with threatened masculinity, the endowment effect can produce combustible reactions to declining valuations, missed earnings or takeover bids - even for individuals who remain vastly wealthy after marginal losses. While the research at this intersection is still emerging, the underlying behavioral patterns are well established.

Financial therapy for high-net-worth individuals rarely looks like sitting on a couch discussing childhood trauma. Instead, it takes an interdisciplinary approach involving financial advisers, therapists and sometimes executive coaches. Sessions tend to focus on legacy planning, control issues, guilt over wealth, or strained family relationships.

Many high-net-worth men display behaviors that don’t look like stereotypical “financial distress.” These can include compulsive deal-making, emotionally driven investment decisions, workaholicism and difficulty trusting advisers. In some cases, unresolved financial trauma shows up as chronic dissatisfaction and the sense that no achievement, acquisition or net worth is ever “enough.”

While financial therapy is intended to help individuals, I think it could actually be a tool for global economic stability.

After all, when masculinity is threatened in corporate decision-making, the consequences can extend far beyond the boardroom. These actions can destabilize industries, fuel economic downturns and disrupt entire labor markets. Unchecked financial anxiety among corporate elites and billionaires isn’t just their own problem - it can cascade and become everyone’s problem.

From this perspective, financial therapy isn’t just a personal good. It’s a structural necessity that can prevent unchecked financial distress from driving destructive corporate decisions and broader economic disruptions.

If financial therapy helps people navigate financial distress and make healthier money decisions, then no group needs it more than male corporate leaders and billionaires. (AP)

Law scholar explains how it reduces poor families’ ability to afford food and health care

How big, beautiful bill will deepen racial wealth gap

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

By Beverly Moran
Vanderbilt University

President Donald Trump has said the “big, beautiful bill” he signed into law on July 4, 2025, will stimulate the economy and foster financial security.

But a close look at the legislation reveals a different story, particularly for low-income people and racial and ethnic minorities.

As a legal scholar who studies how taxes increase the gap in wealth and income between Black and white Americans, I believe the law’s provisions make existing wealth inequalities worse through broad tax cuts that disproportionately favor wealthy families while forcing its costs on low- and middle-income Americans.

The U.S. racial wealth gap is stark. White families’ median wealth between 2019 and 2022 grew to more than \$250,000 higher than Black

families’ median wealth.

This disparity is the result of decades of discriminatory policies in housing, banking, health care, taxes, education and employment.

The new legislation will widen these chasms through its permanent extension of individual tax cuts in Trump’s 2017 tax reform package. Americans have eight years of experience with those changes and how they hurt low-income families.

The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, for example, predicted that low-income taxpayers would gain US\$70 a year from the 2017 tax cuts. But that figure did not include the results of eliminating the individual mandate that encouraged uninsured people to get health insurance through the federal marketplace. That insurance was heavily subsidized by the federal government.

The Republican majority in Congress predicted that the loss of the mandate would decrease federal spending on health care subsidies. That decrease cost low-income taxpayers over \$4,000 per person in lost subsidies.

The Congressional Budget Office examined the net effect of the 2025

bill by combining the tax changes with cuts to programs like Medicaid and food assistance. It found that the bill will reduce poor families’ ability to obtain food and health care.

Perhaps the most revealing part of the bill is how it turns ideas for helping low-income families on their head. They are touted as helping the poor - but they help the wealthy instead.

A much publicized feature of the bill is the creation of “Trump Accounts,” a pilot program providing a one-time \$1,000 government contribution to a tax-advantaged investment account for children born between 2025 and 2028.

While framed as a “baby bonus” to build wealth, the program’s structure is deeply flawed and regressive. Although the first \$1,000 into the accounts comes from the federal government, the real tax benefits go to wealthy families who can avoid paying taxes by contributing up to \$5,000 per year to their children’s accounts.

As analysts from the Roosevelt Institute, a progressive economic and social policy think tank, have pointed out, this design primarily benefits affluent families who already have

the disposable income to save and can take full advantage of the tax benefits.

For low-income families struggling with daily expenses, making additional contributions is not a realistic option. These accounts do not address the fundamental barrier to saving for low-income families - a lack of income - and are more likely to widen the wealth gap than to close it.

This regressive approach - regressive because the wealthy get larger benefits - to wealth-building is mirrored in the bill’s renewal and enhancement of the New Markets Tax Credit program. Although extended by the “big, beautiful bill” to drive investment into low-income communities by offering capital gains tax breaks to investors, the program subsidizes luxury real estate projects that do little to benefit existing low-income residents and accelerate gentrification and displacement. Studies show that there is very little increase in salaries or education in areas with these benefits.

The child tax credit is another part of the bill that purports to help the poor and working classes while, in fact, giving the wealthy more money. A family can earn up to \$400,000

and still get the full \$2,200 tax credit per child, which reduces their tax liability dollar for dollar. In contrast, a family making \$31,500 or less cannot receive a tax credit of more than \$1,750 per child. And approximately 17 million children - disproportionately Black and Latino - will not receive anything at all.

More significantly, the law tightens eligibility by requiring not only the child but also the taxpayer claiming the credit to have a Social Security number. This requirement will strip the credit from approximately 4.5 million U.S. citizen children in mixed-status families - families where some people are citizens, legal residents and people living in the country without legal permission - where parents may file taxes with an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number but lack a Social Security number, according to an April 2025 study.

Perhaps most striking is the law’s “pay-fors” - the provisions designed to offset the cost of the tax cuts.

The legislation makes significant changes to Medicaid and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, lifelines for millions of low-income families. (AP)

‘Money is far more than numbers on a balance sheet — it carries emotional, psychological and social meaning.’

‘For low-income families struggling with daily expenses, making additional contributions is not a realistic option.’

New releases struggle to impress at the box office

'Superman' flexes its might in second weekend

NEW YORK, July 21, (AP): James Gunn's "Superman" showed staying power in its second weekend at North American box offices, collecting \$57.3 million in ticket sales and remaining the No. 1 movie in cinemas, according to studio estimates Sunday.

None of the week's new releases - "I Know What You Did Last Summer," "Smurfs," and "Eddington" - came close to touching Warner Bros. and DC Studios' superhero success. "Superman" dipped 54% from its domestic opening, an average decline for a big summer film.

In two weeks, "Superman" has grossed \$406.8 million worldwide, a good start for the movie DC Studios is banking on to restart its movie operations. A big test looms next weekend, when the Walt Disney Co. releases Marvel's "The Fantastic Four: First Steps."

Strong audience scores and good reviews should help propel the \$225 million-budgeted "Superman" toward profitability in the coming weeks. For Warner Bros. and DC Studios, "Superman" is key to kicking off a 10-year plan for the comic book adaptation studio. Co-heads Gunn and Peter Safra were tasked with rehabilitating the flagging operation. Next on tap are the films "Supergirl" and "Clayface" in 2026.

But "Superman" is far from flying solo in theaters right now. Universal Pictures' "Jurassic World: Rebirth" came in second this weekend, with \$23.4 million in its third week of release. The seventh "Jurassic" movie, this one starring

Scarlett Johansson, held its own despite the competition from "Superman." In three weeks, it accrued \$648 million worldwide.

Apple Studios and Warner Bros.' "F1: The Movie" has also shown legs, especially internationally. In its fourth weekend, the Brad Pitt racing drama dipped just 26% domestically, bringing in \$9.6 million in North America, and another \$29.5 million overseas. Its global total stands at \$460.8 million.

But both of the biggest new releases - Sony Pictures' "I Know What You Did Last Summer" and Paramount Pictures' "Smurfs" - fell flat.

"I Know What You Did Last Summer" opened with \$13 million, a fair result for a movie budgeted at a modest \$18 million, but a disappointing opening for a well-known horror franchise. The film, directed by Jennifer Kaytin Robinson, is set 27 years after the 1997 original. Teenagers played by Madelyn Cline and Chase Sui Wonders are again haunted for covering up a car accident.

The movie's reviews (38% "fresh" on Rotten Tomatoes) were poor for "I Know What You Did Last Summer" and audiences graded it similarly. The film notched a "C+" on CinemaScore. The original collected \$72.6 million in its domestic run in 1997.

Paramount Pictures' "Smurfs" debuted in fourth place this weekend with \$11 million. The latest big-screen reboot for the woodland blue creatures prominently features Rihanna

as the voice of Smurfette. But reviews (21% "fresh" on Rotten Tomatoes) were terrible. Audiences were kinder, giving it a "B+" on CinemaScore, but the \$58 million-budgeted release will depend largely on its international sales. In 56 overseas markets, "Smurfs" earned \$22.6 million.

Ari Aster's "Eddington" opened with \$4.2 million on 2,111 screens for A24. Since its premiere at the Cannes Film Festival, "Eddington" has been particularly divisive. The pandemic-set Western features Joaquin Phoenix as the right-wing sheriff of a small New Mexico town who faces off with its liberal mayor (Pedro Pascal).

While Aster's first film, 2018's "Hereditary" (\$82.8 million worldwide against a \$10 million budget) helped establish A24 as an indie powerhouse, but the less-than-stellar launch of "Eddington" marks the second box-office disappointment for Aster. His 2023 film "Beau Is Afraid" cost \$35 million to make but collected just \$12.4 million worldwide. "Eddington" cost about \$25 million to produce. Audiences gave it a "C+" on CinemaScore. None of Aster's previous films have been graded higher.

Yet collectively, Hollywood is enjoying a very good summer. According to data firm Comscore, the 2025 summer box office is up 15.9% over the same period last year, with the year-to-date sales running 15% ahead of 2025. Summer ticket sales have amassed about \$2.6 billion domestically, according to Comscore.



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

Props sale

Indiana's whip sells for \$525K

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif., July 21, (AP): A whip wielded by Harrison Ford in "Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade" that once belonged to Princess Diana has sold at auction for \$525,000.

Thursday's sale came a day after the Rosebud sled from "Citizen Kane" went for a staggering \$14.75 million, making it one of the priciest props in movie history. They were part of the Summer Entertainment Auction being held all week by Heritage Auctions.

Heritage says the overall take has made it the second-highest grossing entertainment auction of all time, and there's still a day to go.

Yet to be up for bids are Macaulay Culkin's knit snow cap from "Home Alone," a Kurt Russell revolver from "Wyatt Earp," a pair of "Hattori Hanzo" prop swords from "Kill Bill Vol. 1" and a first edition set of Harry Potter novels signed by J.K. Rowling.

The whip sold Thursday was used during the Holy Grail trials that Ford's character goes through at the climax of 1989's "Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade."

Symbol

Ford gave it to then-Prince Charles at the film's UK premiere. It was given as a gift to Princess Diana, who gave it to the current owner, who was not identified. The buyer also was not identified.

"The bullwhip is the iconic symbol of an iconic character of cinema history, Indiana Jones, and has been a highlight of this auction," Joe Maddalena, Heritage's executive vice president, said in a statement to The Associated Press.

The \$525,000 price includes the "buyers premium" attached to all auction items for the house that sells it.

Heritage said the nearly \$15 million bid for the Rosebud sled puts it second only to the \$32.5 million that Judy Garland's ruby slippers from "The Wizard of Oz" fetched in December. Neither of those buyers were identified either.

The sled was sold by longtime owner Joe Dante, director of films including "Gremlins."

"Rosebud" is the last word spoken by the title character in director Orson Welles' 1941 film "Citizen Kane," and the hunt for its meaning provides the film's plot. Many critics have regarded it as the best film ever made.

Long thought lost, the sled is one of three of the prop known to have survived. Dante stumbled on it when he was filming on the former RKO Pictures lot in 1984. He wasn't a collector, but knew the value of the sled and quietly preserved it for decades, putting it as an Easter egg into four of his own films.

Dante's friend and mentor Steven Spielberg paid \$60,500 for another of the sleds in 1982, and anonymous buyer paid \$233,000 for the third in 1996.



This image shows a whip wielded by Harrison Ford in 'Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade'. (AP)

Film



This image released by A24 shows Joaquin Phoenix in a scene from 'Eddington'. (AP)

Aster's dystopian Western for the digital age

'Eddington' mirrors the divides it depicts

NEW YORK, July 21, (AP): A Post-it note sat near Ari Aster while he wrote "Eddington": "Remember the phones."

"Eddington" may be set during the pandemic, but the onset of COVID-19 isn't its inciting incident. Outside the fictional New Mexico town, a data center is being built. Inside Eddington, its residents - their brains increasingly addled by the internet, social media, smartphones and whatever is ominously emanating from that data center - are growing increasingly detached from one another, and from each other's sense of reality.

"We're living in such a weird time and we forget how weird it is," Aster says. "Things have been weird ever since we were able to carry the internet on our person. Ever since we began living in the internet, things have gotten weirder and weirder."

"It's important to keep reminding ourselves: This is weird."

Moviegoers have grown accustomed to expecting a lack of normalcy in Aster's movies. His first three films - "Hereditary," "Midsommar," "Beau Is Afraid" - have vividly charted strange new pathways of dread and deep-rooted anxiety. Those fixations make Aster, a master of nightmare and farce, uniquely suited to capturing the current American moment.

"Eddington," may be the most prominent American movie yet to explicitly wrestle with social and political division in the US. In a showdown between Joaquin Phoenix's bumbling right-wing sheriff and Pedro Pascal's elitist liberal mayor, arguments over mask mandates, Black Lives Matter protests and elections spiral into a demented Western fever dream.

At a time when our movie screens are filled with escapism and nostalgia, "Eddington" dares to diagnose something frightfully contemporary. Aster, in a recent interview at an East Village coffee shop he frequents, said he couldn't imagine avoiding it. "To not be talking about it is insane," he said.

"I'm desperate for work that's wrestling with this moment because I don't know where we are. I've never been here before," says Aster. "I have projects that I've been planning for a long time. They make less sense to me right now. I don't know why I would make those right now."

"Eddington," appropriately enough, has been divisive. Since its premiere at the Cannes Film Festival in May, Aster's film has had one of the most polarizing receptions of the year among critics. Even in Cannes, Aster seemed to grasp its mixed response. "I don't know what you think," he told the crowd.



Pedro Pascal, (from left), director Ari Aster and Joaquin Phoenix pose for photographers at the photo call for the film 'Eddington' at the 78th international film festival, Cannes, southern France, Saturday, May 17, 2025. (AP)

Some critics have suggested Aster's film is too satirical of the left. "Despite a pose of satirical neutrality, he mainly seems to want to score points off mask-wearers, young progressives, anti-racists and other targets beloved of reactionaries," wrote The New Yorker's Justin Chang. For The New York Times, Manohla Dargis wrote: "Aster knows how to grab your attention, but if he thinks he's saying something about America, the joke is on him."

Reaction

Aster was expecting a divisive reaction. But he disputes some of the discourse around "Eddington."

"I heard one person say it was harder on the left than the right, and I think that's pretty disingenuous," he says. "In the film, one side is kind of annoying and frustrating and hypocritical, and the other side is killing people and destroying lives."

For Aster, satirizing the left doesn't mean he doesn't share their beliefs. "If there's no self-reflection," he says, "how are we ever going to get out of this?"

Aster began writing "Eddington" in June 2020. He set it in New Mexico, where his family moved when he was 10. Aster wanted to try to capture the disconnect that didn't start with the pandemic but then reached a surreal crescendo. He styled "Eddington" as a Western with smartphones in place of guns - though there are definitely guns, too.

"The dread I was living with suddenly intensified. And to be honest, I've been living with that

level of dread ever since," Aster says. "I just wanted to see if I could capture what was in the air."

Scripts that dive headlong into politics are far from regular in today's corporate Hollywood. Most studios would be unlikely to distribute a film like "Eddington," though A24, the indie powerhouse, has stood behind Aster even after 2023's \$35 million-budgeted "Beau Is Afraid" struggled at the box office. A24 has shown a willingness to engage with political discord, backing last year's speculative war drama, "Civil War."

And Aster's screenplay resonated with Phoenix, who had starred in "Beau Is Afraid," and with Pascal. In Cannes, Pascal noted that "it's very scary to participate in a movie that speaks to issues like this." For Phoenix, "Eddington" offered clarity and empathy for the pandemic experience.

"We were all terrified and we didn't fully understand it. And instead of reaching out to each other in those moments, we kind of became antagonistic toward each other and self-righteous and certain of our position," Phoenix earlier told The AP. "And in some ways it's so obvious: Well, that's not going to be helpful."

Since Aster made "Eddington" - it was shot in 2024 - the second administration of President Donald Trump has ushered in a new political reality that Aster acknowledges would have reshaped his film.

"I would have made the movie more obscene," he says. "And I would have made it angrier. I think the film is angry. But I think we're living in a time of total obscenity, beyond anything I've seen."

"Eddington" is designed to be argued over. Even those who find its first half well-observed may recoil at the violent absurdism of its second half. The movie, Aster says, pivots midway and, itself, becomes paranoid and gripped by differing world views. You can almost feel Aster struggling to bring any coherence to his, and our, modern-day Western.

But whatever you make of "Eddington," you might grant it's vitally important that we have more films like it - movies that don't tiptoe around today in period-film metaphor or avoid it like the plague. Aster, at least, doesn't sound finished with what he started.

"I'm feeling very heartbroken about where we are, and totally lost, so I'm looking for ways to go into those feelings but also to challenge them. What can be done?" Aster says. "Because this is a movie about people who are unreachable to each other and completely siloed off, or fortressified off, a question that kept coming to me was: What would an olive branch look like? How do we find a way to reengage with each other?"

Variety

LOS ANGELES: Bruce Springsteen will take the stage as both performer and a guest of honor at one of Hollywood's most prominent fundraising events, the Academy Museum Gala.

The 75-year-old rock legend is being honored alongside actors Penelope Cruz and Bowen Yang and filmmaker Walter Salles at the Oct. 18 celebration hosted by the Academy Museum of Motion Pictures.

The high-fashion get-together, now in its fifth year, has been positioned as a West Coast version of the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art's Met Gala. It features a massive red carpet with a slew of celebrities from Hollywood and beyond, raising money for the Los Angeles museum's exhibits and education programs.

Gala co-chairs include Jon M. Chu, Common, Jennifer Hudson, Viola Davis, Julius Tennon, Robert Downey Jr. and Susan Downey. The host committee includes Kurt Russell and Goldie Hawn, Adrien Brody, Zoë Kravitz, Demi Moore, Colman Domingo, Ke Huy Quan, Meg Ryan and Amy Adams.

Last year's event honored Quentin Tarantino, Rita Moreno and Paul Mescal and raised more than \$11 million. (AP)



LOS ANGELES: A 22-year-old man suspected in the shooting deaths of a longtime music supervisor for "American Idol" and her husband at their home in Los Angeles was charged with two counts of murder Thursday.

Police said officers conducting a welfare check Monday at a gated house in the Encino neighborhood found the bodies of a woman and man with gunshot wounds. The victims were later identified as Robin Kaye and Thomas Deluca, both 70.

Raymond Boodarian, an Encino resident, was arrested Tuesday afternoon, police said. Investigators believe he was burglarizing the residence July 10 while the couple was away and shot them when they suddenly returned.

Boodarian faces charges including murder and first-degree burglary. Deputy District Attorney Hilary Williams told reporters. Arraignment was scheduled for Aug. 20.

Boodarian could not be reached for comment. Messages were sent to the public defender's office inquiring if one of its attorneys was representing him.

Kaye was with "American Idol," the hit singing competition TV series, for more than 15 years and was working on the upcoming season at the time of her death. (AP)



ROME: On the International Day of Peace, Sept. 21, 2025, a historic event will take place on Piazza Pio XII, set against the breathtaking backdrop of St. Peter's Square.

The World Peace Concert - Sound of Peace, a global benefit concert that brings together internationally renowned artists to send a powerful message of peace and unity. From Rome, the message "Peace begins within us" will be shared with the world. The World Peace Concert is under the patronage of the Jubilee 2025 - Holy Year and the Fondazione Pro Musica e Arte Sacra.

Between St. Peter's Square and Castel Sant'Angelo, artists and music lovers from across the globe will come together to make a collective statement of hope. The concert celebrates the universal language of music as a bridge between cultures and generations.

Sound of Peace is more than just a concert. In the spirit of global solidarity, donations will be raised to support humanitarian aid projects for children and families affected by war, as well as initiatives promoting cultural education and global cooperation.

Further details on the participating artists, program, schedule, live broadcast, and how to attend will be announced soon. (AP)

‘The luckiest man in the world’

D-Day veteran and TikTok star ‘Papa Jake’ dies at 102

PARIS, July 21, (AP): D-Day veteran “Papa Jake” Larson, who survived German gunfire on Normandy’s bluffs in 1944 and then garnered 1.2 million followers on TikTok late in life by sharing stories to commemorate World War II and his fallen comrades, has died at 102.

An animated speaker who charmed strangers young and old with his quick smile and generous hugs, the self-described country boy from Minnesota was “cracking jokes til the end,” his granddaughter wrote in announcing his death.

Tributes to him quickly filled his “Story Time with Papa Jake” TikTok account from across the United States, where he had been living in Lafayette, California. Towns around Normandy, still grateful to Allied forces who helped defeat the occupying Nazis in World War II, paid him homage too.

“Our beloved Papa Jake has passed away on July 17th at 102 years young,” granddaughter McKaela Larson posted on his social media accounts. “He went peacefully.”

“As Papa would say, love you all the mostest,” she wrote.

Born Dec. 20, 1922, in Owatonna, Minnesota, Larson enlisted in the National Guard in 1938, lying about his age since he was only 15 at the time. In 1942, he was sent overseas and was stationed in Northern Ireland. He became operations sergeant and assembled the planning books for the invasion of Normandy.

He was among the nearly 160,000 Allied troops who stormed the Normandy shore on D-Day, June 6, 1944, surviving machine-gun fire when he landed on Omaha Beach. He made it unhurt to the bluffs that overlook the beach, then studded with German gun emplacements that mowed down American soldiers.

“We are the lucky ones,” Larson told The Associated Press at the 81st anniversary of D-Day in June, speaking amid the immaculate rows of graves at the American cemetery overlooking Omaha Beach.

“We are their family. We have the responsibility to honor these guys who



In this photo taken April 29, 2019, D-Day veteran Jake Larson poses before going for a ride in the ‘The Spirit of Benovia’ World War II-era aircraft in Oakland, Calif. (AP)

gave us a chance to be alive.”

He went on to fight through the Battle of the Bulge, a grueling month-long fight in Belgium and Luxembourg that was one of the defining moments of the war and of Hitler’s defeat. His service earned him a Bronze Star and a French

Legion of Honor award.

In recent years, Larson made repeated trips to Normandy for D-Day commemorations - and at every stop, “Papa Jake” was greeted by people asking for a selfie. In return, he offered up a big hug, to their greatest joy.

One memorable encounter came in 2023, when he came across Bill Gladden, a then-99-year-old British veteran who survived a glider landing on D-Day and a bullet that tore through his ankle.

“I want to give you a hug, thank you. I got tears in my eyes. We were meant to meet,” Larson told Gladden, as their hands, lined and spotted with age, clasped tightly. Gladden died the following year.

In his TikTok posts and interviews, Larson combined humorous anecdotes with somber reminders about the horrors of war.

Reflecting to AP on the three years he was in Europe, Larson said he is “no hero.” Speaking in 2024, he also had a message to world leaders: “Make peace not war.”

He often called himself “the luckiest man in the world,” and expressed awe at all the attention he was getting. “I’m just a country boy. Now I’m a star on TikTok,” he told AP in 2023. “I’m a legend! I didn’t plan this, it came about.”

Small-town museums and groups around Normandy that work to honor D-Day’s heroes and fallen shared tributes online to Larson, one of their most loyal visitors.

“He was an exceptional witness and bearer of memory,” the Overlord Museum posted on Facebook.

“He came every year to the museum, with his smile, his humility and his tales that touched all generations. His stories will continue to live. Rest in peace Papa Jake,” it read.

“Thanks for everything.”

Television



This image released by Warner Bros. Discovery shows Janelle Van Ruiten interacting with a shark in a scene from ‘Dancing with the Sharks.’ (AP)

‘World’s most dangerous dance competition’

‘Shark Week’ starts with splash ... and dance

NEW YORK, July 21, (AP): Fifty years ago, “Jaws” unlocked dread in millions about man-eating sharks. This summer, that fear may be somewhat reduced as they become contestants on a TV dance show.

Former “Dancing With the Stars” host Tom Bergeron steps up for a marketing masterstroke by Discovery Channel’s “Shark Week” - “Dancing with Sharks,” where humans and 20-foot-long hammerhead sharks do a little mambo.

“I had a decade and a half experience of hosting a dance show, but this one was different,” Bergeron tells The Associated Press. “I’d often thought on ‘Dancing With the Stars,’ wouldn’t it be great if we could incorporate another species? And here I’ve finally got my dream come true.”

In the show, five scuba-diving shark handlers use bait to twirl and guide various sharks into mini-waltzes, in what’s being billed as “the world’s most dangerous dance competition.”

One contestant wraps his arms around a nerf shark and spoons it. Another takes off her air tank and does a double backflip. A third - a hip-hop loving shark handler - does an old school head spin on the ocean floor as sharks swirl.

“These are some of the best shark handlers in the world. These are people who know the nuances of sharks, know how they move, know how to behave, know how to safely move with them, and they’re guiding these sharks along as you would a partner,” says Kinga Philipps, a TV correspondent and one of the three judges. “It is so fluid and beautiful, all they really had to do is put a little bit of music to it and they’re actually dancing.”

“Dancing with Sharks” kicks off the week of programing, which includes shows on how to survive a shark attack, why New Smyrna Beach in Florida has earned the title of “The Shark Attack Capital of the World” and whether a mysterious dark-skinned shark off the

coast of California is a mako, mutant or possibly a mako-and-great white hybrid.

The seven nights of new shows - and a related podcast - ends off the Mozambique coast with a once-a-year feeding frenzy that turns into a showdown between the sharks and their massive prey, the giant trevally.

One highlight is Paul de Gelder’s “How to Survive a Shark Attack,” which he has intimate knowledge about. He lost his right hand and leg in 2009 during an attack by a bull shark in Sydney Harbor.

“If you’re in the jaws of a shark, you want to fight for all of your life. You want to go for the soft parts. You want go for the eyeball. You want to go for the gills,” he says. “But if you’re not being attacked by a shark and you’re just encountering a shark, then you just want to remain calm.”

De Gelder debunks one myth: Punching a charging shark will stop its attack. “If you really want to hurt your own hand, go ahead,” he says. A better approach is to not thrash about and gently redirect the animal. “The secret I got taught many years ago was don’t act like food and they won’t treat you like food.”

“Shark Week” has become a key part of the summer holiday TV schedule, a place where humans safe on land can see ancient apex predators unnervingly glide into view and snap open their jaws.

This year’s highlights also include the hunt for a 20-foot great white that can leap into the air - “Air Jaws: The Hunt for Colossus” - and a show about male and female great whites competing in a series of challenges to determine which sex is the superior predator, naturally called “Great White Sex Battle.”

Joseph Schneider, senior vice president of production and development at Discovery, says the shows are born from listening to

what the diving and science community is seeing, like pro divers moving artistically with the sharks as they fed them, leading to “Dancing With Sharks.”

“We realized, well, there’s something here that we can go further with,” he says. “We’re lucky that sharks continue to surprise us. Which helps us get kind of new stories and new things to focus on. That’s been the mantra for us - the sharks are the stars, not the humans.”

As always, there is a deep respect for the creatures and strong science beneath the amusing titles, sharky puns, dramatic music and racy titles like “Frankenshark” and “Alien Sharks: Death Down Under.”

“It’s like putting your vegetables in a dessert,” says Bergeron. “You get all the allure of a ‘Dancing With Sharks’ or other specific shows, but in the midst of that you do learn a lot about sharks and ecology and the importance of sharks in the ecosystem. It’s all in your strawberry sundae.”

Discovery’s “Shark Week” has a rival - National Geographic’s “SharkFest,” which also has hours of sharky content. There’s also the unconnected shark horror comedy “Hot Spring Shark Attack” and a movie earlier this summer that added a serial killer to a shark movie - “Dangerous Animals.”

“Shark Week” was born as a counterpoint for those who developed a fear of sharks after seeing “Jaws.” It has emerged as a destination for scientists eager to protect an animal older than trees.

“Jaws” helped introduce this country and this world to a predator we’re all fascinated with,” says Schneider. “But we also feel ‘Jaws’ went too far. These are not creatures that are out to hurt humans by any means, but they have had 50-plus million years of evolution to get to this place where they are just excellent predators. It’s fun to celebrate just how good they are at their job.”

Oliver’s team

Mammoth debut, mammoth crowd

ERIE, Pa., July 21, (AP): Besides being a fan, **John Oliver** has had a certain affinity for minor league baseball.

On Saturday night, the comedian and host of HBO’s “Last Week Tonight” saw his latest crazy creation set out into the world as the Erie Moon Mammoths made their debut in front of a record crowd of 7,070 at UPMC Park.

“We’re sending our furry child out into the world and you are the custodian of it. Now, please be careful with our child,” Oliver said a couple of hours before the Moon Mammoths took the field against the Chesapeake Oyster Catchers.

Oliver spotlighted Minor League Baseball promotions and alternate nicknames during “Last Week Tonight” on May 4. At the end of the segment, Oliver invited teams to send in proposals on why they should get rebranded by the show’s staff.

Forty-seven teams sent in pitches, including the Erie SeaWolves, the Double-A affiliate of the Detroit Tigers.

Erie president Greg Coleman sent a list of 11 reasons why they were the perfect candidate, including: “The SeaWolves play baseball nowhere near the sea.”

“To have so many teams expressing interest was really edifying. I think it kind of validates the fact that we thought there was something special about minor league baseball. We thought this would be a group of people that would respond to the ludicrous idea that we had,” Oliver said.

Mascot

Erie was announced as the winner on May 18. After six weeks of research by Oliver and his staff, the Moon Mammoths were unveiled on June 29. That included the mascot named Fuzz, a purple woolly mammoth wearing a space helmet.

“Erie did stand out to us as being, you know, uniquely eccentric. And I say that as both a compliment and an insult, which is the biggest compliment there is,” Oliver said. “There was something about the Moon Mammoth that spoke to us for being particularly odd. It felt like it could make a baseball team’s theme. You could almost see the logo in your head and it felt like something to be extra surprising.”

That this came together in less than three months is a minor miracle. It usually takes 16 months for a team to have an alternate identity approved and then take the field.

“I thought we had a good chance when I sent it in. And then when we were selected it was a little surreal,” Coleman said. “And since then working with the ‘Last Week Tonight’ team, they’ve been wonderful and detail oriented.”



Oliver

Extreme heat and flooding pose danger to fans, crew

Steve Miller Band cancels tour over extreme weather

LOS ANGELES, July 21, (AP): Classic rocker Steve Miller has canceled his US tour because he said severe weather including extreme heat and unpredictable flooding poses a danger to his band, its fans and crew.

The tour was set to kick off in August and run through early November, with nearly three dozen stops across the US including cities in New York, Tennessee, Florida and California.

“The combination of extreme heat, unpredictable flooding, tornadoes, hurricanes and massive forest fires make these risks for you our audience, the band and the crew unacceptable,” Miller, 81, said in a statement posted on the band’s social media accounts Wednesday. “You can blame it on the weather. ... The tour is cancelled.”

The Steve Miller Band, formed in California in the 1960s, has hits including “The Joker” (1973) and “Abracadabra” (1982).

A band spokesperson declined to provide additional de-

tails about the cancellation.

Miller’s decision comes as a stretch of extreme weather in the U.S. has made headlines. A sweltering heat dome that baked much of the eastern half of the nation in June and deadly flash flooding in Texas are some of the recent rounds of extreme weather.

Scientists say climate change is fueling extreme weather, causing storms to unleash more rain and sending temperatures soaring to dangerous heights, making it harder to plan outdoor summer events. The atmosphere can hold higher amounts of moisture as it warms, resulting in storms dumping heavier amounts of rain compared with storms of the past.

“Everyone wants to see their favorite artist, and that’s still possible. You just have to best mitigate weather risks,” said Jonathan Porter, chief meteorologist at AccuWeather, a private weather company. “For example, the doors may open an hour late in order to ensure thunderstorms have moved sufficiently away from the venue so the show can go on safely.”

Music festivals have recently encountered extreme weather, resulting in cancellations or causing concertgoers to become ill.

In June, the Bonnaroo Music and Arts Festival in Tennessee was canceled partway through due to heavy rainfall. Last week, hundreds of people were treated for heat-related illnesses at the Rock the Country music festival in Kentucky, according to local officials.

In 2023, tens of thousands of Burning Man event attendees were stranded after heavy rain created thick mud in the Nevada desert and roads were temporarily closed.

A study published in 2020 reported climate change will increase the likelihood of extreme heat stress during the Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival in California.

Tropical storms and hurricanes will soon contribute to the turbulent weather as activity peaks between August and October, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.



Steve Miller performs at 92NY, Oct. 1, 2023, in New York. (AP)

Pontiff renews his call for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza

Pope Leo marks moon landing anniversary with call to Aldrin

ROME, July 21, (AP): Pope Leo XIV marked the 56th anniversary of man's arrival on the moon Sunday with a visit to the Vatican astronomical observatory in Castel Gandolfo and a call to astronaut Buzz Aldrin.

After praying the Sunday Angelus at his summer retreat in Castel Gandolfo, Leo headed to the astronomical observatory located in the Pontifical Villas, where he took a close look at the telescopes that have supported celestial exploration from a faith-based perspective for decades.

The pontiff was accompanied by astronomers and students participating in the traditional summer school organized by the observatory.

This was Pope Leo's first visit to the observatory, founded in 1891 by Leo XIII. The first vision of it, however, can be traced back to the establishment by Pope Gregory XIII of a commission aimed at studying the scientific data and implications of the calendar reform that took place in 1582.

The Vatican Observatory has generated top-notch research from its scientist-clerics, drawing academics to its meteorite collection, which includes bits of Mars and is considered among the world's best.

Later Sunday, the pope called astronaut Buzz Aldrin,



Pope Leo XIV waves to the faithful as he arrives for a Mass at the St. Pancras Cathedral, in Albano Laziale, some 30 kilometers southeast of Rome, Sunday, July 20. (AP)

who shared with Neil Armstrong and Michael Collins the historic 1969 moonwalk.

"This evening, 56 years after the Apollo 11 moon landing, I spoke with the astronaut Buzz Aldrin," Pope Leo

wrote on his X account. "Together we shared the memory of a historic feat, a testimony to human ingenuity, and we reflected on the mystery and greatness of Creation."

Pope Leo then blessed the astronaut, his family and his collaborators.

There are a few precedents of papal calls to "space."

In 2011, Pope Benedict XVI rang the space station and asked about the future of the planet and the environmental risks it faced.

Before Benedict, Pope Paul VI sent a radio message to astronauts Armstrong, Aldrin and Collins after their moonwalk, calling them "conquerors of the Moon."

Meanwhile, Pope Leo renewed his call on Sunday for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, asking the international community to respect international laws and the obligation to protect civilians.

"I once again call for an immediate end to the barbarity of this war and for a peaceful resolution to the conflict," the pontiff said at the end of his Sunday Angelus prayer from his summer retreat in Castel Gandolfo.

Leo also expressed his "deep sorrow" for the Israeli attack on the only Catholic church in the Gaza Strip on Thursday, which killed three people and wounded 10 others,

including the parish priest.

"I appeal to the international community to observe humanitarian law and respect the obligation to protect civilians as well as the prohibition of collective punishment, the indiscriminate use of force, and the forced displacement of populations," the pope added.

The shelling of the Holy Family Catholic Church in Gaza also damaged the church compound, where hundreds of Palestinians have been sheltering from the Israel-Hamas war, now in its 21st month. Israel expressed regret over what it described as an accident and said it was investigating.

"We need to dialogue and abandon weapons," the pope said earlier Sunday, after presiding over Mass at the nearby Cathedral of Albano.

"The world no longer tolerates war," Leo told reporters waiting for him outside the cathedral.

Asked about his phone conversation on Friday with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Leo said, "We insisted on the need to protect the sacred places of all religions."

The pope will remain in Castel Gandolfo until Tuesday evening, when he returns to his Vatican residence, a Vatican spokesman said Sunday.

Healthy bites

Tips for smart snacking to beat workday slump

NEW YORK, July 21, (AP): When Claire Paré was a classroom teacher, working in a setting where every minute, down to the bathroom breaks, was scheduled, she brought granola bars, fruit and protein shakes to school so she'd be prepared when hunger hits.

Then she transitioned to a job at education publisher McGraw Hill. Working remotely at home in New Hampshire, her children's cheddar bunny crackers and Fruit Roll-Ups lured her to the pantry, confounding her commitment to healthy snacking.

"I have the opportunity to be judicious, but I choose not to most of the time," Paré said. "I really do enjoy being able to put the time into making something, but oftentimes convenience just has to win out."

Eating healthy snacks during the workday can be challenging. Many people find themselves facing down a mid-afternoon slump and accompanying sugar, caffeine or carbohydrate cravings after lunch. Busy adults racing from back-to-back meetings to family commitments often reach for what's easy, whether it's a candy bar from the office vending machine or potato chips from a kitchen cupboard.

Problem

The problem with eating packaged sugary or salty snacks to get through the afternoon is they may spike blood sugar levels but don't give a sustained second wind, according to Beth Czerwony, a registered dietitian at Cleveland Clinic.

"It's going to burn off really fast, so you're going to get that boost of energy and then all of a sudden you're going to get another crash," Czerwony said. "Some people just chase that for a while, and they're drinking coffee or their energy drinks and they're eating their candy, and it just sets you up for these spikes and these drops."

Here are some ideas for maintaining healthy snacking habits at work.

Foods that are high in protein, such as Greek yogurt, hard-boiled eggs, cottage cheese and beef or turkey jerky, can help people feel full for longer periods of time than

snacks without protein, said Caroline Susie, a Dallas-based registered dietitian and spokesperson for the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics.

Eating a snack consisting of refined carbohydrates such as a bagel causes blood sugar to rise rapidly and then drop, so teaming it up with another source of nutrition is preferable, Susie said.

"When you pair that carbohydrate with lean protein or have a protein-forward choice, it contributes to satiety. So you're just going to stay fuller longer," she added.

Recommendations

Czerwony recommends snacks that combine lean proteins with complex carbohydrates such as crackers, rice cakes or fruit. The combination works because carbohydrates raise blood sugar, giving you a boost, while the protein takes longer to digest, helping to sustain you for longer, she said.

"The carbohydrates are like the kindling on the fire, and then the proteins are the logs," Czerwony said. "You're going to get the slow burn from the protein, but you need that sudden start, so you have the carbohydrates to get you going."

Many people find it hard to resist crunchy foods. For a satisfying munch, the American Heart Association recommends sliced apples with a tablespoon of low-sodium peanut butter, pears dipped in reduced-fat cottage cheese, vegetables such as carrots, celery, bell peppers, cucumber or zucchini paired with hummus or tzatziki sauce, popcorn, rice cakes or unsalted nuts and seeds. You can also roast chickpeas, which provide both protein and carbohydrates.

For a packaged snack, read the nutrition label to check how much added sugar and sodium it contains, the association suggests.

The Cleveland Clinic recommends whole fruit, edamame, seeds, a handful of nuts or a single-serving package of tuna that you can eat with a fork.

Bringing your own snacks to work can help you control the quality and quantity of what you eat, Czerwony said. Try slicing vegetables, cheese or low-fat meats on weekends to last through the week, she said.

Hunger deaths rise to 86, including 76 kids

Measles death

Hunger kills at least 18 in Gaza within 24 hrs: health authorities

7m Afghan kids to get polio jab

GAZA, July 21, (Agencies): At least 18 Palestinians died in the past 24 hours due to hunger in Gaza, bringing the total death toll of hunger in the enclave since March to 86, including 76 children, the Gaza-based health authorities said Sunday.

What is happening in Gaza, home to more than two million people, is a "silent massacre," it said in a press statement, adding that about 17,000 children suffer from severe malnutrition in the enclave.

It demanded immediate opening of the crossings to allow the entry of food and medicine.

Meanwhile, the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East said in a statement on social media platform X that "Israeli authorities are starving civilians in Gaza, including one million children."

It urged lifting the Israeli blockade on Gaza.

Also on Sunday, Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammed Mustafa said the situation in Gaza is "unbelievable and unreasonable."

According to a statement issued by his office, Mustafa called for stopping the bleeding in Gaza, reconstructing the enclave, and "unifying Gaza and its institutions with national institutions" so as to "establish the state on the ground."

At least 8,066 Palestinians have been killed and 28,939 others injured since Israel renewed its intensive strikes in Gaza on March 18, bringing the total death toll since October 2023 to 58,895, and injuries to 140,980, Gaza-based health authorities said earlier on Sunday.

Deadliest

Gaza saw its deadliest day yet for aid-seekers in over 21 months of war as at least 85 Palestinians were killed while trying to reach food on Sunday, the territory's Health Ministry said.

There was new alarm as Israel's military issued evacuation orders for parts of central Gaza, one of the few areas where it has rarely operated with ground troops and where many international organizations trying to distribute aid are located. One group said several offices were told to evacuate immediately. There was no immediate Israeli comment.

The largest death toll was in devastated northern Gaza, where living conditions are especially dire. At least 79



Palestinians wait to receive food in the Al-Rimal neighborhood of central Gaza City, on July 20. (Xinhua)

Palestinians were killed while trying to reach aid entering through the Zikim crossing with Israel, Zaher al-Waheidi, head of the Health Ministry's records department, told The Associated Press. The U.N. World Food Program said 25 trucks with aid had entered for "starving communities" when it encountered massive crowds.

Condition

A U.N. official, speaking on condition of anonymity because they were not allowed to comment on the incident to the media, said Israeli forces opened fire toward crowds who tried to take food from the convoy. Footage taken by the UN and shared with the AP showed Palestinian men running as automatic gunfire was heard.

"Suddenly, tanks surrounded us and trapped us as gunshots and strikes rained down. We were trapped for around two hours," said Ehab Al-Zei, who had been waiting for flour and said he hadn't eaten bread in 15 days. He spoke over the din of people carrying the dead and wounded. "I will never go back again. Let us die of hunger, it's better."

Nafiz Al-Najjar, who was injured, said tanks and drones targeted people "randomly" and he saw his cousin and others shot dead.

Israel's military said soldiers shot at a gathering of thousands of Palestinians in northern Gaza who posed a threat, and it was aware of some casualties. But it said the numbers reported by officials in Gaza were far higher than its initial investigation found. It accused Hamas militants of creating chaos. More than 150 people were wounded, some in critical condition, hospitals said.

Al-Waheidi said Israeli gunfire killed another six Palestinians in the Shakoush area, hundreds of meters (yards) north of a hub of the recently created Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, a US- and Israel-backed group, in the southern city of Rafah. The GHF said it was not aware of any incident near its site. Witnesses and health workers say several hundred people have been killed by Israeli fire while trying to access the group's aid distribution sites.

Separately, seven Palestinians were killed while sheltering in tents in Khan Younis in the south, including a 5-year-old boy, according to the Kuwait Specialized Field Hospital, which received the casualties.

The new evacuation orders cut access between the central city of Deir al-Balah and Rafah and Khan Younis in the narrow territory. The military also reiterated evacuation orders for northern Gaza.

Palestinians were startled to see the orders for parts of Deir al-Balah, a relative haven. "All of Rafah is under evacuation, and now you have decided that half of Deir al-Balah is under evacuation. Where will we move to?" asked resident Hassan Abu Azab, as others piled everything from bedding to live ducks onto carts and other vehicles. Smoke rose in the distance, with blasts and the sound of a siren.

KABUL, July 21, (Xinhua): The Afghan interim government's Ministry of Public Health on Monday announced a four-day vaccination campaign aimed at protecting 7.3 million children under the age of five from poliovirus.

Running from Monday to Thursday, the campaign would provide anti-polio drops to children in 19 out of the country's 34 provinces, said Sharafat Zaman Amarkhil, spokesperson for the ministry.

In his message, Amarkhil urged tribal elders, religious scholars, and parents to actively participate and fully cooperate with polio workers to implement the campaign appropriately.

"The Ministry of Public Health is striving to combat infectious diseases by implementing all preventive measures; through the polio vaccination campaign, we aim to prevent the spread of polio in Afghanistan," said Amarkhil.

□ □ □

WHO: The United States said on Friday that the country has rejected amendments to the international health regulations adopted by the World Health Organization (WHO) last year.

US Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. and Secretary of State Marco Rubio issued a joint statement to formally reject the WHO's 2024 International Health Regulations Amendments.

The statement accused the amendments of being "vague and broad" in terminology, claiming that U.S. agencies "put Americans first in all our actions" and "will not tolerate international policies that infringe on Americans' speech, privacy or personal liberties." The pact, which was adopted in Geneva in June 2024, aims to ensure that drugs, therapeutics and vaccines are globally accessible when the next pandemic occurs.

□ □ □

Measles: Mongolia reported one more death from measles, bringing the death toll to 8 since the beginning of 2025, the country's National Center for Communicable Diseases (NCCD) said on Friday.

Meanwhile, 285 people remained in hospital, including 3 critically ill children, the NCCD said in a statement.

The NCCD advised parents to protect their children from the potentially severe disease by getting them two doses of measles vaccine.

Measles is a highly contagious viral disease transmitted by respiratory droplets and direct contact.

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Fast bowler Dwarshuis returned a career-best 4-36

Debutant Owen propels Australia to T20 win over West Indies

KINGSTON, Jamaica, July 21, (AP): Mitchell Owen marked his international debut with a half-century and a wicket to help Australia to a three-wicket win in the Twenty20 cricket series opener against West Indies.

Owen shared an 80-run fifth-wicket stand off 40 deliveries with Cameron Green, who scored 51 off 26 balls, to put Australia on course to reach the victory target of 190 with seven balls to spare .

After being sent in to bat and making a flying start, West Indies was restricted to 189-8 after losing four wickets for five runs off the last nine balls.

Australian fast bowler Ben Dwarshuis returned a career-best 4-36, taking three wickets in four deliveries - Jason Holder blocked a hat-trick ball but was out next delivery - in the next-to-last over of the West Indies innings.

The top four West Indies batters all got starts, with Roston Chase plundering 60 from 32 deliveries before he was caught in the deep off Dwarshuis' bowling to end a 91-run second-wicket partnership with Shai Hope (55) in the 13th over.

Anotehr win has given Australia, coming off a 3-0 test series sweep, an early lead in the five-game T20 series.

Owen, a Tasmanian allrounder who opened the batting with success for the Hobart Hurricanes in the domestic T20 league last season, joined David Warner and Ricky Ponting as Australians who've scored a half-century on debut in the format.

"Firstly happy we got the win - it was nice to contribute," he said. "Just nice to be mentioned with those class players."

The 23-year-old allrounder's first scoring shot was a six straight down the ground against Andre Russell in a

contest between a player on international debut against a veteran playing his next-to-last game. He also clouted the last ball of that over for six.

Owen hit three sixes in one over from Akeal Hosein that went for 20 runs and included a dropped catch when the batter was on 26.

He survived a very narrow miss on 42. Owen was at the non-striker's end and was out of his ground when Cameron Green hit a drive straight back down the pitch and it went through spinner Gudakesh Motie's hands and hit the stumps. After a long delay to check with ultra-edge technology, there was no evidence of any touch from Motie and umpires confirmed Owen was not out.

Green raised his 50 off 25 balls later in the same over with a six and a boundary but was out next ball, caught in the deep off Motie.

Owen scored 50 off 27 deliveries before he was caught

out in the deep off Alzarri Joseph's bowling with Australia needing 15 runs from 21 deliveries and four wickets in hand for victory.

Shimron Hetmyer swiped Owen's first delivery in international cricket - in the 16th over of the match - over his left shoulder for six in extraordinary fashion. But the young Australian got his first wicket two balls later when Hope mis-timed a slower ball and was caught in the deep after hitting four boundaries and three sixes in a 39-ball innings.

"Fantastic," Australia skipper Mitch Marsh said of Owen's debut. "Any time you get a young kid that comes in and performs like that in his first game for Australia, it's always really exciting."

"I'm sure there'll be lots of people - I think it's mid-morning back home now - that would've watched that and will be really excited. So we're pumped for him."

Knueppel scores 21 as Hornets win maiden NBA Summer League title



Charlotte Hornets players celebrate after defeating the Sacramento Kings in an NBA Summer League championship basketball game in Las Vegas. (AP)

Charlotte holds off Kings

LAS VEGAS, July 21, (AP): Kon Knueppel, the fourth pick in this year's draft, scored 21 points and Charlotte held off a Sacramento rally to beat the Kings 83-78 for the Hornets' first NBA Summer League title.

Ryan Kalkbrenner added 15 points and three other players each scored 11 for the Hornets, who ended their Summer League run with a 6-0 record.

Isaac Jones had 24 points and 11 rebounds for Sacramento (5-1), and Devin Carter scored 13. Nique Clifford, drafted 24th, finished with 10 points and eight rebounds. He entered the game averaging averaging 16.2 points and 6.2 rebounds.

The Kings lost for the first time in three trips to the final. They won



Sacramento Kings' Nique Clifford, right, drives against Charlotte Hornets' KJ Simpson during the second half of an NBA Summer League championship basketball game in Las Vegas. (AP)

titles in 2014 and 2021.

Knueppel continued his hot play after scoring five points in his opener. He averaged 18.3 points over his final four games and was

ing to come here, you should win," Knueppel said. "So that's what we did."

The Hornets dominated early, leading by 36-18 in the second quarter. The Kings came back, and Jones twice cut the deficit to a point late - a follow with 1:17 left and a 3-pointer with 20.3 seconds remaining.

But the Hornets closed out the game at the free-throw line, three players making 5 of 6.

"It's a championship game," Charlotte Summer League coach Chris Jent said. "That's what everybody wants to see anyway, so it works out well. In order to win a championship, you've got to play through adversity."

Hornets center James Banks III was ejected with 3:47 left in the third quarter after picking up a flagrant-two foul for an elbow to Sacramento center Dylan Cardwell's face. Cardwell went down hard and remained on the floor during most of the video review.

\$11 million deal for the veteran

'Smart to sign with Lakers after Wizards buyout'

LOS ANGELES, July 21, (AP): Veteran guard Marcus Smart will sign with the Los Angeles Lakers after receiving a contract buyout from the Washington Wizards, a person with knowledge of the deal told The Associated Press on Sunday.

The person spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity because the Wizards had yet to announce their buyout of Smart. The stand-out defender and two-way contributor excelled for the rival Boston Celtics for nine seasons before spending the past two years with Memphis and Washington.

Smart will get a two-year, \$11 million deal with the Lakers to join their supporting cast around Luka Doncic and LeBron James. Los Angeles filled its biggest offseason need earlier this month by signing center Deandre Ayton.

Smart was the NBA's Defensive Player of the Year in 2022 for the Celtics, who reached the NBA Finals that season and made nine consecutive playoff appearances during his tenure. He is a three-time member of the All-Defense first team, and he was a regular



In this file photo, Washington Wizards guard Marcus Smart (36) looks on during the first half of an NBA basketball game against the Miami Heat in Washington (AP)

starter for Boston in his final half-decade with the team before he was traded to the Grizzlies in 2023.

Because of injuries, the 6-foot-3 Smart has played in just 54 games over the past two seasons since

LaRavia, who signed with the Lakers in free agency this month.

Smart has never averaged more than 13.1 points per game while playing in more than half of his team's games in a season, but the Lakers undoubtedly covet his defensive contributions to a roster already featuring strong scorers. Smart will have ample opportunity to play a significant role for the Lakers, who needed another strong point-of-attack defender after losing Dorian Finney-Smith to the Houston Rockets in free agency.

Smart, Ayton and LaRavia are the major offseason additions to the Lakers, who lost in the first round to Minnesota last spring after their seismic midseason trade to acquire Doncic from the Dallas Mavericks. Los Angeles has managed to keep its core intact apart from Finney-Smith, even resigning backup center Jaxson Hayes.

James picked up his \$52.6 million player option to return for his record 23rd NBA season, but agent Rich Paul has been vocal about James' desire for the Lakers to be a serious championship contender in the upcoming season.

'The pressure was intense'

Feng Yu quiet resolve behind China's Worlds team free gold

SINGAPORE, July 21, (Xinhua): When her teammates rested on the sidelines, Feng Yu quietly sat or lay down, repeatedly practicing her routine's hand movements.

It had only been nine days since she stepped up to join China's team free squad. Just before the 2025 World Aquatics Championships team free final, Feng was called upon to replace Zhang Yayi, who had injured her feet. The 25-year-old captain undertook intense training under immense pressure and led the team to an astonishing gold medal victory - a feat many thought unimaginable.

Reflecting on the nine critical days, Feng described the experience as "very special." "Every spare moment, I was thinking about the routine," she said.

The pressure was intense. "I barely slept on the night before the team free preliminaries," she confessed. "I was afraid of forgetting parts of the routine. But it didn't affect my overall state. My mind felt even clearer." "Actually, the pressure gradually eased with each day of training," she added. "I made sure not to let my anxiety affect the team. I wanted to be calm on stage. I didn't dwell on the result; I just wanted to do my best. Most of the pressure came from my own expectations for perfect execution." Since the decision was made for her to join the routine, Feng recalled receiving strong support from her teammates.

"Everyone encouraged me and trusted me deeply. Even if I had problems, they would say, 'You'll definitely be fine. You can do it.' I really didn't want to let down that trust and expectation." "There was an unspoken understanding among us," she added. "No one wanted to burden me with extra talk that might add stress. My teammates trusted me, and I didn't share too much about my fears or worries about making mistakes." "I know where the team's goals lie. Regardless of whether I had enough preparation or training time, I hoped to perform at my best and repay the team's trust," she said.

Asked about her role as captain during the crisis, Feng was humble but resolute.

"If someone else were put in this situation, they would also step up. For me, I hoped to perform well and bring more stability to the team's routine. But first, I had to make sure I didn't make mistakes." Head coach Zhang Xiaohuan praised Feng's leadership and perseverance.

"Before the final, during training days, while others rested, Feng was quietly mimicking the routine with her hands, practicing tirelessly alone. She never showed her worries or pressure to the coaches or teammates. As a team captain, her dedication is truly admirable." "With Feng Yu's help, we achieved something that others didn't even dare to imagine," Zhang added. "Just one day after Yayi's injury, Feng stepped in as a substitute, began training the next day, and by the third day, she was already on the World Championships journey. On the eighth day, she competed in the preliminaries. It is because of athletes like Feng that the team can overcome difficulties and continue moving forward." Their effort paid off. China triumphed in the team free event with an impressive 348.4779 points, finishing 13.7547 points ahead of second-placed Japan. It marked China's second artistic swimming gold at the Singapore Worlds, following Xu Huiyan's win in the women's solo technical.

Although China retained the "Gravity" theme from their gold-winning performance at the 2024 Paris Olympics, many technical elements were changed. The coaching staff even revised all three acrobatic components after the Artistic Swimming World Cup Final in June. As a result, the Chinese athletes had just over a month to rehearse the new routine ahead of the World Championships.

"It felt unlike before - a new kind of challenge. Our routine had major changes. The difficulty and lifts were completely redesigned," said the reigning Olympic champion. "But I have confidence in our team. Since the Paris Olympics, we have been training and refining together for a long time, and we can handle those adjustments." Feng will also take part in the team technical and the team acrobatic at the Worlds.



Gold medalists team China (center), silver medalists team Japan and bronze medalists team Spain pose after the awarding ceremony for the team free final of artistic swimming at the World Aquatics Championships in Singapore (Xinhua)

Barbosa fires Cruzeiro past Juventude

RIO DE JANEIRO, July 21, (Xinhua): Gabriel Barbosa struck two second-half goals as leaders Cruzeiro cruised to a 4-0 home win over Juventude in Brazil's Serie A championship.

Christian Cardoso put the hosts ahead by volleying home from close range and Barbosa doubled the lead with an assured finish following Kaio Jorge's cross.

Barbosa converted from the penalty spot after Marcos Paulo stamped on Kaio Jorge while contesting a loose ball.

Carlos Eduardo completed the rout in stoppage time, latching onto Yannick Bolasie's nodded pass to send a looping header into the top-left corner.

The result leaves Cruzeiro with 33 points from 15 games, three points ahead of second-placed Flamengo, while Juventude sits 18th, 22 points further back.

Despite his team's impressive start to the season, Barbosa said talk of a title challenge was premature.

"I've won two Brazilian Serie A titles and I know that nobody is champion after 15 rounds," the former Flamengo striker said.

"There is a long way to go. No team is going to be thinking about the title at this stage of the season. We are taking things game by game. Our next game against Corinthians [on Wednesday] is going to be tough away from home and we're going to do our best to win." In other Brazilian Serie A fixtures on Sunday, Flamengo won 1-0 at home to Fluminense, Palmeiras prevailed 3-2 at home to Atletico Mineiro, Botafogo won 1-0 at Sport Recife, Vitoria edged Bragantino 1-0 at home and Internacional beat Ceara 1-0 in Porto Alegre.

‘It’s a great joy to be among the top four’

Italy nears Women’s Euro final just three years after players turned pro

GENEVA, July 21,(AP): Italy is one win away from reaching the final of the Women’s European Championship, but just three years ago its players couldn’t even get professional contracts in their own country.

Little wonder veteran captain Cristiana Girelli was in tears after her two goals inspired Italy to a 2-1 victory over Norway last week, and a first semifinal appearance at the tournament in 28 years.

The Azzurre next plays defending champion England on Tuesday in Geneva.

“It’s a great joy to be among the top four in Europe and it is a happiness that we want to share because we know how important it is to bring home the results in Italy and especially for the new generations,” Girelli said, after again wiping the tears from her eyes.

“Because obviously we do this for our glory but there is a much deeper meaning, which we certainly want to bring, which is that in Italy women can play soccer too.”

Of course they can, although they couldn’t hope to make a lot of money for it until 2022 after years of amateur-only status.

It was in April of that year that the executive board of the sport’s national federation approved new regulations to open the way for a women’s professional era starting July 1 - in time for the following Serie A season.

A 1981 Italian law had limited female players to amateur status, meaning they couldn’t earn more than 30,000 euros (\$32,000) per year before taxes.

Benefits such as social security



Soccer players and staff from Italy celebrate their victory after the Women’s Euro 2025 quarterfinals soccer match between Norway and Italy at Stade de Geneve in Geneva, Switzerland. (AP)

contributions, an end-of-career fund, pension, medical protection for injuries and maternity leave were a distant dream.

The 35-year-old Girelli and many of her national teammates have experienced the change firsthand, with several of them having had to do hospital-ity jobs to support their soccer careers.

“There were difficult years where we really suffered a lot,” Girelli said. The push to make the women’s

game professional in Italy followed the national team’s surprise run to the quarterfinals of the 2019 Women’s World Cup.

It was also helped by the big clubs - Juventus, AC Milan, Inter Milan, Roma and Lazio - starting to invest more in their women’s teams.

Progress has been slower than in the countries of its traditional soccer rivals - such as England, France and Spain - but Italy is showing signs that it is catching up on the international stage.

Under coach Andrea Soncin, Italy is proving it can go toe-to-toe with the top teams, culminating in its first semifinal match at the European tournament since a run to the 1997 final.

“It’s something magical,” Girelli said. “But to tell you the truth I have felt something special in the air since I arrived in Switzerland, since the coach took charge of this team I felt something special.

“And you know, women are never wrong with their feelings,” she continued with a wry smile.

While it hasn’t quite reached fever pitch back home, 2.4 million television viewers in Italy - a 16.2% audience share - watched the team’s match against Norway and that’s likely to be even more for the semifinals.

“We hope this love, this affection, this atmosphere that’s coming to us from Italy doesn’t disappear,” Girelli said. “I really hope that with all my heart because we struggled to get here.

“We’ve reached something amazing, something extraordinary, and however it goes, I really hope it continues to feed this passion, this love for us.”

Hamlin defies age and adversity to win again at Dover Speedway

Denny just two victories away from all-time top 10

DOVER, Del., July 21, (AP): **Denny Hamlin balked when a surfboard he was asked to sign for charity was placed on the floor. At his age, Hamlin cracked; he might not be able to get back up. The 44-year-old driver had similar aging concerns a night earlier when the picture on the TV he watched as he started to doze off seemed a bit fuzzy.**

“I’m not losing my eyesight, am I?” Hamlin said.

Hamlin’s vision was on point Sunday at Dover - his sights set firmly on victory lane.

Hamlin can eliminate distractions and succeed like few drivers in the series can do: He shook off a setback in his court battle with NASCAR, shrugged off old tire concerns once he took a late lead ahead of a rain delay, and survived a late charge from his teammate to go back-to-back at Dover Motor Speedway for the Joe Gibbs Racing driver’s series-best fourth victory of the season.

“I just love that I’m able to still do it at a high level,” Hamlin said. “Every morning when I wake up, I just hope I still have what I had yesterday.”

Hamlin won in the No. 11 Toyota for the second straight time at Dover to add to wins this season at Martinsville, Darlington, and Michigan.

Hamlin has 58 NASCAR Cup Series victories, leaving him two short of Kevin Harvick for 10th on the career list. The veteran Virginia driver might hit that mark this season as he chases his first career Cup championship.



Denny Hamlin celebrates in Victory Lane after winning a NASCAR Cup Series auto race at Dover Motor Speedway in Dover, Del. (AP)

Hamlin is on NASCAR’s short list of greatest drivers to never win a championship. He won’t let the void on an otherwise stellar resume full of Hall of Fame credentials define how he feels about his career.

Hamlin took the checkered flag days after he suffered a setback in court with his own 23XI Racing team’s federal antitrust suit against NASCAR.

On Thursday, a federal judge rejected a request from 23XI Racing and Front Row Motorsports to continue racing with charters. At the same time, they battle NASCAR in court, meaning their six cars will race as open entries this weekend at Dover, next week at Indianapolis, and perhaps longer than that in a move the teams say would put them at risk of going out of business.

Hamlin vowed this weekend “all will be exposed” if the case goes to its scheduled Dec. 1 trial date.

The courtroom drama hasn’t affected Hamlin’s performance on the track.

Germany’s defensive woes mount ahead of Spain test

ZURICH, July 21, (AP): Germany defender Sarai Linder has been ruled out of her team’s Women’s European Championship semifinal against Spain, leaving the eight-time champion short of defenders against the tournament favorites.

Linder “sustained a capsular ligament injury to her left ankle” in the quarterfinal win over France, the German soccer federation said late Sunday.

The Wolfsburg left back was injured in a tussle with French forward Marie-Antoinette Katoto. She received lengthy treatment and tried continuing with a bandage around the ankle but had to go off in the 20th minute in obvious pain.

The federation said it wasn’t clear if Linder could return for the potential final.

Germany was already without injured right back Giulia Gwinn, the team captain who sustained a knee injury in the team’s opening game, while defender Kathrin Hendrich’s red card against France for pulling Griedge Mbock Bathy’s hair means she’s suspended for the match against Spain.

Midfielder Sjoekie Nisken is also suspended after receiving her second yellow card of the tournament against France.



Germany’s goalkeeper Ann-Katrin Berger saves a penalty by France’s Alice Sombath in a penalty shootout at the end of the Women’s Euro 2025 quarterfinals soccer match between France and Germany at St. Jakob-Park in Basel, Switzerland. (AP)

Bayer Leverkusen defender Carlotta Wamser, who was sent off in the final group game against Sweden, could return after serving her suspension against France.

Best of the Rest

Banfield goes top of group: Mauro Mendez scored late as Banfield edged to a 2-1 away win over Newell’s Old Boys in the Argentine Primera Division Clausura tournament.

Rodrigo Auzmendi gave his side the lead just before halftime by running onto Tomas Adoryan’s pass and thumping a first-time effort into the far corner.

Ever Banega equalized with a free kick that left goalkeeper Facundo Sanguinetti stranded after taking a deflection off the wall. (Xinhua)

Ghana gov’t congratulates Black Queens: The government of Ghana has congratulated the country’s senior women’s national football team for reaching the semifinals of the ongoing Women’s Africa Cup of Nations (WAFCON) in Morocco.

A statement released , signed by Sports Minister Kofi Iddie Adams, observed that the feat was remarkable after almost nine years of having failed to reach the WAFCON semifinals. (Xinhua)

‘Very special for me to come back and play tennis’

Venus is back in tennis and wishes Serena would come out of retirement to join the fun

WASHINGTON, July 21, (AP): Venus Williams is back on the tennis scene, ready to compete for the first time in more than a year, and while she smiled or laughed frequently Sunday while discussing her return at the DC Open, there was something that would make her even happier: if her younger sister Serena were along for the ride.

“I keep saying to my team: The only thing that would make this better is if she was here. Like, we always did everything together, so of course I miss her,” Venus said when asked about a recent video on social media that showed Serena swinging a racket. “But if she comes back, I’m sure she’ll let y’all know.”

That, of course, was said with a wide grin. Serena, 43, hasn’t played since the 2022 U.S. Open, when she declared she was “evolving” away from the sport she dominated for stretches on the way to 23 Grand Slam singles titles and an additional 14 in doubles with Venus.

“I don’t know what she’s going to do. I don’t ask those questions,” Venus said a day before the hard-court tournament in the nation’s capital begins. “I think we always hit the ball, because that’s who we are. We’re always hitting.”

She said it was during a recent practice session of hers that Serena



Venus Williams reacts during a news conference at the Citi Open tennis tournament in Washington. (AP)

showed up and joined in for about 15 or 20 minutes.

“She can take six months off and she clocks it clean,” Venus said. “You can’t teach that kind of talent. She’s just so good.”

They both were the best around at one point.

Both reached No. 1 in the rankings. Venus, who turned 45 last month, won seven major singles championships, two at the U.S. Open and five at Wimbledon.

Her last tournament was in March 2024 at the Miami Open, where she exited in the first round. It’s been so long that the official WTA Tour website lists her as “inactive.”

“This is very special for me to come back and play tennis,” Venus said. “I think it’s a surprise for the fans - and a surprise in general, as I hold my cards tight.”

Sure does.

It came as a bit of a shock to the tennis world when her appearance in

Washington via a wild-card invitation was announced a week ago.

Her team had reached out to DC Open chairman Mark Ein via text in April to gauge whether he’d be open to having Venus at an event she last entered in 2022. He said he needed two seconds to reply: “Of course.”

“She’s such an icon of the sport - and, importantly, both on and off the court,” Ein said in an interview. “So anytime you can have her engaged and have the spotlight on her and everything she’s done and continues to do, it’s hugely positive.”

What did she miss the most while away from the tour?

“All the times that I had and, of course, the adrenaline, all those things,” Venus said. “Just the pure fun of playing the game, the fun of the challenge, overcoming - when you play, you overcome so many challenges: your opponents, the conditions, a lot of times you have to overcome yourself. Those things are very exciting.”

When asked why she’s getting back on court, Venus offered a simple response: “Why not?”

As for whether this is a one-stop tour or she plans to play elsewhere, she wasn’t prepared to say much.

“I’m just here for now, and who knows?” Venus said. “Maybe there’s more.”

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NEWS



Gold medalists Anna-Maria Alexandri and Eirini-Marina Alexandri of Austria, centre, stand on the podium with silver medalists Lin Yanhan and Lin Yanjun of China, left, and bronze medalists Maia Doroshko and Tatiana Gayday of Neutral Athlete B following the women's duet technical final of artistic swimming at the World Aquatics Championships in Singapore. (AP)

Sports

Al-Hilal withdraws from Saudi Super Cup

RIYADH, July 21: The Saudi Arabian Football Federation (SAFF) announced that it has received an official letter from Al-Hilal Club, confirming the withdrawal of the club's first football team from the 2025/2026 Saudi Super Cup, scheduled to take place in Hong Kong from August 19 to 23, 2025.

In light of this development, the SAFF will move forward with necessary actions in accordance with the competition's rules and regulations, through the appropriate committees. The Competitions Committee will oversee the completion of all related procedures, ensuring the continued implementation of the tournament's framework.

The Federation reaffirmed its commitment to respecting the approved statutes and safeguarding the interests of all stakeholders, in line with the values outlined by its General Assembly.

In an official statement released, Al-Hilal explained that the decision was made to prioritize player safety, especially for its international players who are expected to join the Saudi national team's training camp ahead of the 2026 FIFA World Cup qualifying playoffs in October.

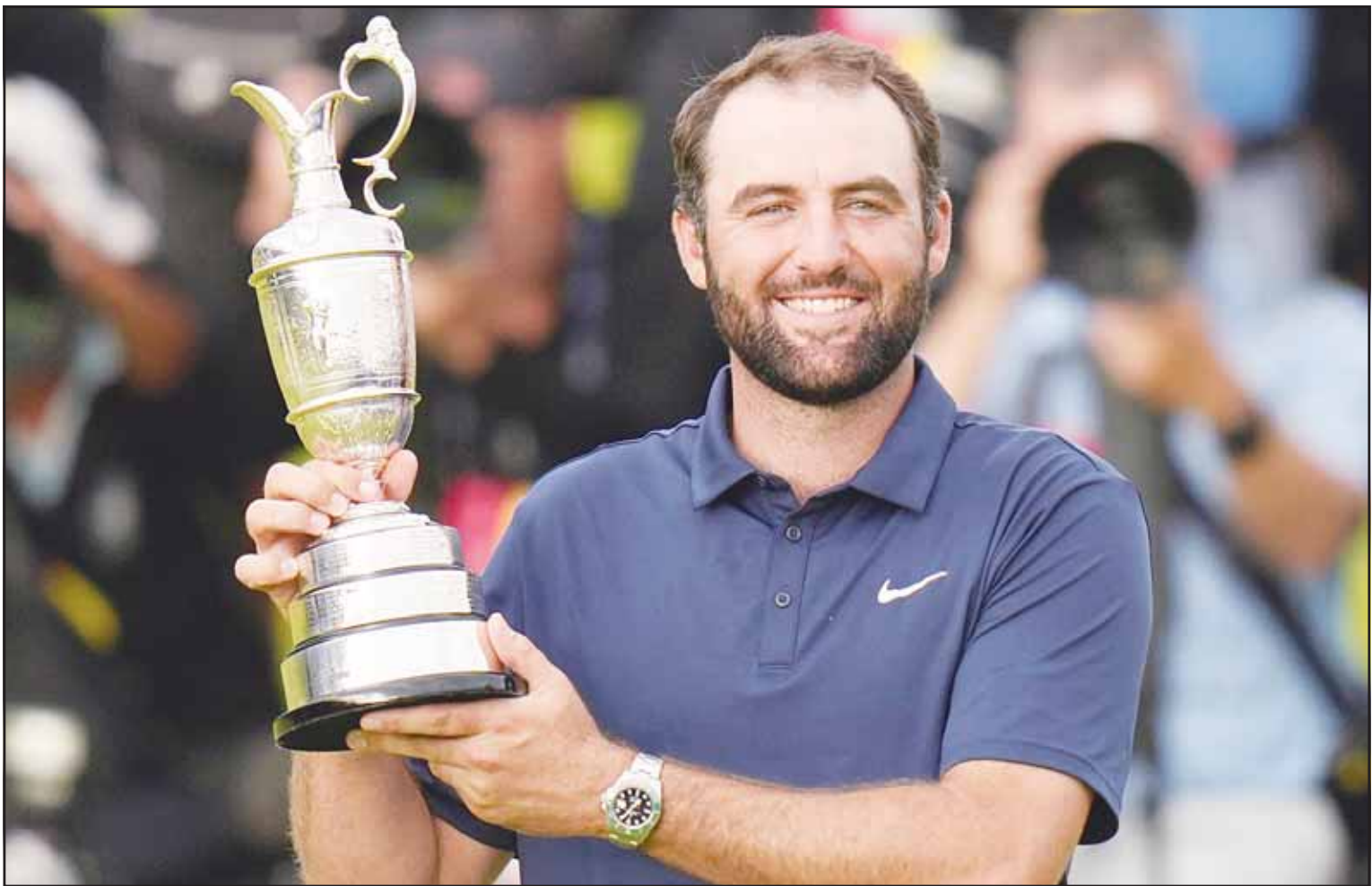
The club emphasized that the withdrawal comes in response to exceptional circumstances and reflects a desire to avoid overburdening players during a critical phase of the season. Al-Hilal further stated:

"We have called for a review of alternative solutions that can support the tournament's organization and fulfill its marketing and promotional goals in Hong Kong, while recognizing the team's current challenges."



A file photo of Al-Hilal players celebrating.

Scheffler wins British Open for third leg of career Grand Slam



Scottie Scheffler of the United States poses for photographers with the Claret Jug trophy after winning the British Open golf championship at the Royal Portrush Golf Club, Northern Ireland. (AP)

'He is the bar that we're all trying to get to'

PORTRUSH, Northern Ireland, July 21, (AP): The enormous yellow scoreboard above the 18th green at Royal Portrush perfectly illustrated the state of golf these days. Scottie Scheffler's name was at the top. No one was close.

That's how it was in the British Open, when Scheffler never gave anyone a chance from the time his 9-iron settled a foot away for birdie on the first hole until he tapped in for a 3-under 68 and a four-shot victory over Harris English.

That's how it is in the sport, a level of dominance not seen since Tiger Woods.

"He is the bar that we're all trying to get to," Masters champion Rory McIlroy said. "In a historical context, you could argue that there's only maybe two or three players in the history of the game that have been on a run the one that Scottie's been on here for the last 24 to 36 months. Incredibly impressive." Scheffler not only won his second major this year - and fourth in the last three years - he captured the third leg of the career Grand Slam, now missing only the U.S. Open.

He became the first player in more than a century to win his first fourth major title by at least three shots, and if not for his lone blunder from a bunker on the eighth hole when he had a seven-shot lead, he would have played bogey-free on the weekend.

"Being able to walk up 18 with the tournament in hand is a really tough thing to describe. It's a really cool feeling. I have a lot of gratitude towards being able to accomplish something like this," Scheffler said, the silver claret jug on the table next to him.

"It's taken a lot of work - not only a lot of work, but it takes a lot of patience," he said. "It's a high level of

focus over 72 holes of a tournament. This was, I felt like, one of my best performances mentally."

The emotions he showed were telling.

Until he had his name etched on golf's oldest trophy, Scheffler had a week marked by his extraordinary insight on how he views winning. He said celebrations last only a few minutes. He has wondered, "What's the point?" He loves the work required to be the best. He thrives on competition. But in terms of fulfillment, he often questions why he wants to win so badly when the thrill of winning is fleeting.

On the golf course, his biggest fist pump was for a par on the sixth hole. As he crouched to line up his birdie putt on the 18th, he rested his head on his hand with a slight smile of deep satisfaction. When he tapped in the final putt, he plucked the ball from the cup and put it in his pocket as if he had just won a regular PGA Tour event.

But when he finally found his family - wife Meredith, 15-month-old son Bennett, and his parents - Scheffler went crazy. He thrust both arms in the air, pumped both arms, screamed and threw his cap in the air. That's what it's all about for the 29-year-old from Texas.

"She's always the first person I want to celebrate with," he said. "She knows me better than anybody. That's my best friend. It takes a lot of work to be able to become good at this game, and I wouldn't be able to do it without her support."

McIlroy had referred to the outcome as "inevitable" when Scheffler built a four-shot lead going into the final round, and it was every bit of that.

The tap-in birdie on the first hole. A brilliant approach between two knobs to 7 feet for birdie on the fourth. A 15-foot birdie on No. 5. Most telling was his biggest celebration, a powerful fist pump when he made a 15-foot par putt on No. 6.

It was reminiscent of when Woods saved his big-

gest fist pump for a par on the 16th hole of his historic 15-shot victory at Pebble Beach in the 2000 U.S. Open, when it was clear Woods was competing mainly against himself.

That's what it felt like until Scheffler's one wobble a double bogey on No. 8 when it took two shots to get out of a fairway bunker.

That ended his streak of 32 consecutive holes without a bogey. The lead was down to four shots when Scottish Open winner Chris Gotterup birdied the ninth. And then Scheffler birdied the next hole. He played the back nine with eight pars and a birdie because that's all he needed. No one could catch him.

"I played with him the first two days, and honestly I thought he was going to birdie every hole. It was incredible to watch," Shane Lowry said. "If Scottie's feet stayed stable and his swing looked like Adam Scott's, we'd be talking about him in the same words as Tiger Woods. ... His bad shots are really good. That's when you know he's really good."

Scheffler, who finished at 17-under 267, won for the fourth time this year. He now has won 20 times worldwide in the last 30 months. This was the 11th straight time he turned a 54-hole lead into a victory.

"I don't think we thought the golfing world would see someone as dominant as Tiger come through so soon, and here's Scottie sort of taking that throne of dominance," said Xander Schauffele, the defending champion who tied for seventh.

"You can't even say he's on a run. He's just been killing it for over two years now," he said. "He's a tough man to beat, and when you see his name up on the leaderboard, it sucks for us."

English capped off a memorable two weeks in the United Kingdom. His caddie of eight years couldn't get a new travel visa because of a 10-year prison term he served two decades ago. English had a replacement last week at the Scottish Open and another this week.

Kuwait Wushu Kung Fu Championship wraps up

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: The 2025 Kuwait Wushu Kung Fu Championship concluded at the Kuwait Force Academy in Yarmouk Club, under the supervision of the Kuwait Wushu Kung Fu Committee, chaired by Nasser Al-Loughani, and the judging committee led by referee Rashid Al-Ismael.

The championship featured participation from five coaches representing private clubs:

- Captain Nour El-Din of the Ding Kung Fu Institute in Dasma, son of the founder of Wushu Kung Fu in Kuwait
- Master Khader Ding of the Qim Club
- Captain Abdulrahman Al-Turki of the V Gym Club
- Captain Ahmed Abduljawad of the Tamimi Tai Chi Club
- Captain Dhari Al-Tamimi of the Shining Peaks Club
- Captain Mahmoud Salahat

In the medal tally:

- V Gym Club secured the gold medal
- Qim and Humam Club won silver
- Tamimi Tai Chi Club earned bronze
- The Ding Kung Fu Institute placed fourth, followed by the Shining Peaks Club in fifth place.

In the overall championship point's standings:

- Qim and Humam Club
- V Gym Club
- Tamimi Tai Chi Club
- Ding Kung Fu Institute
- Al Qimam Al Shamkha Club



Top performers honored at the championship's closing ceremony.

Pospisil retiring from tennis

Wimbledon expansion gets legal boost, judge dismisses challenge

LONDON, July 21, (AP): Wimbledon's expansion plans, which would almost triple the size of the tennis tournament grounds, received a boost Monday when a judge dismissed a campaign group's legal challenge.

The Save Wimbledon Park group took legal action against the Greater London Authority's decision to grant planning permission last year.

Aside from concerns about the environment and overall scale, opponents argued that the adjacent property that was a golf course when the All England Club bought it in 1918 is subject to restrictions that favor preservation of open spaces for the public.

Wimbledon's plan includes adding an 8,000-seat stadium with a retractable roof and 38 other grass courts that would allow the All England Club to move its qualifying event on-site to boost attendance and revenue.

"In short, the defendant's decision on the relevance of deliverability, applying to both the statutory trust and the restrictive covenants, was a planning judgment rationally exercised and having regard to appropriate and relevant factors," judge Justice Saini said.

Wimbledon is the only Grand Slam tournament that holds its qualifying rounds at a completely separate location. There are also too few practice courts in the current setup, requiring some of the world's best players to share courts.

"We are delighted that Mr. Justice Saini has dismissed the challenge to the GLA's decision to grant planning permission for our plans to transform the former Wimbledon Park golf course," said Deborah Jevans, chair of the All England Club.

"It is clear that we have a robust planning permission that enables us to create a permanent home for the Wimbledon qualifying competition as well as delivering 27 acres of beautiful new park land for local people, providing public access to land that has been a private golf course for over 100 years," Jevans added. The next hurdle in the process is a hearing in January over whether there is a statutory trust over



In this file photo, Vasek Pospisil of Canada celebrates after teaming up with Jack Sock (unseen) of the U.S. to win men's doubles final at the All England Lawn Tennis Championships in Wimbledon, London. (AP)

the former golf course land.

□ □ □

Vasek Pospisil, who won a Wimbledon men's doubles title and helped Canada win the Davis Cup, will retire from tennis after playing in the Toronto tournament next week.

"Eighteen years of professional tennis. Looking forward to playing in front of you one last time in Toronto," the 35-year-old Pospisil posted Monday on social media.

Pospisil has been an advocate for players on the tours and joined with **Novak Djokovic** to form the Professional Tennis Players' Association, which filed a class-action lawsuit in federal court in New York against some of the groups running the sport.

On the court, Pospisil paired with Jack Sock to earn a Wimbledon championship in 2014 and was part of the Canadian team that won the Davis Cup title in 2022. Pospisil reached career-high rankings of No. 4 in doubles and No. 25 in singles. The hard-court Masters event in Canada awarded Pospisil a wild-card entry.

Bahrain hosts draw for Volleyball Championship

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: The Arab Volleyball Federation has announced the participation of 10 national teams in the 17th Arab Junior Volleyball Championship (for players born in 2007), scheduled to take place in Amman, Jordan, from August 14 to 26.

The participating countries are: Kuwait, Libya, Lebanon, Egypt, Palestine, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Bahrain, and host nation Jordan.

The tournament draw will be conducted today at 6:00 PM at the Arab Volleyball Federation headquarters in the Kingdom of Bahrain, and will be broadcast live online via the Microsoft Teams platform.



Mohammed Abdul Razzaq

The Kuwaiti team continues its local preparations for the championship.

The team is expected to hold an external training camp either at the end of this month or in early August, prior to departing for Jordan.

Meanwhile, the Board of Directors of the Kuwait Volleyball Association has appointed Mohammed Abdul Razzaq as head coach of the national team, supported by assistant coach Mishaal Al-Sabti and team administrator Abdullah Al-Rais.