



Opinion

■ Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

The children of Kuwaiti women need more compassion

WE submit the complaints of the Kuwaiti mothers of non-Kuwaiti children to His Excellency Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef; because Kuwait is a humanitarian country. Kuwait has proven this over the decades. Even the purification of national identity has not left those whose citizenship was revoked without solutions.

We submit the complaints to Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef, because he is acting according to directives of the political leadership to ensure that no one is wronged.

Your Excellency the First Deputy Prime Minister, we hear a lot about unverified injustices against the children of Kuwaiti women married to non-Kuwaitis. They allegedly suffer from lack of opportunities, as they are being prevented from practicing any activity or profession, because they are stateless despite being

born in Kuwait to Kuwaiti mothers. They lived and worked in its schools.

In some cases where the father died or was forced to leave Kuwait for any reason, or because the mother got divorced; the children who live with their Kuwaiti mothers have no identity, and perhaps, without benefits or jobs.

Your Excellency the First Deputy Prime Minister, the children born under these circumstances should not be blamed. It is true that the law prohibits the naturalization of the children of Kuwaiti women married to non-Kuwaitis, while most countries around the world grant this right to women, as it leads to social stability and stimulates fair competition. It is important for these young people to find jobs that provide them with an income to help them support themselves and their families; and also help them contribute to the only

country they know. Mothers want to provide opportunities for their children.

A large portion of this group is highly qualified, and some are skilled in professions considered important in Kuwait. The State is keen on attracting foreigners to fill positions where the members of this group are skilled in, not to mention their knowledge of society. These people are an added value to the economy, as they spend all their income in Kuwait.

Continued on Page 5

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‘We greet France move to recognize Palestine’

KUWAIT CITY, July 26, (KUNA): The Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs welcomed French President Emmanuel Macron’s announced intention to officially recognize the State of Palestine.

In a press release, the ministry commended this significant step that would contribute to implementing relevant United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative in a way that enables the Palestinian people to have self-determination and establish their independent Palestinian state on the 1967 border with East Jerusalem being its capital.

The ministry called on other countries to follow suit in order to reach a just and comprehensive solution to the Palestinian cause.

Meanwhile, Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Jassem Al-Budaiwi applauded the declaration by French President Emmanuel Macron that Paris would officially recognize the State of Palestine in September.

This decision is a significant step that mirrors the unwavering commitment of the French Republic to the international principles of justice in support of various regional and international causes, as well its relentless bids to solidify the foundations of global security and stability, Al-Budaiwi said. He called upon other states to follow France’s example and take the historic and

Continued on Page 5

KUWAIT HAS BEEN, WILL BE BEACON OF THOUGHT, CREATIVITY

‘Fortify role of media, think tanks’

‘SCO Summit unique opportunity to crystallize visions’



Kuwait’s Ambassador to China Jassem Al-Najem expresses his views.



Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Media and Think Tank Summit kicks off.



KUNA photos
Acting Director General of Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) Mohammad Al-Mannai and Acting Editor-in-Chief Mohammad Al-Bahar at the summit.

ZHENGZHOU, China, July 26, (KUNA): Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Media and Think Tank Summit called on Saturday for enhancing media and think tank roles in promoting coexistence, tolerance, and cross-cultural understanding.

This came in the Zhengzhou Statement issued at the summit, which kicked off last Wednesday in China, with the participation of over 400 officials and representatives from approximately 200 media outlets and think tanks.

Xinhua News Agency quoted the statement as saying that the organization played a key role in fostering unity, trust, peace, and development in the region, calling on media and think tanks to act as bridges in sharing its achievements and promoting cooperation.

The statement urged SCO media and think tanks to promote member states’ realities, development strategies, and approaches to help resolve differences, unify visions, and protect shared interests.

It pointed out that maintaining regional peace is a shared duty of SCO members, highlighting the importance of implementing President Xi Jinping’s Global Security Initiative to enhance global peace.

The statement urged to highlight the outcomes of member state cooperation in

economic integration and development, aiming to align national strategies with regional initiatives and share the benefits of progress.

It emphasized strengthening the role of media and think tanks in promoting coexistence, tolerance among civilizations, and deepening understanding and friendship among peoples of SCO countries.

The statement called for defending true multilateralism and improving global governance as they are in the common interests of all parties to the SCO.

It also called for promoting common human values and amplifying the SCO’s voice to support unity and fairness over division and hegemony.

Attendees agreed that the summit would strengthen consensus and cooperation in joint coverage, journalist training, and academic exchange, supporting development, peace, stability, and revitalization.

The SCO’s Media and Think Tank Summit, scheduled to conclude on Sunday, is held in preparation for the leaders’ summit scheduled in Tianjin city on August 31 until September first.

The delegation accompanying KUNA’s Acting Director General Mohammad Al-Mannai includes Acting Editor-in-Chief Mohammad Al-Bahar and Head of Marketing and Public Relations Lamia Al-Farsi.

Meanwhile, Acting Director General of Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) Mohammad Al-Mannai has affirmed that the State of Kuwait continues to be a beacon of media, thought and creativity; a launching pad for many pioneering media and cultural initiatives; and an incubator of the principles of peaceful

coexistence and rapprochement among peoples, embodying its firm belief in the importance of dialogue and building common bridges in international forums.

In a press statement on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Media and Think Tank Summit, Al-Mannai asserted that “the summit is a unique opportunity to crystallize common visions that consolidate the role of media in raising awareness and guiding public policies. The world is experiencing a critical moment, in which the pace of geopolitical and technological changes is accelerating, with the media becoming an integral part and a major player.

The role of the media is growing day by day, as its credibility as a primary source of information becomes increasingly evident.”

He stressed the importance of concerted efforts in overcoming current and future challenges through media partnerships, which have become crucial due to these challenges.

He pointed out that the world is now in dire need of opening horizons for cultural dialogue between peoples. “It is essential to transform our media into broad windows overlooking our unique and rich worlds by building joint media bridges that enhance the role of the media and its messages,” he added.

He stated that the media landscape has undergone and continues to undergo transformation from traditional media to integrated digital platforms.

Continued on Page 5

KAC reports 6% Q2 ’25 jump

Cost cuts, efficiency, super services help hike revenues

KUWAIT CITY, July 26, (KUNA): Chairman of Kuwait Airways Corporation, Abdulmohsen Al-Faqan, announced that the airline’s operating revenues saw a 6 percent increase in the second quarter of 2025, highlighting the company’s ongoing commitment to development strategies approved by the Board of Directors.



Al-Faqan

Kuwait Airways announced achieving revenues of USD 324 million in the second quarter of 2025, marking a six percent increase compared to the first quarter.

Kuwait Airways Corporation reported operating revenues of USD 285 million in the second quarter of 2025, reflecting a 14 percent increase compared to the first quarter, according to a statement on its official X platform account.

The company added that operating expenses declined by USD 19.4 million, representing a 20 percent reduction over the same period.

Continued on Page 5

War in Gaza has claimed lives of 232 mediamen

RAMALLAH, July 26, (KUNA): Palestinian Journalist Adam Abu Herbid has fallen martyr, taking the total number of journalists killed in Gaza since the start of the Israeli occupation forces war to 232, Gaza’s government media office said on Friday.

In a statement, the office deplored the systematic targeting and assassination of reporters by the Israeli forces, calling on the Inter-

national Federation of Journalists (IFJ) and the Federation of Arab Journalists as well as all media bodies in the world to condemn all organized crimes against Palestinian reporters and media people in the Strip.

Abu Herbid was killed on Thursday by Israeli aircraft bombing of

Continued on Page 5

38, KD25 million co-op projects in implementation

By Fares Ghaleb
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 26: Director of the Cooperative Facilities Department and acting Director for Monitoring and Inspection at the Ministry of Social Affairs Khaled Marzouq revealed that the depart-

ment supervised the implementation of 38 major projects in a number of cooperative societies from the beginning of this year until mid-July, with a total value of KD25 million.

The total value of 227 small and medium projects implemented in the aforementioned period amounted to about KD2 million. These projects include main-

tenance, equipment, computers, air conditioning, insulation, awnings, landscaping and other works.

In a press statement, Marzouq confirmed that the Technical Committee approved the disbursement of payments; indicating the department handles four categories of projects: preventive projects through

Continued on Page 5

Almost 6 mn cut in local and foreign conferences budget

By Mohammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 26: The 2025/2026 fiscal year report revealed a decrease of KD5.816 million in the budget allocated for internal and external conferences organized by ministries and government departments,

compared to the previous year.

The report indicated that the total budget for this item in the current year amounted to KD10.235 million distributed as follows: KD9.985 million for local conferences and KD250,000 for external conferences.

Continued on Page 5

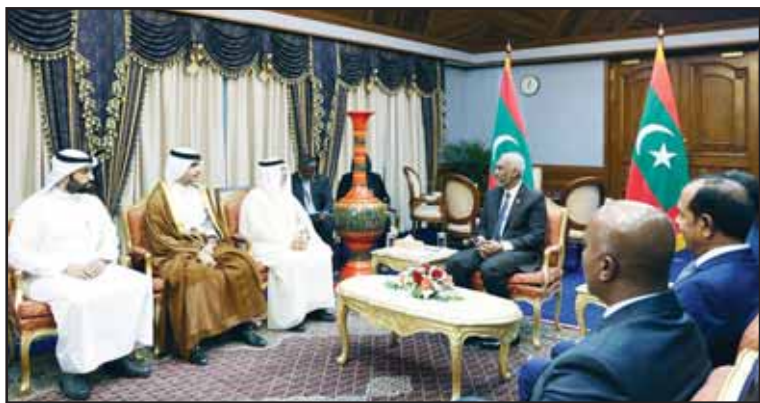
Sports club officials under probe

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

KUWAIT CITY, July 26: The Public Prosecution continues the interrogation of the president of Al-Jahra Sports Club, the former secretary, an investor and five other defendants who were detained last Thursday pending investigation into the alleged forgery of official documents and harming public funds.

The detention decision was issued after extensive investigations initiated by the prosecution, based on the report submitted by the incumbent Board of Directors of the club that accused the previous administration of committing serious financial and administrative violations like forgery of official documents and harming public funds.

Continued on Page 5



KUNA photo
President of the Maldives Mohammad Muizzu and Acting Director General of the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) Waleed Al-Bahar, his team in talks.

Maldives lauds Kuwaiti projects

KUWAIT CITY, July 26, (KUNA): President of the Maldives Mohamed Muizzu and Acting Director General of the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) Waleed Al-Bahar discussed on Saturday means of boosting collaboration and reviewed

joint projects in a way that contributes to backing sustainable development efforts in the Maldives.

During the meeting held in the Maldives’ capital, Male, Muizzu expressed

Continued on Page 5

Prayer Timings

Fajr	03:34	Asr	15:30
Sunrise ..	05:04	Maghrib ..	18:44
Zohr	11:54	Isha	20:12

Local

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

By Day: Very hot and relatively humid over coastal areas with light to moderate northwesterly wind, with speeds of 10-30 km/h.

By Night: Hot to rather hot and

Weather

relatively humid over coastal areas with light variable wind to light to moderate northwesterly wind, with speeds of 08-30 km/h.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	49	35
Kuwait Airport	50	31

Abdaly	51	29
Bubyan	48	29
Jahra	51	34
Salmiyah	46	33
Ahmadi	44	30
Nuwaisib	46	32
Wafra	49	29
Salmy	50	30

Crown Prince, PM extend wishes

HH Amir congratulates Liberia, Maldives on Independence Day

KUWAIT CITY, July 26, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent on Saturday cables of congratulations to Liberian President Joseph Boakai and Maldivian President Mohamed Muizzu on the occasion of their countries' Independence Day.

In his messages, His Highness the Amir expressed his best wishes for the presidents' continued health and wellbeing, as

well as progress and prosperity for the friendly peoples of Liberia and the Maldives.

Similarly, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent congratulatory cables to the leaders of both countries, extending warm wishes and reaffirming Kuwait's friendly ties with Liberia and the Maldives.

PADA cuts work hours via Sahel

KUWAIT CITY, July 26: The Public Authority for Disability Affairs (PADA) has launched a new service allowing reduced working hours for individuals with disabilities and their caregivers through the Sahel application, reports Al-Anba daily.

The service is now accessible through smartphones for persons with moderate to severe disabilities, as well as their designated caregivers, in various disability

categories. This initiative is part of the digital transformation strategy of the authority, aimed at streamlining services and enhancing accessibility for people with disabilities and their families.

The authority emphasized that this development is in line with its ongoing commitment to remove barriers and ensure equal access to essential government services through modern and user-friendly digital platforms.

Sabah Asad's delicate eggshell engravings captivate audiences

Kuwaiti artist shines at Istanbul Arts Festival

ISTANBUL, July 26, (KUNA): Kuwaiti artist Sabah Asad on Thursday expressed his great happiness and pride in representing the State of Kuwait at international forums and raising its flag among nations.

His statement came during the opening of the 26th edition of the International Buyukcekmece Arts, Culture and Handicrafts Festival in Istanbul, with Kuwait participating alongside 32 countries from around the world.

"I am a visual artist who specializes in one of the rare branches of visual arts – the art of sculpture and engraving on eggshells – which is considered unfamiliar in our Arab societies," Asad told KUNA.

He added that he has received invitations to participate in many international exhibitions in countries such as China, Uzbekistan, Italy, Britain, and the Gulf states, noting that he has received international awards, including the title of "International Sculptor" from the People's Republic of China.

The Kuwaiti pavilion at the festival, as in other art events, featured unique works by Sabah Asad, who sculpted and engraved eggshells. His creations won the admiration of visitors and some Turkish media outlets, as well as the approval of the festival's organizing committee.



KUNA photo

Kuwaiti artist Sabah Asad with his delicate eggshell engravings at Buyukcekmece Festival.

Other Voices

Let's all start from home

By Ahmad alsarra

WE, and many others, have said this countless times – Without a distinguished education system based on critical thinking, questioning, freedom of expression, and research, progress is impossible. As long as we continue to follow the outdated education model that allows a child to be punished for forgetting a sentence, we will never move forward.

It may take decades for educational authorities to realize the importance of these issues. Therefore, parents should not wait for the wave of change, which may be slow to arrive. Instead, they must actively nurture critical thinking in their children and support their growth by helping them develop effective skills that will benefit them throughout life.

Professor Anwar Asfari says children should not be seen merely as recipients. Instead, we must teach them various skills from an early age, especially those involving creativity and critical thinking. We should encourage children to ask questions rather than simply follow orders without inquiry. They must be given the freedom to express any questions they have.

To achieve this, parents can, for example, present a small problem and encourage their children to analyze and solve it. This approach helps generate ideas and activates their critical thinking skills.

Teaching critical thinking to children is not easy, but parents can help their children develop a mindset that encourages curiosity and a deeper desire to seek knowledge, especially aimed at solving everyday problems.

The important step is to teach children how to think more deeply in situations that require care-

ful and skillful decision-making. Children will grow up self-confident, able to discuss assumptions and probabilities, and think logically without being influenced by negative emotions.

We should explain this to them as often as possible, regardless of their age. It is important to encourage children to ask



alsarra

questions and respond positively, inviting them to share their logical conclusions. Critical thinking involves a logical and

objective analysis of ideas, rather than emotional or subjective reactions. Critical thinking is the foundation that enables individuals to challenge their own views by examining information and considering different perspectives.

Open-minded, flexible thinking is essential when approaching any new problem and is central to a culture of critical thinking. Encouraging children to solve problems in new and creative ways by connecting ideas is a key aspect of creativity, skill development, and innovation.

Ultimately, critical thinking is important not just for children, but for adults as well. Teaching children to think logically is not enough; we, too, must develop this valuable and essential skill. Reflective thinking is also a fundamental part of improving parenting and reducing ineffective practices.

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Municipal Council member flags ‘inaction’ on tyre dump reforms

Sustainability efforts stall

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 26: Municipal Council member Alia Al-Farsi has submitted a question to the executive body of Kuwait Municipality regarding tyre landfills and dumping sites; pointing out that Kuwait has scarce and undiversified natural resources, while it has large quantities of waste that can be utilized in the economic sector.

Al-Farsi said the Environmental Affairs Committee in the council discussed this issue in its first workshop -- held on June 26, 2024 -- under the title, "Tyre Landfills and Dumping Sites and their Impact on Public Health and Environmental Safety - Current Situation and Sustainable Solutions," which resulted in the issuance of a set of urgent and long-term recommendations.

She included in her question the most important recommendations presented at the workshop -- the need for coordination between the Municipality, Environment Public Authority (EPA) and Public Authority for Industry (PAI) to gradually eliminate tyre accumulation, particularly at the Kilometer 65 site in Salmi, with the participation of factories licensed by PAI and Kuwaiti entrepreneurs approved by the Municipality.

She said this should be part of a comprehensive plan that includes studying the specifications of the accumulated tyres -- both new and old, and the mechanism for distributing them to treatment facilities, under the supervision of the Municipality and according to a clear timetable.



Al-Farsi

She added the plan must also include meeting the requirements of Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) at tyre collection sites; such as establishing temporary water basins, developing a comprehensive plan to manage tyre disposal in line with sustainable development goals, and rehabilitating waste transporters in light of the new regulations for municipal waste management and public hygiene.

She enumerated the other recommendations as follows:

- Promote modern tyre processing methods;
- Prepare a procedures manual for the use of recycled building materials in coordination with Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR), Ministry of Public Works and Kuwait University;
- Specify legislative frameworks through the Regulations Review Committee at the Municipality;
- Monitor the results of experiments conducted by some entities using rubber asphalt extracted from tyres, in preparation for developing technical specifications

and expanding the scope of application in road projects;

■ Invest in recycled waste within road maintenance contracts at the Ministry of Public Works;

■ Support and encourage the private sector to implement projects that promote sustainable development and the green economy.

Al-Farsi pointed out that more than a year had passed since the issuance of these recommendations, which prompted her to present a series of questions to the executive body in the Municipality, about the measures taken regarding the tyres landfill in Salmi (Kilometer 65) and the extent of the commitment of the Municipality to implement the recommendations; especially with regard to the disposal of tyre waste in line with the sustainable development goals. She also inquired about the mechanism followed in measuring and managing the quantities of accumulated tyres, as well as the increase and disposal rates.

Municipality reports sharp drop in safety violations

KUWAIT CITY, July 26: The Kuwait Municipality confirmed the remarkable decrease in safety violations and encroachments on State properties after a comprehensive field inspection campaign that spanned three weeks in the six governorates, reports Al-Anba daily.

Head of Ahmadi Governorate inspection team Mohammad Al-Duwaihees told Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that the campaign aimed to ensure compliance with regulations on

public land encroachments, address safety violations, and take swift action to remove illegal structures.

As part of the campaign, inspection teams visited various areas including Fintas and Abu Halifa. In Mahboula, two violations were recorded and three warnings issued for non-compliance with the municipality rules and safety standards.

Al-Duwaihees disclosed that the Municipality will continue to strictly enforce the regula-

tions, stressing that inspection teams are not lenient in dealing with violations. He said many of the infractions stem from lack of awareness among workers regarding the importance of workplace safety measures; particularly the use of personal protective equipment, such as helmets and safety gear.

He urged all individuals and entities to comply with municipal rules and safety regulations to help protect workers and public properties.

Centralized services guide launched

CSC re-nomination policy still in effect, tied to agency needs

KUWAIT CITY, July 26: According to informed sources, the policy of the Civil Service Commission (CSC) that allows citizens to re-nominate for the same government agency from which they were previously rejected or had resigned remains in effect. However, implementation of the policy depends on the staffing needs of the respective agency, reports Al-Anba daily.

Applicants can complete the re-nomination process by visiting CSC's official website, logging into the employment system, and tracking their registration. This digital procedure is in line with CSC's efforts to transition toward a paperless system.

In a related development, the sources revealed that the Ministry of Oil, in cooperation with CSC, has prepared a comprehensive Government Services Guide as part of Kuwait's strategic administrative development plan.

They explained that the guide consolidates various government services into an integrated system, now available on CSC's website. It includes step-by-step instructions for accessing each

service, including a timeline, service description, implementing entities, and necessary forms.

The added value of the Government Services Guide includes the following:

1. Easy access to information - Beneficiaries can conveniently access detailed information about services provided by government agencies through the Government Services Guide.
2. Enhanced transparency - The guide promotes transparency by publishing comprehensive information about the services offered by government entities.
3. Ongoing improvement - Clear, accessible documentation enables continuous review and development of services to keep pace with evolving needs and standards.
4. Automated information system - The initiative includes the design, implementation, and regular updating of an automated system for services offered by government agencies covered by the Civil Service Law. This system is made available to the public via CSC's official website.

Social Affairs resumes overseas charity transfers

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 26: Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Social Affairs Dr. Sayed Issa has issued administrative decisions to form committees tasked with auditing and reviewing the work and accounts of three cooperative societies over the past two fiscal years. These committees are expected to complete their work within two months.

The committees must prepare detailed minutes within one week of their formation, and outline the duties and responsibilities of each member. Their responsibilities include re-

viewing the latest reports from investigation, audit, review, or inspection committees to identify any unresolved violations.

Each committee will coordinate with relevant departments, financial supervisors, and administrative officials within the cooperative societies. Their duties also involve examining the general budgets and administrative docu-



Dr. Issa

ments related to the cooperative societies' activities to ensure compliance with applicable accounting systems.

The committees have the authority to access all data and documents and to question board members and employees of cooperative societies about any observed violations, with all testimonies documented in official minutes.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Social Affairs, through the Charitable Societies and Foundations Department, has issued a circular to the board chairpersons of charitable societies regarding financial transfers for licensed overseas charitable projects.

According to the circular, the min-

istry has approved the resumption of financial transfers for licensed external charitable projects, specifically those with accumulated funds, through the Charitable Societies Automation Program.

The circular stipulates that collecting donations for these projects is prohibited until further notice. Approvals are limited to financial transfers for projects that are already under contract with external parties.

These transfers must be carried out in accordance with the new mechanism detailed in Circular No. 307, issued on June 29, 2025, concerning the Charitable Societies Automation System.

New traffic law reduces ambulance calls for accidents

KUWAIT CITY, July 26: The number of ambulance reports related to traffic accidents decreased to 357 in just two months since the implementation of the new Traffic Law, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Official spokesperson of the Health Ministry Dr. Abdullah Al-Sanad posted on his official account on the X platform that the integration of the legislative move with field efforts led to a significant decline in the number of ambu-

lance reports on traffic accidents. He said such reports decreased to 357 two months after the enforcement of the amended Traffic Law. "We confidently look forward to better results in the coming days," Al-Sanad asserted.

Kuwaiti law, AI: Yes or no, State in quandary

“WITH the rapid advancement of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies, the need for clear legal frameworks to regulate their use and mitigate potential risks has become more urgent than ever,” Kuwaiti Lawyer **Abdulrahman Al-Houti** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“In light of this new reality, Kuwait, like many other countries, stands at a crossroads. It either keeps pace with digital transformation by developing advanced legislation to govern AI, or it risks falling behind as technological progress moves forward without waiting for anyone.

“While AI applications are diverse, ranging from medical diagnostics and data analysis to content creation, they raise a number of pressing legal and ethical questions, despite improving efficiency and reducing time and costs.

“Among the main legal challenges is determining liability for errors resulting from the use of AI.

Should responsibility fall on the programmer, the organization using the system, or the AI itself? What is the legality of using AI to make decisions that impact individual rights such as those related to parole, employment, or bank loans?

“In addition, the growing use of AI for facial recognition and behavioral analysis in some countries raises serious questions about ethical and legal boundaries.

“In the case of Kuwait, as of the writing of this article, there is no specific legislation that directly regulates the use of AI. However, this does not mean the legislation is entirely absent. Some general laws may apply to certain AI-related activities. For instance, the Anti-Cybercrime Law criminalizes acts such as privacy breaches or data manipulation, which could be committed using AI tools. Similarly, the Electronic Transactions Law provides a general framework for digital interactions, though it does not explicitly address AI technologies.

“With some government agencies beginning to adopt AI technologies in their digital services, there is a growing need for a dedicated legal system that offers clear solutions to the complex legal challenges arising from the use of this emerging and transformative technology.

“To ensure the safe and regulated use of artificial intelligence in both public and private sectors, it has become essential to enact specific legislation. Such laws should provide clear definitions of AI, outline legal liability, and establish guidelines for its use, particularly in sensitive sectors such as healthcare, law enforcement, and the judiciary.

“One proposal worth considering is the creation of an independent national authority for artificial intelligence. This body would be responsible for overseeing the development of AI technologies, issuing regulatory recommendations, and ensuring that AI applications comply with ethical and legal standards.

“It is also necessary to update legal education curricula to include concepts related to artificial intelligence and its legal implications. This step is crucial for preparing a new generation of lawyers, judges, and legal professionals capable of dealing with this reality.

“Equally important is active engagement at the international level. In addition to enacting local legislation, Kuwait should consider joining international agreements and conventions aimed at regulating artificial intelligence, such as the UNESCO Recommendations on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence. These guidelines emphasize fundamental principles related to respect for human rights, privacy, fairness, and non-discrimination in the use of AI systems.

“Given that artificial intelligence has become a vital tool for achieving sustainable development and supporting the government’s ambitious goals for digital transformation under Kuwait Vision 2035, regulating its use is no longer a matter that can be delayed.

“While AI presents new opportunities for progress and improved services, the absence of a legal framework could lead to significant challenges impacting privacy, individual rights, and even societal values. Therefore, the development of flexible, balanced, and forward-looking legislation is essential. It will play a decisive role in shaping Kuwait’s path forward in this complex technological path.”

Also:

“Agricultural tourism in Abdali and Wafra has attracted many families to visit farms in these remote areas. This has helped promote local agricultural products through direct sales on-site or at farmers’ markets held during the growing seasons in both regions.” **Ahmad Nasser Al-Muzayel** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“The growth of agricultural tourism has also brought attention to farmers’ problems and concerns, as well as provided a recreational space for citizens and residents to enjoy, especially during the cooler winter and spring months.

As a farmer in Abdali, I urge the relevant authorities to support and encourage agricultural tourism by granting official licenses to farm owners. This would also ensure that farms meet safety standards for all visitors, as is the case in many other countries.”

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



Al-Houti

“As we contemplate the accelerating pace of the future, it becomes clear that upcoming generations will face a reality unlike anything experienced in recent decades, marked by rapid change and increasingly complex challenges,” columnist Major General **Engineer Faisal Musaed Al-Jazzaf** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“To prepare our sons and daughters for this new era, we must redefine the skills we teach them, moving beyond traditional knowledge to embrace a broader range of creative, communicative, and emotional abilities.

“Future skills extend far beyond technology and languages, but they encompass deeper skills such as critical thinking, empathy, emotional intelligence, psychological resilience, and diverse forms of expression whether through sports, art, language, physical movement, or technology.

“These are the skills that enable individuals to adapt not only to the labor market but to life itself, with all its fluctuations, challenges, and uncertainties.

“This shift in how we view skills places a huge responsibility on educational, cultural, and media institutions, as well as families, to develop a new vision that goes beyond rote learning. It should empower individuals to engage with life, nurture their talents, and create ample opportunities for creativity, dialogue, and personal growth.

“Our schools, media platforms, youth development programs, and centers for sports, culture, and the arts must all be transformed into integrated environments that cultivate children’s skills for the future. They should prepare individuals who can build and innovate, live with dignity and balance, and positively impact the world around them.

“I would like to express my sincere appreciation for the generous gesture of the Council of Ministers and the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior in granting Kuwaiti citizenship to the children of Kuwaiti women with disabilities.

“This humanitarian act reflects the spirit of justice and compassion - values we hope will continue to guide all national policies. We look forward to more such humanitarian decisions that support the most vulnerable groups in our beloved country.

“I pray to God Almighty to have mercy on our righteous martyrs, protect our beloved Kuwait, and bless the efforts of all those working for its renaissance, under the leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khalid Al-Sabah (May God protect them both).”

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“Algerian media professionals have revisited the historical memory and explored Kuwaiti archives from 63 years ago, highlighting Kuwait’s support for the Algerian Revolution, which began in 1954. They recalled the solidarity shown by the Kuwaiti people, both at the governmental and grassroots levels, in offering financial and moral support to Algeria.” Kuwaiti writer **Tariq Idris** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“Algerian television conducted a series of interviews with Kuwaiti media figures, historians, writers, and authors who reflected on Kuwait’s national and patriotic role in supporting Algeria. I was among those who participated in these documentaries, along with my friend and colleague, journalist and researcher Bassem Issa Al-Loughani.

“Coincidentally, both his father and mine (May God have mercy on them) were part of the Kuwaiti medical mission to Algeria in 1962, along with the late uncle Muhammad Nasser Al-Hamdan. At the time, they were all working in the Ministry of Health as administrators and financial accountants.

“Yes, we were joined on this documentary media mission by a number of esteemed colleagues (May God reward them). Among them were Dr. Abdul Mohsen Al-Jarallah Al-Kharafi, the literary scholar Abdullah Khalaf Al-Tilji, the historian Saleh Al-Misbah who initiated and coordinated this historical documentary, and Dr. Ayed Al-Jarid, a professor of history with a deep interest in Islamic history and the documentation of Kuwait’s historical ties with the Islamic and Arab worlds.

“Algerian television has begun airing the news segments and reports in three of its stations - Al-Jazeera Al-Arabiya, Al-Ajnawi, and Amazigh.

“We extend our gratitude to our Algerian media colleagues who undertook this long journey through history and delved into these valuable documents, which reaffirm Kuwait’s courageous stance toward Algeria during the era of the late Amir Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, the founder of democracy and the father of the constitution.

“Kuwait, with its loyal people, wise leadership, and prudent government, has always been, and continues to be, a pioneer in offering aid and humanitarian assistance to its Arab sister nations. It will continue to be a land of compassion, with leaders who embody a noble legacy of humanitarian values, under the leadership of His Highness the Amir of Resolution.”

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



First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef taking a round in Khaitan area.



Illegal laundry in a dilapidated house in the area.

Massive Mol raids net over 50 suspects running liquor dens

Illegal restaurants, groceries set up in Khaitan

By Munif Naif
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 26: In a series of achievements within just 24 hours, the Ministry of Interior carried out multiple preemptive operations, including the successful thwarting of an attempt to smuggle approximately 4 million Captagon pills, valued at around KD 12 million, into Kuwait.

Meanwhile, 52 suspects were arrested for operating illicit liquor factories in six different areas. Legal action was also taken against the owners of dilapidated properties in Khaitan that had been illegally converted into unlicensed restaurants, shops, and grocery stores by illegal immigrants.

As part of the extensive campaigns overseen by First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef, the Ministry of Interior explained in

a statement that the Drug Control General Department (DCGD) had received intelligence about a plot to smuggle a large quantity of Captagon into Kuwait by hiding the pills inside water treatment pipes.

The shipment had passed through an Arab country and then a European country, serving as a cover before its intended arrival in Kuwait.

A suspect has been arrested within Kuwait, and coordination is currently underway with a counterpart anti-narcotics agency in another country to apprehend the primary suspect behind the operation.

The Ministry of Interior announced yesterday the arrest of a gang involved in the manufacture and distribution of locally produced liquor from rented homes in six residential areas - Mishref, Jaber Al-Ali, Al-Nahda, Faiha, Saad Al-Abdullah, and Qusour.

It explained that the extensive campaign uncovered fully equipped factories used for producing local liquor. Large quantities of manufacturing materials were seized, including barrels filled with raw ingredients and thousands of plastic bottles containing liquor ready for distribution and sale.

Security forces have arrested the main suspect, who was working



KUNA photos
Liquor distillation apparatus in one of the areas.

with the gang remotely via telephone in coordination with external parties.

In total, 52 individuals - 30 men and 22 women of Nepalese and Indian nationalities - were arrested. Authorities also seized eight vehicles used for transporting raw materials, distributing wages, providing meals to workers, and facilitating liquor sales and delivery.

In addition, the Ministry of Interior carried out an extensive security inspection campaign in Khaitan

Citizen accused of sectarian discord trial set for July 30

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

KUWAIT CITY, July 26: The Criminal Court has set the session of July 30 for the trial of a citizen, identified only as “A.M.”, who is accused of offending a segment of Kuwaiti society and violating the National Unity Law.

The defendant was referred to court following investigations by the Public Prosecution into a complaint filed against him over statements attributed to him, which were deemed offensive and damaging to the social fabric, in violation of Law No. 19/2012 on the Protection of National Unity.

The court will study the charges to determine whether the defendant’s actions constitute punishable offenses under the law. There have been growing public calls for strict enforcement of the

law to deter anyone who incites sedition or threatens social cohesion.

□ □ □

89% cases completed: According to statistics released by the Ministry of Justice’s Statistics and Research Department, the Public Prosecution achieved a case completion rate of 89.4 percent in the month of May. This reflects the justice system’s efficiency and its ability to handle various crimes with decisiveness and speed.

A total of 2,942 new cases were received, with 42 percent classified as felonies. Pending cases numbered 2,408, while 2,152 cases were completed during the period.

Commercial misdemeanor cases had the highest completion rate at 31.8 percent. Notably, all drug addiction cases were fully resolved, marking a significant improvement in this area. Drug-

related crimes accounted for 41 percent of felony cases. Banking cases represented the largest share of incoming cases (40 percent) and had the lowest completion rate (73.3 percent) due to their complexity and technical details.

Jahra Prosecution handled the most cases (22.7 percent), while the Commercial Affairs Prosecution achieved the highest rate of completed pending cases (19 percent). The State Security Prosecution recorded a full 100 percent completion rate.

The Capital Market Prosecution accounted for only 0.05 percent of total cases, with half of these cases completed.

Lawyer Israa Al-Haddad praised the Public Prosecution’s balanced approach in handling various types of cases, highlighting its well-planned reform efforts and firm action on serious crimes.

Assailant under probe

Doctors beaten for not signing ‘medical leave’

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

KUWAIT CITY, July 26: The Public Prosecution has started investigating the assault on two doctors working at Sabah Al-Salem North Center by an unknown individual after they left their workplace late at night.

Case files indicate that the assailant followed the two doctors in the parking lot of the clinic and attacked them with a sharp object (a wheel wrench), resulting in multiple injuries and a broken hand for one of them. The assault happened when the doctors refused to grant him medical leave after the end of official working hours.

Attorney Elaf Al-Saleh, acting on behalf of Kuwait Medical Association and representing the victims, filed an official complaint against the perpetrator who fled the scene after committing the assault. The complaint was transferred from Sabah Al-Salem Police Station to the prosecution, which heard the testimonies of one of the victims and Al-Saleh. The investigation will be completed once the other doctor gives his testimony upon completion of his treatment at Al-Razi Orthopedic Hospital.

The deputy public prosecutor instructed the relevant security authorities to quickly apprehend the culprit.

Commenting on the incident, Al-Saleh denounced what she described as a “blatant and cowardly assault,” stressing that the crime is punishable under Kuwaiti law. She asserted “this assault not only affects the two doctors; as it is also a blatant violation of the honor of the health sector, its professional and job security. It contradicts the human and ethical values upon which any civilized society is based. An assault on a doctor is, in essence, an assault on an entire humanitarian profession.”

Al-Saleh praised the quick response of the investigation authorities at the area police station and the prosecution, affirming her confidence in the security authorities’ ability to arrest the accused and bring him to justice as soon as possible.

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15 individuals lose Kuwait citizenship

Pending Cabinet nod

KUWAIT CITY, July 26: The Supreme Committee for the Investigation of Kuwaiti Citizenship, during its recent meeting chaired by First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah, decided to revoke the citizenship of several individuals, pending approval by the Council of Ministers, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a press statement, the Ministry of Interior clarified that the decision includes revocations based on dual nationality, fraudulent acquisition through false state-

ments or forgery, and cases deemed necessary for the protection of the country's higher interests.

In a related development, the official gazette "Kuwait Al-Yaum" recently published two decisions for revoking the citizenship of 15 individuals.

The first decision, issued under Article 10 of the Nationality Law, revoked the citizenship of one woman. The second decision, issued under Article 11 of the same law, revoked the citizenship of 10 women and four men.



Sheikh Fahad

Al-Awadhi, envoy discuss health co-op

Health Ministry eyes Czech partnership

KUWAIT CITY, July 26, (KUNA): Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi met on Thursday with Czech Ambassador to Kuwait Juraj Chmiel to discuss ways to strengthen bilateral cooperation and benefit from Czech expertise in developing medical services and improving the quality of healthcare across various specialties.

This came in a press statement issued by the ministry following Dr. Al-Awadhi's meeting with Ambassador Khmel, who was accompanied by Deputy Head of Mission Anna Otipokova. The meeting was also attended by Assistant Undersecretary for Foreign Health Services Dr. Hisham Kalander. It falls within the ministry's efforts to enhance international cooperation and advance the health sector in Kuwait.

According to the statement, the Czech ambassador expressed his appreciation for the Ministry of Health's efforts in developing the sector, and praised Kuwait's openness and cooperation in building a sustainable and integrated healthcare system.

Dr. Kalander noted that the ministry is working to build strategic partnerships with re-



KUNA photo
Minister of Health Dr. Ahmed Al-Awadhi and Ambassador of the Czech Republic Juraj Chmiel.

nowned international institutions, adding that the meeting aligns with the ministry's vision to foster innovation and attract advanced healthcare solutions.

Kuwaiti pavilion shines at Jerash Festival

Jordan hails Kuwait's cultural contributions

AMMAN, July 26, (KUNA): Jordan's Culture Minister Mustafa Rawashdeh lauded Kuwait on Thursday as a key patron for the Arab culture and a leading contributor to the efforts for enriching it.

This remark was made by Al-Rawashdeh in statements to KUNA after inaugurating the Kuwaiti pavilion at the 39th Jerash Cultural Festival in Amman.

He admired the Kuwaiti pavilion which showcases the rich heritage and civilization of the Arab country.

Kuwait is a known for its cultural activities and the efforts to preserve heritage and traditional crafts, he said.

For his part, the representative of Kuwait's Minister of Information and Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs, Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi, Secretary-General of the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters, Dr. Mohammad Al-Jassar, said in statements to KUNA that his country is always interested in partaking in the Jerash Festival, which is one of the oldest cultural and art festivals in the Arab region.



Jordanian Minister of Culture and Kuwaiti Ambassador to Jordan at the Kuwaiti pavilion



Attendees tour the Kuwaiti pavilion at the Embassies Exhibition at the Jerash Cultural Festival.



KUNA photos
Live demonstration of bisht making at the Kuwaiti pavilion.

He added that Kuwait's pavilion this year's edition of the festival focuses on showcasing its culture and heritage, noting that a number of craftsmen representing traditional crafts such as ship-building and bisht-weaving are present at the Kuwaiti pavilion.

Moreover, a diwaniya corner was located at the pavilion to acquaint visitors about the Kuwaiti diwaniya, cuisine, and hospitality, he said.

Al-Jassar explained that the Kuwaiti delegation participating in the festival met with Jordanian Minister of Culture Mustafa Al-Rawashdeh on the sidelines of the festival to discuss Kuwaiti-Jordanian cultural relations.

He pointed out that an agreement was reached between the Kuwait Cultural Library and the National Library in Jordan to co-operate in organizing and digitizing the libraries.

For his part, Kuwaiti Ambassador to Jordan Hamad Al-Marri told KUNA that the Jerash Festival enhances the exchange of cultures and arts between Arab countries.

He described it as one of the most important cultural and art festivals in the Arab region.

Kuwait continues its annual participation in the Festival, but this year is special as it celebrates being the Capital of Arab Culture, he said.

He added that these cultural festivals bring the peoples of the world closer, especially Arab countries, with their shared culture, customs, and traditions, and strengthen relations between peoples.

The Jerash Festival of Culture and Arts is an annual event held in the ancient city of Jerash. It was inaugurated by Jordanian Prime Minister Jaafar Hassan on Wednesday, and will continue until August 3.

It's a major cultural event in Jordan, attracting artists and visitors from around the Arab world and beyond. The festival features a variety of performances, including folklore dances, concerts, plays, opera, and popular singers, as well as traditional handicrafts.

This year's festival, held under the theme "Jerash Festival: Authenticity and Continuity", places strong emphasis on youth engagement.

JULY

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Kuwait's scientific legacy praised

Czech envoy lauds Al-Ajari Center

By Fares Ghaleb
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 26: Ambassador of the Czech Republic to Kuwait Juraj Chmiel praised the efforts of Al-Ajari Scientific Center in monitoring and publishing astronomical phenomena and seasons.

During his visit to the Al-Ajari Scientific Center Museum at the home of the late Dr. Saleh Al-Ajari in Yarmouk, Chmiel commended the dedication of the center in preserving heritage and the equipment used by astronomer Al-Ajari to observe and document astronomical phenomena.

He asserted that over the decades, Kuwait has made great strides in developing Astronomy and encouraging members of society to participate in various scientific activities in this field. He said "such efforts deserve support and encouragement. We will strengthen part-



Al-Seyassah photo
Czech Ambassador to Kuwait, Juraj Chmiel, visited the Saleh Al-Ajari Center Museum, accompanied by the center's General Director, Yousef Al-Ajari.

nerships with Al-Ajari to achieve further development."

Meanwhile, Director General of the center Yousef Al-Ajari pointed out that the visits made by representatives of diplomatic bodies to Al-Ajari Museum affirm the importance of preserving Kuwaiti heritage and history in light of the international interest in this regard.

Al-Ajari added the praise that the center re-

ceived from the Czech Ambassador will inspire future steps; indicating that the recent period witnessed a huge turnout of university students, school students and other interested groups in society, who are communicating with the center, monitoring phenomena, publishing them, and discussing them -- the most recent of which was monitoring the gazelle moon phenomenon.

Kuwait envoy in Lisbon seeks academic cooperation with Portuguese university

MADRID, July 26, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Ambassador in Lisbon Hamad Al-Hazem discussed academic cooperation with Portugal's leading university, ISCTE, which is ready to welcome Kuwaiti students.

Speaking to KUNA on Saturday, the ambassador said he had met with the Portuguese university's vice chairman for international relations Professor Maria Joao Cortinhal and Rector of College of Business Administration Maria de Lurdes Rodrigues, underling the significance of promoting cultural and academic relations between Kuwait and Portugal.

He added that the ISCTE is listed

among the world's top 50 universities in view of some specialized programs and is internationally well-ranked in business administration.

The university, which was established 52 years back, is home to five colleges covering sociology and humanities, business administration, public politics, technology, engineering and digitalization, he said.

The Kuwaiti diplomat noted that the Portuguese university is willing to cooperate with Kuwait's National Bureau for Academic Accreditation and Education Quality Assurance (NBAQ) to receive Kuwaiti students.



KUNA photo
Kuwaiti Ambassador in Lisbon discusses academic cooperation with Portugal's leading university, ISCTE.

KD95 mln tops second-phase tender offers

CAPT opens bids for Subiya plant upgrade

By Mohammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 26: The Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) recently opened bids for the second phase of the project to provide high-efficiency engineering and maintenance services for open-cycle gas turbines at the Subiya power and water distillation plant.

Reliable sources revealed that three bids were accepted; indicating the lowest bid was KD87.280

million, while the highest was KD95.318 million. Sources said the accepted bids will be referred to the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy for review and to present its recommendations within 30 days; paving the way for CAPT to issue its decision regarding the contract award.

Sources added the bids will then be forwarded to the State Audit Bureau (SAB) for auditing and opinion, in preparation for contracting and commencement of implementation.

Sources clarified that the tender aims to improve the efficiency of the plant and enhance its operational readiness, especially during the summer months, which put more pressure on power stations due to extremely hot temperatures that lead to high consumption.

In a related development, the agency postponed until Aug 5 the opening of bids for the supply, installation, operation and maintenance of gas turbine units with a combined cycle system and a capacity of 900 megawatts. This is part of the fourth phase of the expansion of the Subiya station.

It is one of the important projects that the ministry is counting on to increase energy production capacity and keep pace with the growing demand, especially since the combined cycle system contributes to improving production efficiency and reducing fuel consumption and harmful emissions. The project implementation period from the date of signing is 36 months.

KUWAIT CITY, July 26, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent Friday a cable of condolence to Russian President Vladimir Putin over the victims of the crash of a passenger plane in Russia Federation's far-eastern region of Amur, voicing sympathy for the victims' families.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent Friday a cable of condolence to Russian President

Crown Prince, PM extend condolences

Kuwait HH Amir sympathizes with Russia over plane crash

Vladimir Putin over the victims of the crash of a passenger plane in Russia Federation's far-eastern region of Amur, voicing sympathy for the victims' families.

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Continued from Page 1

The children

Recently, the privileges they enjoyed in the past were revoked due to the withdrawal of their citizenship. This move has had many repercussions that worsened their living conditions; especially those who have families to support, financial obligations, loans and children studying abroad.

The government's decision to restore the benefits of those whose citizenship was revoked and allow them to travel using their Kuwaiti passport was a correct move that deserves praise. The children of Kuwaiti women married to non-Kuwaitis should be treated in the same manner, even if it is only through granting them limited-term passports, so that they can modify their status; particularly their nationalities. They must be allowed to sell their properties, liquidate their businesses or transfer their assets to their Kuwaiti mothers.

Your Excellency the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, when the leader of the new era issued a directive to guarantee justice; His Highness proceeded based on the real Kuwaiti social culture --helping those in need. Those born on this land and from Kuwaiti mothers are more deserving of relief and assistance. The children of Kuwaiti women married to non-Kuwaitis support their mothers in their old age while they themselves live in crisis. Kuwait is known worldwide for being a compassionate and humane country at every level.

Despite the fact that all the people of Kuwait firmly supported the revocation of the citizenship of those who have attempted to cause damage to the national identity by obtaining citizenship illegally, the latter are treated well on humanitarian grounds. This means that the children of Kuwaiti women married to non-Kuwaitis have also the right to find solutions to their problems. Without a doubt, such solutions are available.

In Kuwait, we are accustomed to the complaint of the oppressed finding a receptive ear. We know that the State is working with all its might to correct mistakes to eliminate injustice. The political leadership, headed by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah -- may Allah protect him -- has instructed the government to intensify efforts to guarantee justice.

Your Excellency Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousuf, whatever the Kuwaiti mothers married to non-Kuwaitis are facing in this regard requires compassion. With admiration, the whole world is watching Kuwaiti initiatives to provide assistance to all those in need, especially the female citizens who worked hard to raise their children to be loyal to Kuwait, even if they are not citizens. Patriotism is about belonging and loyalty, not anything else.

'Fortify role

He underscored the need for sharing experiences in this field and exploring ways to invest in modern technologies like artificial intelligence to analyze data, personalize content, and improve user experience.

He confirmed "our Arab institutions are open to cooperation and developing mechanisms and methods for addressing local and global public opinions, as we believe in the importance of strengthening strategic partnerships that turn intertwined interests and the intersection of cultures into opportunities for rapprochement and a space for consolidating peace and development."

He asserted that the large Arab participation in the summit confirms this openness and reflects the pivotal role of Arab media regionally and internationally. He praised the summit's effective participation and constructive proposals, which reflect a genuine desire from all parties to strengthen cooperation among SCO member countries, and maximize exchanges and cooperation between think tanks to achieve sustainable development.

Constructive dialogue

Kuwait's Ambassador to China Jassem Al-Najem affirmed Kuwait's commitment to supporting initiatives aimed at fostering constructive media dialogue and expanding cooperation between media institutions and think tanks.

Speaking at the Media and Think Tank Conference of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), Ambassador Al-Najem highlighted the importance of such conferences in strengthening mutual understanding among SCO member states.

He noted the summit's focus on pressing global issues such as digital innovation, green development, sustainable growth, and cross-border cooperation, emphasizing Kuwait's readiness to expand partnerships within the SCO framework.

Ambassador Al-Najem also underlined Kuwait's "Kuwait Vision 2035," which includes key infrastructure projects like Mubarak Al-Kabeer Port and the Northern Economic Zone to enhance regional connectivity and investment.

He praised China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) as a vital platform for global development and reiterated Kuwait's early commitment to the initiative since 2014. He also conveyed Kuwait's support for global cooperation efforts launched by Chinese President Xi Jinping.

Ambassador Al-Najem highlighted Kuwait's recent full membership in the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and reaffirmed Kuwait's role in supporting development through the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED), which has financed projects in over 100 developing countries.

The ambassador conveyed greetings from Kuwait's Minister of Information, Culture and State Minister for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi, wishing the summit success in strengthening regional and international media cooperation.

Kuwait's delegation at the forum includes Acting Director General Mohammad Al-Mannai, Acting Editor-in-Chief Mohammad Al-Bahar and Head of Marketing and Public Relations Lamia Al-Farsi.

Building trust

Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Media and Think Tank Summit kicked off on Friday in the Zhengzhou City of China, with the participation of Kuwait.

The event saw the participation of KUNA's Acting Director General Mohammad Al-Mannai alongside experts from Arab and Gulf media entities in addition to Ambassador of Kuwait to China Jassem Al-Najem.

Over 400 officials and representatives from approximately 200 media outlets and think tanks from SCO member states have attended the summit.

The summit would address ways to advance international media cooperation and global cultural governance to higher levels.

President of Xinhua News Agency, Fu Hua, highlighted the summit's goal to strengthen the media role in building trust, promoting cultural respect, and fostering shared development among SCO member states.

He emphasized that the organization, a key platform for Eurasian cooperation, has significantly contributed to regional security, stability, development, and prosperity over the past 24 years.

Fu Hua reiterated China's commitment to the Belt and Road Initiative, deepening cooperation with SCO members.

He hoped the summit would foster a positive media environment, enhancing collaboration among member states.

Sports club

Al-Jahra Club is experiencing a period of instability, as the Public Authority for Sports decided to suspend financial and banking appropriations for the current Board of Directors due to disputes between the current and previous boards.

Cost cuts,

It also noted that the number of departure flights reached 7,063 during second quarter of 2025, marking a nine percent increase compared to the previous quarter, while the total number of passengers transported reached one million.

In a statement to the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), Al-Faqan noted that this growth is a direct result of focused initiatives aimed at enhancing operational efficiency, reducing unnecessary expenses, and boosting revenue, all while maintaining the highest standards of operational safety.

He emphasized that Kuwait Airways' leadership is dedicated to elevating performance, ensuring optimal efficiency, and delivering high-quality services to its customers. Al-Faqan attributed the improved results to the dedication and hard work of the airline's staff, whose efforts have been instrumental in achieving these positive outcomes.

"This growth underscores our commitment to continually advancing our operational systems and overall service quality -- from technical and operational aspects to human resources," Al-Faqan said.

He acknowledged the challenges Kuwait Airways has faced, including aircraft shortages caused by delayed deliveries and global spare part supply issues. The airline also had to navigate difficult geopolitical and regional conditions. Despite these obstacles, Al-

Faqan affirmed that Kuwait Airways remains focused on financial discipline and service excellence.

38, KD25

annual maintenance contracts for air conditioning and refrigeration; emergency projects to cover unforeseen situations; development projects to replace equipment that has reached the end of its lifespan, as well as restoration and development projects for the cooperative; and construction projects for new buildings, markets and branches.

He said the department conducts field inspections during summer and winter to monitor the efficiency of air conditioning units and refrigerators, and ensure the readiness of insulation for the rainy season.

He affirmed that the ministry has the authority to issue violation citations in case projects are implemented without consulting the department, failure of the board of directors to maintain buildings and facilities, failure to respond to warnings, failure to give information to inspectors, or failure to complete legal and regulatory procedures.

He revealed that the emergency work category is regulated as per Ministerial Resolution No. 46T/ 2021; covering electrical, air conditioning, refrigeration, firefighting and shelving works. He stated that the resolution has been amended to include linking monitoring systems with government agencies. He explained this formula allows cooperatives to disburse amounts of up to KD7,500 in the event of emergency breakdowns; provided that they notify the department.

Almost 6 mn

On the other hand, the budget in the previous fiscal year (2024/2025) amounted to KD16.051 million --KD15.696 million for local conferences and KD355,000 for external conferences.

This budget decline is in line with the policy of the State to rationalize spending, regulate expenditures, and increase revenues without compromising government performance.

In this context, the Ministry of Finance issued a circular to all government agencies, calling for reduction of conference expenses and compliance with the new directives. This is a manifestation of the State's direction towards instilling financial discipline and directing resources to vital sectors.

Maldives lauds

much gratitude and appreciation to Kuwait, lauding the fund's key role since its cooperation with his country in 1976, according to a statement by the fund.

The fund's contributions included establishing the Maldives' airport in Male, along with backing hospitals and drinking water projects, it stated.

The meeting came in coincidence with the Maldives' celebrations on the independence day, and the inauguration of the KFAED-funded airport expansion project in the capital, it noted.

'We greet

responsible decision to help in ending hardships of the brotherly Palestinian people and back up the process for just and lasting peace.

Moreover, the GCC chief re-affirmed the Council unwavering stance in support of the Palestinian cause and reaching a solution, based on ending the Israeli occupation and establishing the independent Palestinian State to the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, according to the relevant UN resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative.

The Arab Peace Initiative, declared at an Arab summit held in Lebanon in 2002, was launched by Saudi Arabia. It essentially called for recognizing Israel in exchange for an independent Palestinian State.

The GCC, founded in the early '80s, comprises Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain, Qatar and Oman.

War in

his family's tent in Yarmouk, central Gaza, Palestine news agency (Wafa) quoted medical sources as saying.

Meanwhile, Palestine's press syndicate said targeting systematically and categorically journalists is a full crime and a flagrant violation of all international norms and laws, topped with the UN Security Council Resolution 2222.

The Israeli occupation has committed terrible massacres against journalists since the start of its war on Gaza, aiming to eradicate truth and petrify media people, it added.

Municipality clarifies new amendments to free zone

New specs apply only to Sector 16

KUWAIT CITY, July 26, (KUNA): Director General of Kuwait Municipality Manal Al-Asfour affirmed that the recent amendments to the special conditions and specifications are limited to buildings located in the free zone.

In a press statement, Al-Asfour clarified that what was published in some newspapers regarding the ministerial decision on the conditions and specifications for service sector buildings (Sector 16, formerly the free zone) does not apply to the Shuwaikh and Al-Rai areas.

She noted that one of the key provisions allows the establishment of hotels at a rate of 150 percent of the service plot area -- the same percentage previously approved -- and permits the inclusion of more than one basement level.

For his part, Director of the Capital Municipality Branch and Head of the Building Regulations Study and Review Committee, Muhammad Al-Mutairi, stated that the former free zone was transferred to the Public Authority for Industry and renamed Sector 16 of the service sector.

Al-Mutairi added that the area has become a multi-service zone and has been integrated into the regulations governing the Shuwaikh and Al-Rai service, craft, and commercial areas.



Manal Al-Asfour, Director General of Kuwait Municipality



KUNA photos
Muhammad Al-Mutairi, Director of the Capital Municipality Branch and Head of the Building Regulations Study and Review Committee

He emphasized that the new ministerial decision only amends the building regulations specific to Sector 16 and does not affect other sectors in Shuwaikh and Al-Rai.

He pointed out that the updated regulations include a building ratio not exceeding 130 percent, consistent with previous regulations, to be distributed over a maximum of three floors (ground, mezzanine, and first). Additionally, the area of shops and showrooms must be no less than 100 square meters on the ground, mezzanine, and basement levels.

Office spaces must be at least 150 square meters on the ground and mezzanine floors. Furthermore, the percentage of restaurants (cafés) has been increased from 5 to 10 percent. The use of basement space for warehouses has also been introduced, and all plots are required to provide parking spaces within the property boundaries.

Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Abdul Latif Al-Mishari recently issued a decision concerning the requirements and specifications for private service sector buildings (Sector 16) in the Shuwaikh and Al-Rai service, craft, and commercial areas.

The decision outlined the permissible activities for the establishment of commercial units in the sector, which include administrative offices, shops, showrooms, banking services, commercial bank branches, health clubs, hotels, supporting facilities, and warehouses.

OBITUARY

The Arab Times
and
Al-Seyassah

extend deepest condolences
and heartfelt sympathy to the family
of our late colleague

Salamat Ali Atta Muhammad

We pray that Almighty
God bestows His mercy upon
the departed, grants him
a place in Paradise, and comforts
his family and loved ones
with patience and solace.

"To God we belong,
and to Him we shall return."



Students carry their belongings as they board buses during what University of New Mexico officials called a 'staged, tactical evacuation' following an early morning shooting on the campus in Albuquerque, New Mexico, on July 25. (AP)

University of New Mexico dorm shooting kills 1, suspect arrested

A shooting early Friday at a University of New Mexico dormitory killed a 14-year-old boy, wounded a 19-year-old and prompted the evacuation of hundreds of students and a campuswide search for the suspect, who has since been taken into custody.

University officials lifted a shelter in place order late Friday afternoon, saying there was still an active in-

vestigation and that the main campus in Albuquerque would remain closed. They said students were allowed to eat at the dining hall and return to their dorms but otherwise should avoid the crime scene.

New Mexico State Police Chief Troy Weisler said officers took a male suspect, aged 18, into custody at about 2:30 p.m.

Four people, including the sus-

pect, were playing video games inside a dorm room belonging to one of them when the shooting began, John Silva, chief of the University of New Mexico Police Department, said at a news conference.

The 14-year-old was fatally shot and the others fled the room, Weisler said. A 19-year-old male sought treatment at a hospital and said he was shot on campus. (AP)

Dems, advocates criticize Trump’s executive order on homelessness

SAN FRANCISCO, July 26, (AP): Leading Democrats and advocates for homeless people are criticizing an executive order President Donald Trump signed this week aimed at removing people from the streets, possibly by committing them for mental health or drug treatment without their consent.

Trump directed some of his Cabinet heads to prioritize funding to cities that crack down on open drug use and street camping, with the goal of making people feel safer. It’s not compassionate to do nothing, the order states.

“Shifting these individuals into long-term institutional settings for humane treatment is the most proven way to restore public order,” the order reads.

Homelessness has become a bigger problem in recent years as the cost of housing increased, especially in states such as California where there aren’t enough homes to meet demand. At the same time, drug addiction and overdoses have soared with the availability of cheap and potent fentanyl.

The president’s order might be aimed at liberal cities such as San Francisco, Los Angeles and New York, which Trump views as too lax about conditions on their streets. But



Tents are set up along a freeway in a homeless encampment on May 12, in Los Angeles. (AP)

many of the concepts have already been proposed or tested in California, where Gov. Gavin Newsom and Democratic mayors have worked for years to get people off the streets and into treatment.

Last year, the U.S. Supreme Court made it easier for cities to clear encampments even if the people living in them have nowhere else to go.

Still, advocates say Trump’s new order is vague, punitive and won’t effectively end homelessness.

Newsom has directed cities to

clean up homeless encampments and he’s funneled more money into programs to treat addiction and mental health disorders.

His office said Friday that Trump’s order relies on harmful stereotypes and focuses more on “creating distracting headlines and settling old scores.”

“But, his imitation (even poorly executed) is the highest form of flattery,” spokesperson Tara Gallegos said in a statement, referring to the president calling for strategies already in use in California.

White House seeks fines in potential deals with Harvard, others

Education Dept to release billions in remaining withheld grant money for schools

WASHINGTON, July 26, (AP): The Trump administration is releasing billions of dollars in withheld grants for schools, the Education Department said Friday, ending weeks of uncertainty for educators around the country who rely on the money for English language instruction, adult literacy, and other programs.

President Donald Trump’s administration had suspended more than \$6 billion in funding on July 1, as part of a review to ensure spending aligned with the White House’s priorities.

The funding freeze had been challenged by several lawsuits as educators, Congress members from both parties and others called for the administration to release the money. Congress had appropriated the money in a bill signed this year by Trump.

Last week, the Education Department said it would release \$1.3 billion of the money for after-school and summer programming. Without the money, school districts and nonprofits such as the YMCA and Boys and Girls Club of America had said they would have to close or scale back educational offerings this fall.

The Office of Management and Budget had completed its review of the programs and will begin sending the money to states next week, the Educa-

tion Department said.

A group of 10 Republican senators on July 16 sent a letter imploring the administration to allow the frozen education money to be sent to states, saying the withheld money supported programs and services that are critical to local communities.

“The programs are ones that enjoy longstanding, bipartisan support,” U.S. Sen. Shelley Moore Capito, R-W.Va., said Friday. She pointed to after-school and summer programs that allow parents to work while their children learn and classes that help adults gain new skills - contributing to local economies.

In withholding the funds, the Office of Management and Budget had said some of the programs supported a “radical leftwing agenda.”

“We share your concern,” the GOP senators had written. “However, we do not believe that is happening with these funds.”

School superintendents had warned they would have to eliminate academic services without the money. On Friday, AASA, an association of superintendents, thanked members of Congress for pressing to release the money.

In Harford County, Maryland, some of the withheld federal money made up more than half the budget for the dis-



LASOS summer campers hold up an art project at Bel Air High School in Bel Air, Md., on July 24. (AP)

trict’s annual summer camp for kids learning English. The money helps the district hire certified teachers to staff the camp, incorporating learning into children’s play for four weeks during the summer. The program helps kids keep their English and academic momentum over the summer.

The district serves roughly 1,100 stu-

dents who are non-native English speakers. Many of them are born in the U.S. to parents who came to the area seeking job opportunities, often in the restaurants and warehouses that have popped up in the past decades in the region northeast of Baltimore. During the school year, the soon-to-be-released federal money pays for tutors for kids learning English.

On Thursday, more than 350 children filled the second floor of Bel Air High School for the second-to-last day of summer camp. Young learners crowded around an alphabet wheel, jostling with each other to push each letter button as they thought of foods starting with letters from A to Z.

Middle school students watched a robotics team demonstration, and a few sheepishly raised their hands when asked if they would be interested in joining. High school student volunteers, some of whom had been campers learning English themselves not many years ago, helped the youngest children with art projects.

The uncertainty around the funding was an unnecessary distraction for schools, said U.S. Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wa.

The grants that were under review included \$2 billion for teachers’ professional development and efforts to reduce class size; \$1 billion for academic enrichment grants, often used for science and math education and accelerated learning; \$890 million for students who are learning English; \$376 million to educate the children of migrant workers; and \$715 million to teach adults how to read.

It added up to millions of dollars for

the nation’s largest school districts. Data available from the Census for three of the grant programs - teacher development, academic enrichment, and bilingual education - shows the Los Angeles Unified School District, for example, received \$62 million in the 2022-23 school year. Philadelphia’s school district got \$28 million, while Miami’s got over \$24 million.

Also:

WASHINGTON: The White House is pursuing heavy fines from Harvard and other universities as part of potential settlements to end investigations into campus antisemitism, using the deal it struck with Columbia University as a template, according to an administration official familiar with the matter.

Fines have become a staple of proposed deals in talks with Harvard and other schools, according to the official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss internal deliberations.

The new strategy was first reported by The Wall Street Journal.

Federal civil rights investigations into schools and universities almost always have been resolved through voluntary settlements, yet they rarely include financial penalties. The **Biden** administration reached dozens of such deals with universities and none included fines.

Trump plays golf in Scotland while protesters take to streets, decry visit

EDINBURGH, Scotland, July 26, (AP): US President Donald Trump played golf Saturday at his course on Scotland’s coast while protesters around the country took to the streets to decry his visit and accuse United Kingdom leaders of pandering to the American.

Trump and his son Eric played with the US ambassador to Britain, Warren Stephens, near Turnberry, a historic course that the Trump family’s company took over in 2008. Hundreds of protesters gathered on the cobblestone and tree-lined street in front of the US Consulate about 100 miles (160 kilometers) away in Edinburgh, Scotland’s capital.

Speakers on a makeshift stage told the crowd that Trump was not welcome and they criticized British Prime Minister Keir Starmer for striking a recent trade deal to avoid stiff US tariffs on goods imported from the UK.

Protests were planned in other cities as environmental activists, opponents of Israel’s war with Hamas in Gaza and pro-Ukraine groups loosely formed a “Stop Trump Coalition.”

“I think there are far too many countries that are feeling the pressure of Trump and that they feel that they have to accept him and we should not accept him here,” said June Osbourne,



US President Donald Trump plays golf at the Trump Turnberry golf course in Turnberry, Scotland on July 26. (AP)

52, a photographer and photo historian from Edinburgh who protested wearing a red cloak and white hood, recalling “The Handmaid’s Tale.” Osbourne held up picture of Trump with “Resist” stamped over his face.

The dual-US-British citizen said the Republican president was “the worst

thing that has happened to the world, the U.S., in decades.”

Saturday’s protests were not nearly as large as the throngs that came out across Scotland when Trump played at the resort during his first term in 2018.

But bagpipes played, people chanted “Trump Out!” and raised home-made signs that said “No red carpet for dictators.” “We don’t want you here” and “Stop Trump. Migrants welcome.” One dog had a sign that said “No treats for tyrants.”

Some on the far right took to social media to call for gatherings supporting Trump in places such as Glasgow. Upon arriving in Scotland on Friday night, Trump admonished European leaders for not cracking down on immigration. “This immigration is killing Europe,” he said.

“You better get your act together,” Trump said. “You’re not going to have Europe anymore.”

While in Scotland, Trump is set to talk trade with Starmer and Ursula von der Leyen, the European Commission president. But golf is a major focus.

The Trumps will also visit another Trump course, in the Aberdeen area in northeastern Scotland. They plan to cut a ribbon on Tuesday, opening the second Trump course.



In this photo released by the Russian Emergency Ministry Press Service on July 26, rescuers work at the site of an explosion in an apartment building in Saratov, Russia. (AP)

4 people killed in Russia, Ukraine as countries trade aerial attacks

MOSCOW, July 26, (Agencies): Russia and Ukraine traded aerial attacks overnight, resulting in two deaths in each country, according to officials.

Ukraine’s southern Dnipro and northeastern Sumy regions came under combined rocket and drone attack, local officials reported. Head of the Dnipro regional administration Serhii Lysak said at least two people had died and five were wounded in the barrage.

In the city of Dnipro, a multi-story building and business were damaged during the strike and in the region a fire engulfed a shopping center.

In Sumy, the military administration said three people were injured.

Kharkiv sustained an intense aerial bombardment overnight with local authorities reporting Ukraine’s second-largest city was hit by four guided aerial bombs, two ballistic missiles and 15 drones over a three-hour period.

In a post on Telegram, Kharkiv mayor Ihor Terekhov said high-rise residential buildings, local businesses, roads and the communication network were damaged in the attack. He said at least five people were injured, includ-



Rescuers clear the rubble after a Russian guided air bomb hit a city hospital in Kharkiv, Ukraine on July 25. (AP)

ing three rescue workers who were wounded in a double tap strike - where a second attack targets emergency workers trying to help people wounded in the initial attack.

According to the daily air force re-

port, in total Russia targeted Ukraine with 208 drones and 27 missiles overnight. It said according to preliminary data, air defense and electronic warfare took down or intercepted 183 drones and 17 missiles but hits from 10 missiles and 25 drones had been recorded in nine locations.

In Russia, officials said that Ukrainian drones targeted multiple regions overnight. A drone attack on the Rostov region, on the border with Ukraine, killed two people, acting governor Yuri Slyusar reported.

In the neighboring Stavropol region, drones hit an unspecified industrial facility, governor Vladimir Vladimirov said on Telegram. He added that the attack sparked a brief fire, but didn’t specify where exactly. Vladimirov said cellphone internet in the region was restricted because of the attack - a measure authorities regularly take across the vast country that critics say helps widespread online censorship.

Meanwhile, at least three people were killed Friday in a gas explosion at a residential building in southwestern Russia’s Saratov region, local media reported.

Europe

Belarus conducts large-scale exercise: Belarus is hosting a large-scale exercise involving its radio technical troops, with the aim of enhancing the readiness and operational capabilities of its air defense forces, the Belarusian defense ministry said Friday.

The drills focus on detection, tracking and identification of aerial targets using advanced radar and communication systems.

The exercise simulates various scenarios, including airspace monitoring under challenging conditions, rapid response to potential threats, and coordination with other branches of the armed forces. Belarus president is **Alexander Lukashenko**.

Personnel are practicing the deployment and operation of radar equipment, electronic warfare measures, and data exchange protocols. Meanwhile, they are practicing the deployment of a control system that is new to Belarus, local media reported.

The exercise is scheduled for July 23 to 25, and over a dozen areas are involved in the maneuvers. (Xinhua)



Lukashenko

Man dies trying to cross English Channel: One person has died after attempting to cross the English Channel

from a beach in northern France, local authorities said on Saturday, bringing the death toll this year in the perilous waterway to at least 18.

The Pas-de-Calais department’s prefecture told The Associated Press that a man was found in cardiac arrest on board a boat which had attempted to reach Britain and then turned back toward French shores.

The man was found near Équihen beach, close to the town of Boulogne-sur-mer. He was pronounced dead despite the efforts of firefighters to revive him. An investigation into the cause of his death has been opened.

French media, quoting numbers from France’s Interior ministry, said 18 people have died trying to reach Britain by sea since the start of the year. (AP)

□ □ □

Wildfire spreads in southern BiH: A massive wildfire that started Thursday in the forests of Prozor-Rama, southern Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), continues to spread across mountain terrain, local authorities said on Friday.

All local resources have been mobilized to protect homes, though no buildings are currently at risk. A second, smaller fire has also broken out, putting more pressure on firefighting teams.

Access to the fire zones is limited, and ground crews are struggling. A firefighting plane and a military helicopter are working to contain the blaze.

The Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina are actively assisting, and officials described the situation as “apocalyptic.” The damage is still being assessed. (Xinhua)

Cyclones death toll rises to 30, 7 missing

Philippine Supreme Court rules impeachment bid against VP unconstitutional

MANILA, Philippines, July 26, (Agencies): The Philippine Supreme Court ruled Friday that an impeachment case filed against Vice President Sara Duterte violated the country’s constitution due to a key technicality, a decision that blocks her upcoming trial over a raft of criminal allegations including her threat to have the president assassinated.

The House of Representatives, which impeached Duterte in February and sent the case to the Senate for trial, violated a rule that only one impeachment case could be processed by the lower chamber against an impeachable official in a single year, court spokesperson Camille Ting said.

The House received at least four separate impeachment cases against Duterte between December and February but only one was transmitted to the Senate, which would have served as an impeachment tribunal.

The other three impeachment cases were placed in the House’s order of business but were archived with no action and “effectively dismissed,” according to the ruling.

The ruling was “immediately executory,” the court said. “It is not our duty to favor any political result,” the court said in a statement, suggesting it did not pass judgement on the array of allegations. “Ours is to ensure that politics are framed within the rule of just law.”

Duterte’s lawyers welcomed the decision, which they said upheld the rule of law.

“We remain prepared to address the allegations at the proper time and before the appropriate forum,” the attorneys in a statement.

Duterte, 47, became the first vice president of the Philippines to be impeached by the House in February over an array of alleged high crimes.

The accusations were led by her threat during a November online news conference to have President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., his wife and cousin, then-House Speaker Martin Romualdez, killed by an assassin if she were killed herself during her high-profile disputes with them.

The daughter of Marcos’s controversial predecessor, Rodrigo Duterte, she also has been accused of large-scale corruption, sedition, terrorism and failing to openly support Philippine government efforts to oppose and denounce China’s aggressive actions against Filipino forces in the disputed South China Sea.

Duterte allegedly backed her father’s brutal crackdowns against illegal drugs that led to extrajudicial killings in their southern home city.

Her impeachment trial was set to begin either next week or early next month by the 24-member Senate, which has convened to hear the case. If the Supreme Court ruling becomes final, the vice president’s opponents could file another impeach-



Philippine Vice President Sara Duterte gestures as she speaks during a press conference in Manila, Philippines on Feb 7. (AP)

ment case after a year.

Duterte ran as Marcos’s running mate in 2022 on a campaign battle cry of unity in their deeply divided and poverty-stricken Southeast Asian country. Both were scions of strongmen accused of human rights violations, but their strong regional bases of political support combined to give them landslide victories.

Their whirlwind political alliance, however, rapidly frayed when they took office. Duterte’s father openly accused Marcos of being a weak leader and a drug addict even during the campaign, allegations the president denied. The vice president later resigned from her then-concurrent Cabinet post as education secretary as the rifts between the two political families deepened.

She later accused Marcos, his wife and Romualdez of corruption, weak leadership and attempting to muzzle her because of speculation she may seek the presidency in 2028 when Marcos’s six-year term ends.

Duterte made the comment about killing Marcos and his family members dur-

ing a Nov. 23 news conference, a threat she warned wasn’t a joke.

Faced with the prospects of criminal lawsuits, Duterte later said she wasn’t threatening him but was expressing concern for her own safety. Still, her statements set off a criminal investigation and national security concerns and prompted calls for her impeachment.

Among the impeachment complaint signatories was the president’s son, Rep. Sandro Marcos, and Romualdez. The petition urged the Senate to shift into an impeachment court to try the vice president, “render a judgement of conviction,” remove her from office and ban her from holding public office.

“Duterte’s conduct throughout her tenure clearly displays gross faithlessness against public trust and a tyrannical abuse of power that, taken together, showcases her gross unfitness to hold public office and her infidelity to the laws and the 1987 Constitution,” the complaint said.

Last month, senators voted to send the raft of complaints back to the House due to legal questions, sparking street protests demanding Duterte’s immediate trial.

Then-Senate President Chiz Escudero said the move led by Duterte’s allies in the Senate did not mean the impeachment complaint was being dismissed and issued a summons for Duterte to appear when the trial proceeds.

Also:

MANILA: At least 30 Filipinos are now known to have died in the southwest monsoon enhanced by three tropical cyclones that triggered flash floods and landslides in the **Philippines** since last week, a Philippine government agency said on Saturday.

In a report, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) reported that seven others are missing, either swept away by flash floods or buried in landslides.

It added that the massive flooding and landslides also resulted in 10 injuries.

The agency reported that it validated 13 of the 30 fatalities.

The NDRRMC reported that over 1.46 million families, or approximately 5.30 million people, were affected nationwide.

The Office of Civil Defense reported that 88 cities and municipalities have declared a state of calamity to expedite emergency response efforts and facilitate access to necessary resources.

Typhoon **Wipha, Francisco,** and Co-May have exited the Philippines, but the state weather bureau warned Saturday that the southwest monsoon is expected to dump more rain in the coming days in parts of **Luzon** Island.

An average of 20 typhoons lash the Philippines yearly.

Thailand and Cambodia trade accusations as deadly border clashes enter third day

SURIN, Thailand, July 26, (AP): Thailand and Cambodia traded accusations Saturday of fresh attacks as deadly border clashes entered a third day, leaving at least 33 people dead and more than 168,000 displaced, as international pressure mounted on both sides to reach a ceasefire.

Artillery fire and gunshots were reported near several border villages, expanding the area of the fighting that flared again Thursday after a land mine explosion along the border wounded five Thai soldiers. Cambodian and Thai officials claimed to have acted in retaliation.

Both countries recalled their ambassadors and Thailand closed its northeastern border crossings with Cambodia.

Cambodian authorities reported on Saturday 12 new deaths, bringing its toll to 13, while Thai officials said a soldier was killed, raising the deaths to 20, mostly civilians.

The regional bloc, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, or ASEAN, is under growing pressure to defuse the situation between its two members. During an emergency meeting on Friday, members of the U.N. Security Council called for de-escalation and urged ASEAN to mediate a peaceful solution.

The 800-kilometer (500-mile) frontier between Thailand and Cambodia has been disputed for decades, but past confrontations have been limited and brief. The current tensions broke out in May when a Cambodian soldier was killed in a confrontation that created a diplomatic rift and roiled Thailand’s domestic politics.

Cambodia’s Defense Ministry condemned what it said was an expanded Thai offensive early Saturday after five

heavy artillery shells were fired into multiple locations in the province of Pursat, calling the attack an “unprovoked and premeditated act of aggression.”

Ministry spokesperson Lt. Gen. Maly Socheata said tensions flared in the province of Koh Kong, where four Thai naval vessels were reportedly stationed offshore and four others en route. She said the naval deployment was an “act of aggression” that risked further escalation. Maly Socheata said seven civilians and five soldiers were killed in two days of fighting. Earlier, one man was reported dead after a pagoda he was hiding under was hit by Thai rockets.

The Thai army had denied targeting Cambodian civilian sites and accused Phnom Penh of using “human shields” by positioning their weapons near residential areas.

Meanwhile, Thailand’s navy, in a statement Saturday, accused Cambodian forces of initiating a new attack in the province of Trat, saying Thai forces responded swiftly and “successfully pushed back the Cambodian incursion at three key points”, warning that “aggression will not be tolerated.”

Thai authorities also alleged several Cambodian artillery shells had landed across the border in Laos, damaging homes and property. Lao officials have not publicly responded to the claim.

The conflict has so far left thousands displaced.

Cambodia’s Information Minister Neth Pheaktra said Saturday the clashes had forced 10,865 Cambodian families, or 37,635 people, in three border provinces to evacuate to safe locations, while Thai officials said more than 131,000 people had fled their border villages.



Displaced Cambodians receive water at the Battkhao Resettlement Camp in Oddar Meanchey Province, Cambodia on July 26. (AP)

Pakistan urges social media platforms to block accounts run by militant groups

ISLAMABAD, July 26, (AP): Pakistan on Friday urged global social media companies to take action to block hundreds of accounts allegedly run by outlawed militant groups that Islamabad claims spread propaganda and glorify insurgents in the South Asian country.

According to Pakistan’s Deputy Interior Minister Talal Chaudhry, groups such as the Pakistani Taliban and the separatist Balochistan Liberation Army - banned by the Pakistani authorities and also designated as terrorist groups by the United States - have been using X, Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, and Telegram to promote violence in Pakistan.

Chaudhry, who spoke to reporters at a news conference, urged the tech companies to remove or disable these accounts, as well as those run by supporters of the militant groups.

Deputy Law Minister Aqeel Malik, who also spoke at the new conference, said Pakistani investigators have identified 481 accounts associated with the Pakistani Taliban, known as Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan or TTP, and the Balochistan Liberation Army, or BLA.

The accounts were being used to incite violence and spread hate speech,



People clear the rubble to recover a vehicle following a cloudburst triggered landslide and flash flood on a highway near the Chilas district, northern Pakistan on July 23. (AP)

Malik said.

Also:

PESHAWAR, Pakistan: Rescue teams in northern Pakistan expanded their search Friday for at least a dozen tourists who went missing earlier this week after being swept away by flash floods triggered by heavy monsoon rains, officials said.

At least 12 missing tourists are believed to be buried under a massive

pile of boulders and mud along a damaged stretch of highway in Pakistan’s mountainous north, said **Faizullah Faraq**, a government spokesperson.

“Rescuers are racing against time to trace and rescue the missing tourists,” Faraq said. He said engineers were working day and night to reopen the key **Karakoram** Highway to restore the movement of people, goods, and trade between Pakistan and **China** through the border region.

Haiti sends 150 soldiers to Mexico for training as gang violence surges

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti, July 26, (AP): Haiti’s government announced Friday that it has sent 150 soldiers to Mexico for training in the latest effort to fight back gangs that have gained almost entire control of the troubled country’s capital.

Under the agreement between the two countries, a total of 700 soldiers are to be trained in Mexico as Haiti seeks to revive its military.

“This departure marks a historic milestone in the reconstruction of the Haitian Armed Forces and is part of a policy of strengthening national security capabilities,” Haiti’s government said. “It illustrates the government’s firm determination to restore ... state authority throughout the country.”

From October 2024 to June 2025, more than 4,800 people across Haiti were killed by gang violence. Hundreds more have been injured, kidnapped, raped and trafficked, according to the United Nations.

The Haitian soldiers will spend three months in Mexico. Upon their return, they will join Haiti’s National Police in its fight against gangs, bolstered by Kenyan police officers leading a sparsely funded U.N.-backed mission.

Earlier this month, about 30 Hai-



Haitian and Kenyan police who are part of a UN-backed multinational force stand at a police station in Pont-Sonde, Haiti on Oct. 7, 2024, days after a gang attacked the town. (AP)

tian soldiers were sent to the French Caribbean island of Martinique for a two-week training.

Haiti’s armed forces were disbanded in 1995 following a coup to oust former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. The once-feared army had long been accused of horrific human rights abuses and were involved in several coups.

In 2017, the army was reinstated by slain President Jovenel Moise after the U.N. ended its peacekeeping operations. In recent years, the army has been recruiting young people to bolster its numbers. In 2023, there were roughly 2,000 soldiers, compared with some 7,000 when the army was disbanded. Newer figures were not available.

Road accident in Peru kills 18

LIMA, Peru, July 26, (AP): A bus traveling from Lima to Peru’s Amazon region overturned on a highway in the Andes Mountains, leaving at least 18 people dead and 48 injured, authorities said Friday.

The double-decker bus belonging to the company “Expreso Molina Líder Internacional” went off the road and fell down a slope in the district of Palca, Junín region, Junín’s health director Clifor Curipaco told reporters. Authorities are still investigating the cause of the accident. Videos broadcast on local television showed the bus split in two, while firefighters and police tried to rescue the injured.

It was not the first fatal bus accident in 2025, another bus fell into a river on Jan. 3, leaving six people dead and 32 injured.

A study by the Attorney General’s Office found that d river recklessness and excessive speed are the main causes of accidents in Peru. Road transportation is poorly monitored by authorities in Peru, and emergency assistance is so slow and disorganized.

School roof collapse in India kills 7 children and injures 21

NEW DELHI, July 26, (Agencies): The roof of a government middle school building collapsed Friday in India’s western state of Rajasthan, killing seven children and injuring at least 21, a senior police official said.

The collapse occurred soon after the students had reached their classrooms and were about to start the school assembly, said police official Amit Kumar.

It is still unclear what caused the roof to collapse.

Frantic parents, teachers, and locals immediately joined the rescue effort, sifting through mounds of debris to pull out the trapped students, local media reported.

Local official Ajay Singh said the accident will be investigated, accord-

ing to the Press Trust of India. He added that while the district administration had recently requested a list of dilapidated school buildings from the education department, this school was not on it.

The office of Indian Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** lamented the accident in a social media post, calling it “tragic” and “deeply saddening.”

Also:

NEW DELHI: An Indian army trooper was killed Friday in a mine blast near the Line of Control (LoC) dividing **Kashmir**, officials said.

The trooper was killed in the Krishna Ghati sector of frontier Poonch district, about 185 km southwest of Srinagar city, the summer capital of Indian-controlled Kashmir.

The army trooper had accidentally stepped on a mine planted in the area, said officials, adding that he was immediately evacuated and rushed to a medical facility, where he was declared dead.



Modi

AU forces foil attack on army bases in Somalia

MOGADISHU, July 26, (Xinhua): African Union (AU) troops backed by Somali security forces on Friday thwarted an attack on military bases by a militant group in Sabiid-Anole town, located southwest of the capital Mogadishu.

The AU Support and Stabilization Mission in Somalia (AUSSOM) said al-Shabab fighters had launched a coordinated attack on military bases manned by AU troops and Somali National Armed Forces in the early hours of the day.

“The joint forces successfully repelled the terrorists, forcing them to retreat swiftly,” AUSSOM said in a statement.

Eyewitnesses said the assault erupted with a series of explosions in the nearby villages before the two sides exchanged gunfire.

During the engagement, several militants were killed while others escaped, severely injured, the AU mission said. “Various munitions were also seized from the fleeing militants,” it said, noting that the allied forces maintain control of the targeted military bases, which were liberated from al-Shabab in June.

AUSSOM said a major military



Soldiers march during Somali National Army Day in Mogadishu, Somalia on April 12, 2014. (AP)

operation is underway to locate and apprehend the remaining fighters and their allies.

Meanwhile, the mission assured the safety and security of residents of Sabiid-Anole town and the surrounding areas.

Sabiid-Anole town, in the Lower

Shabelle region of Somalia, is one of the strategic objectives that is now under the control of the allied troops.

The incident came as the joint forces have intensified operations recently to weaken al-Shabab in the southern region and put the remaining towns under their control.

Kuwaiti oil rises to \$72.25 pb

KUWAIT CITY, July 26, (KUNA): The Kuwaiti oil price rose by 60 cents to US 72.25 per barrel (pb) on Friday, compared with USD 71.65 pb on Thursday, said the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) on Saturday.

Globally, price of Brent crude fell 74 cents to USD 68.44 pb, while West Texas Intermediate crude rose by 87 cents to USD 65.16 pb.

Business

Pioneering AI integration and empowering employees

National Bank of Kuwait launches Microsoft Copilot across all divisions

KUWAIT CITY, July 26: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) has announced the successful rollout of Microsoft Copilot to all employees across its divisions – marking a significant leap forward in its enterprise-wide AI transformation strategy. This milestone underscores NBK’s continued investment in cutting-edge technologies that empower employees, streamline workflows, and enhance operational agility.

Microsoft Copilot harnesses the capabilities of Generative AI to assist staff with daily tasks such as drafting documents, analyzing complex data sets, summarizing key information, and automating repetitive activities. By embedding this advanced technology directly into employees’ digital workspace, NBK is enabling its teams to focus on strategic initiatives and high-value client engagement, thereby reinforcing its reputation for service excellence and innovation.

The adoption of Copilot is the first in a series of AI-driven initiatives planned under NBK’s digital innovation roadmap. It reflects the Bank’s long-term commitment to building a future-ready workforce and fostering a digitally intelligent workplace culture. NBK’s strategic embrace of responsible AI ensures that innovation is deployed in a manner that is secure, ethical, and aligned with international best



Mohammad Al Kharafi

practices in data privacy and governance.

Commenting on the launch, Mr. Mohammad Al Kharafi Group Chief Operating Officer, Group Operations, Technology and Data said: “We recognize the transformative potential of AI in reshaping the future of banking, not just as a tool for automation but as a catalyst for innovation and growth. The adoption of Microsoft Copilot marks a pivotal step in our digital evolution—one that empowers our employees to become more efficient, creative, and customer-centric in everything they do.”

AI Kharafi:
■ Copilot leads the way as NBK’s first generative AI solution—paving the way for a full suite of AI-driven tools under its long-term innovation roadmap
■ We view AI not just as a tool for automation, but as a catalyst for innovation, empowering our people to deliver smarter, faster, and more meaningful client engagement.

“By embedding generative AI into the Bank’s daily internal workflows, we are enabling smarter decision-making, faster execution, and more meaningful engagement across the organization. Copilot leads the way as one of NBK’s first generative AI solution—paving the way for a full suite of AI-driven tools under its long-term innovation roadmap,” Al Kharafi explained.

He concluded by adding, “As we continue to embrace emerging technologies, our focus remains firmly on responsible innovation. We are committed to ensuring that every advancement is delivered with the highest standards of security, compliance, and ethical integrity. Ultimately, our goal is to build a future-ready organization that blends human ingenuity with digi-



Microsoft Copilot logo.

tal intelligence to drive sustainable value for our customers, employees, and stakeholders alike.”

Beyond the deployment of Microsoft Copilot, NBK remains committed to enhancing the employee experience through a comprehensive approach that combines cultural transformation with digital enablement. The Bank continues to modernize internal systems and deliver targeted upskilling programs, fostering a work environment where people and technology thrive together. These efforts are part of a broader vision to promote continuous learning, collaboration, and human-centered innovation across the organization.

This strategic launch builds on a series of IT enhancements that NBK has introduced as part of its ongoing digital transformation journey. Across its operations in Kuwait and internationally, the Bank has upgraded core systems, strengthened its digital infrastruc-

ture, and accelerated the automation of routine processes to boost efficiency and reduce operational risk. These developments have also improved system resilience, enhanced cybersecurity protocols, and strengthened business continuity. Together, these advancements contribute to a more agile, secure, and digitally empowered workplace, enabling employees to focus on delivering exceptional service and value to clients.

In recognition of its efforts in digital advancement, innovation excellence, and responsible technology adoption, NBK has received numer-

ous accolades from leading global and regional institutions, further cementing its position as a pioneer in the region’s banking sector.

As NBK continues to lead the financial sector in Kuwait and the region through responsible digital transformation, initiatives like this demonstrate the Bank’s unwavering focus on empowering talent, accelerating innovation, and setting a new benchmark for AI-led transformation in the banking sector—delivering long-term value to customers, shareholders, and the communities we serve.



NBK Headquarters.

Other Voices

Global oil market faces glut, prices remain weak

By Kamel Al-Harami
Independent Oil Analyst

The current glut in the oil market is the reason behind the decline in oil prices to below \$70 per barrel, with prices currently hovering around \$68 and no signs of recovery yet. OPEC+ continues to maintain maximum output, which is contributing to the ongoing oversupply.

There appears to be a hidden war with non-OPEC producers in an attempt to stabilize prices, but so far, this strategy has had little effect. The problem continues and is expected to continue for the foreseeable future.

As a result, the oil market seems to be left to adjust on its own, with prices driven by market forces regardless of the outcome. Is this a deliberate move by OPEC+ to keep oil prices within a “comfort zone” for the benefit of both buyers and OPEC?

With OPEC+ increasingly limited in its ability to influence prices, traditional measures such as production cuts and quota distribution are no longer effective.

While OPEC appears to be adapting to lower oil prices for now, it may be reluctant to implement further production cuts that could benefit non-OPEC producers at the expense of its own market share. However, the ongoing weakness in oil prices is forcing OPEC+ members to borrow from international banks to meet annual budget requirements.

In Kuwait’s case, the fiscal year that ended on March 31 saw a budget deficit of approximately KD 1.3 billion, which is significantly lower than the earlier projected deficit of KD 3-4 billion. This is relatively good news for the country, as it reduces the need for external borrowing or the sale of overseas assets to cover the shortfall.

It may now be the right time to reassess our fiscal policy and focus

on reducing unnecessary expenditures, particularly those that benefit some individuals rather than the state. It is time to cut down on unwarranted expenses.

The currently weak crude oil prices is bad news for oil-producing countries, as it leads to larger deficits in their annual budgets. However, in the long term, lower prices are expected to stimulate global demand for oil. That said, this is not yet the case.

Increased U.S. tariffs on imports from most countries trading with it are fueling inflation and dampening overall demand, including demand for services tied to energy consumption, such as crude oil.

Global oil demand is softening, with the U.S. seeing a decline in crude imports, now averaging around six million barrels per day. Domestic production stands at 13.3 million barrels per day, down by roughly 200,000 barrels per day.

This imbalance is contributing to further drops in oil prices, with U.S. crude trading below \$67 per barrel. On the positive side, lower fuel prices are making travel and driving more affordable, especially during the winter season, which could lead to a seasonal boost in demand.

Today’s oil market remains uncertain and offers little indication of a positive turnaround. With weak global demand and oil prices falling below \$70 per barrel, and potentially declining further, the outlook remains gloomy.

The recent increase in U.S. tariffs on its close trading partners is adding to global inflationary pressures. In response, those partners may impose retaliatory tariffs, further intensifying inflation and reducing overall demand. This, in turn, will put additional downward pressure on oil prices.

OPEC+ currently finds itself unable to intervene to stabilize the oil prices. Any attempt to adjust output could risk losing more of its legitimate market share to non-OPEC producers.

Given these conditions, now may not be the right time for OPEC+ to step in.

■ ■ ■

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KIB leads revitalization of historic Darwaza Al-Abdulrazzaq

KUWAIT CITY, July 26: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) announced that the Municipal Council has approved its initiative to carry out the beautification and development of “Darwaza Al-Abdulrazzaq”, fully funded by the Bank. This step reflects KIB’s steadfast commitment to its national and social responsibility, as part of the Kuwaiti private sector, and its keenness to actively contribute to projects that enhance Kuwait’s urban landscape and serve the public interest.

Darwaza Al-Abdulrazzaq is a vital landmark in the heart of Kuwait City. This gives it particular significance in terms of pedestrian movement and business activity. The site also carries historical value, reflecting the architectural heritage of the city, making its development a truly national project that reinforces the features of Kuwaiti identity.

Commenting on this occasion, KIB Vice Chairman and CEO, Raed Jawad Bukhamseen, said: “We are pleased to announce the esteemed Municipal Council’s approval of KIB’s initiative to develop Darwaza Al-Abdulrazzaq. This initiative reflects the Bank’s vision of supporting projects that serve the community and enhance the quality of life in Kuwait. It stems from our deep belief in the vital role the private sector plays in supporting the State’s efforts, whether through planning, implementation, or funding, which we view as a fundamental aspect of our national responsibility. The significance of this project goes beyond urban beautification. It also represents a meaningful contribution to preserving Kuwait’s historical landmarks and reinforcing their presence in daily life, underscoring our commitment to promoting and preserving national identity.”

Bukhamseen added: “This initiative aligns directly with KIB’s vision of promoting both social and economic growth by supporting efforts that contribute to creating a better urban environment and reflecting the cultural image of our city. With its symbolic location and rich history, Darwaza Al-Abdulrazzaq deserves to be revitalized and restored to its role as a city landmark”.

He also noted that KIB has expressed its full readiness to cover all costs associated with the project, including contracting with specialized companies and consultancy firms to ensure the highest standards of quality under the direct supervision of the esteemed relevant official authorities.

Bukhamseen emphasized the importance of public-private partnerships in driving development forward, stating: “At KIB, we believe that our responsibility extends beyond providing financial services. It includes supporting State efforts on all fronts. This initiative is a clear embodiment of that role and a reaffirmation that the private sector is a key partner in comprehensive development.”

Boukhamseen extended his sincere thanks and appreciation to His Excellency the Minister of State for Municipal Affairs and Minister of State



Darwaza Al-Abdulrazzaq

for Housing Affairs, Mr. Abdul Latif Hamed Hamad Al-Mashari, for his generous support and constructive cooperation, which had a significant impact in advancing this project forward. He also expressed his deep gratitude to the esteemed Council of Ministers for their continued support and endorsement of purposeful initiatives that serve the interests of the nation and its citizens.

Bukhamseen concluded his remarks saying: “We are proud of KIB getting the approval for this initiative and look forward to launching the project soon in full coordination with the relevant government authorities, foremost among them the Kuwait Municipality. We believe this project will be a point of interest for the entire Kuwaiti society and serve as a testament to KIB’s ongoing dedication to supporting sustainable growth and national prosperity.”

It is worth noting that KIB continues to strengthen its role as a committed national partner in community development through initiatives that extend their impact across various aspects of public life. The Bank affirms that social contribution is not a choice, but a national duty that requires the concerted efforts of all.

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.

Sale runs July 27–31 for travel until Sept 30

Jazeera Airways launches mega sale with 100,000 seats

KUWAIT CITY, July 26: Jazeera Airways today announced a significant Mega Sale, offering customers an impressive 100,000 seats at highly competitive fares. One-way flights will be available starting from just KD 14. This initiative underscores Jazeera Airways’ ongoing commitment to providing accessible and affordable travel options across its extensive network.

Paul Carroll, Chief Commercial Officer, Jazeera Airways, commented: “We are incredibly excited

to launch this Mega Sale, designed specifically to broaden travel opportunities and enhance convenience for even more of our customers. By making 100,000 seats available at such remarkable fares, we are actively making the dream of a getaway or an important trip a more attractive and achievable reality.”

This limited-time sale runs from July 27 to 31, and is valid for travel between August 1 and September 30, 2025.

With a wide range of destinations across the Middle East, Asia, and Europe, Jazeera Airways invites travelers to take advantage of these exceptional fares and enjoy a seamless travel experience with Kuwait’s leading low-cost carrier.

Bookings can be made conveniently via the official Jazeera Airways website, jazeeraairways.com, or through the Jazeera Airways mobile application.



Jazeera Airways

Hands-on training prepares youth for careers in Islamic banking

Warba’s Intilaqa program offers real-world banking experience

KUWAIT CITY, July 26: Reaffirming its commitment to supporting national talent and empowering Kuwaiti youth across all stages of their professional journey, Warba Bank launched the first edition of its “Intilaqa” internship program. The initiative is designed to offer students and graduates a comprehensive hands-on experience within the Bank’s departments, integrating them into a real work environment and assigning them meaningful tasks as part of functional teams to help them gain practical knowledge and experience.

The one-month program includes 26 participants from different academic backgrounds who have been assigned across the Bank’s departments based on their interests and specializations. The program is coordinated by the Training and Development Department under the Human Resources Group, in collaboration with the participating departments.

Commenting on the program’s launch, **Ms. Maali Abdullah Al-Rasheed**, Group Chief Human Resources & General Services Officer at Warba Bank, stated: “This program reinforces our social responsibility to develop and empower Kuwaiti youth by bridging the gap between academic learning and professional practice. It offers a real opportunity for participants to develop their skills and



Maali Al-Rasheed

strengthen their capabilities in a dynamic banking environment.”

She added: “At Warba Bank, we believe that empowering youth starts by opening doors for them to engage in real experiences aligned with market needs, putting them on the right path toward a successful career. Guided by our vision to ‘Let’s Own Tomorrow’, we view these trainees as promising national talents deserving of every opportunity and support.”

Al-Rasheed emphasized that this initiative reflects Warba’s deep-rooted commitment to social responsibility and national talent development, affirming that investing in Kuwaiti youth is an investment in the future of Kuwait. For this reason, the Bank



Kuwaiti youth gain real work experience via Warba’s ‘Intilaqa.’

was keen to design a comprehensive training program that offers participants a solid foundation of skills and practical knowledge, empowering them to integrate confidently and competently into the labor market.

She explained: “The Intilaqa program emphasizes practical learning by immersing trainees in real-world work environments and assigning them meaningful tasks. It allows

them to apply their academic knowledge, develop new skills relevant to their field, and gain exposure to Islamic banking culture, all while building professional networks that can support their future careers.”

A Comprehensive Training Approach

The Intilaqa program follows a well-rounded training methodol-

ogy that includes the assignment of real-life tasks and weekly evaluation meetings to track progress and share feedback. It concludes with a final presentation by each trainee to showcase their contributions, skills gained and suggestions for improving future editions of the program.

This initiative is part of Warba Bank’s broader strategy to support the next generation and develop local

human capital by enhancing practical skills, facilitating knowledge transfer, and creating an enabling environment where participants can gain close insights into the banking industry.

Intilaqa is yet another step in Warba Bank’s ongoing efforts to integrate youth into its institutional environment and further solidify its position as an Islamic financial institution that prioritizes human capital investment as part of a broader vision to build a more inclusive and sustainable future for Kuwaiti society.

Warba Bank places great importance on the development of national talent and the support of Kuwaiti youth through a variety of programs and initiatives that aim to empower them and prepare them for the job market, driven by its firm belief in its social role and responsibility toward the community.

The Bank is recognized as one of Kuwait’s most successful Islamic banks in a short span of time. It holds a leading position in digital Islamic banking services and is among the local banks with the highest number of shareholders, ensuring close proximity to all segments of society. This achievement further confirms the Bank’s position as a trusted financial partner, blending innovation with social responsibility to deliver best-in-class financial products and services.

Construction, oil sectors see steepest drops

GCC contract awards nosedive in Q2-2025 led by broad-based slowdown

By KAMCO Invest

The total value of contracts awarded in the GCC declined after five of the six member countries recorded y-o-y decreases in project awards during Q2-2025. The overall value of contracts awarded in the region fell by 58.0% y-o-y in Q2-2025, totaling USD 28.4 Bn, the lowest figure recorded in the past fourteen quarters, compared to USD 67.7 Bn in Q2-2024. This downturn was primarily driven by a sharp contraction in project awards in Saudi Arabia, accompanied by a similarly weak performance in the UAE, which experienced a significant y-o-y decline in contract awards during the period. Similarly, in terms of first half of the year performance, overall GCC contract awards during 1H-2025 declined by 38.9% y-o-y to reach USD 86.0 Bn, compared to USD 140.7 Bn in 1H-2024, largely due to the substantial reduction in project activity in Saudi Arabia during the period. Every market, with the exception of Qatar, recorded a y-o-y decline in contract awards during Q2-2025. Conversely, during 1H-2025, all GCC countries except Kuwait posted y-o-y decreases in awarded contracts. This sharp reduction in project activity in the GCC follows two years of record spending, during which the region invested heavily in large-scale oil and gas developments along with USD 1 trillion-plus GIGA projects program.

From a sectoral perspective, seven of the eight key GCC industries registered y-o-y declines in contract awards during Q2-2025. The GCC Construction sector recorded a 60.0% y-o-y drop, with awards falling to USD 8.2 Bn in Q2-2025 from USD 20.4 Bn in Q2-2024. This was followed by the Oil Sector, which saw a 98.4% y-o-y decline to USD 70 Mn, down from USD 4.5 Bn in Q2-2024. The Construction and Oil sectors were the primary contributors to the overall decline in GCC project awards during the quarter. Notably, the Chemical Sector was the only industry to record a y-o-y increase in contract awards during Q2-2025, while the remaining seven sectors experienced declines across Qatar, Bahrain, and Saudi Arabia. Given the sharpness of the decline, there are growing concerns that full-year contract awards in 2025 may fall short of the total value recorded in 2024.

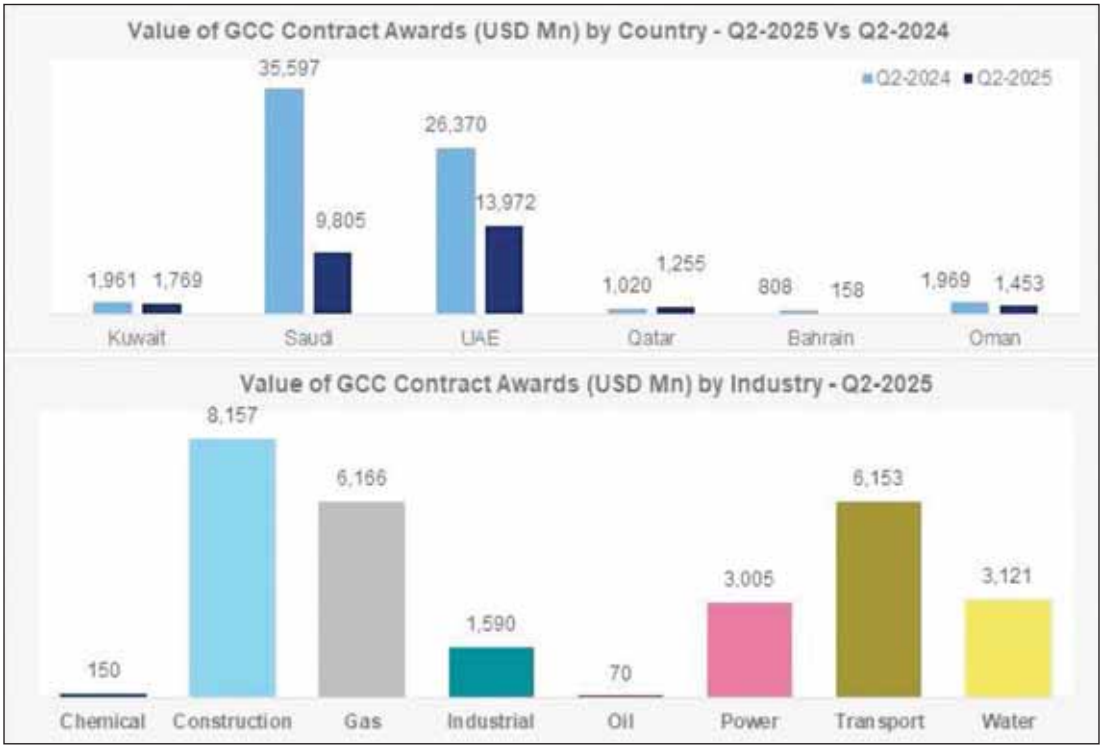
On a quarterly basis, Saudi Arabia’s total contract awards plummeted by 72.5% y-o-y in Q2-2025 to USD 9.8 Bn, compared to USD 35.6 Bn in Q2-2024. In contrast, Kuwait recorded a relatively modest 9.8% y-o-y decline in aggregate project awards, reaching USD 1.8 Bn versus USD 2.0 Bn in Q2-2024. Meanwhile, the UAE posted a 47.0% y-o-y drop in contract awards during Q2-2025, totaling USD 14.0 Bn, down from USD 26.4 Bn in the corresponding period of 2024.

Saudi Arabia

Total contract awards in Saudi Arabia recorded a substantial 72.5% y-o-y decline during Q2-2025, falling to USD 9.8 Bn compared to USD 35.6 Bn in Q2-2024. This sharp contraction reduced the Kingdom’s contribution to overall GCC project awards to 34.5% in Q2-2025, down notably from 52.6% in Q2-2024. The significant drop primarily reflects persistent challenges within Saudi Arabia’s Construction sector, which continued to show mixed performance, weighed down by a downward trend in residential and hospitality-led contract awards. According to CBRE’s latest market review, a combination of affordability concerns, financing constraints, and evolving global economic conditions adversely affected contract awards in the Kingdom’s Construction sector during Q2-2025.

Despite these challenges, Saudi Arabia’s economic outlook for 2025 and the medium term presents a blend of flexibility, ongoing structural reforms, and headwinds related to global oil markets and geopolitical uncertainties. According to MEED Projects, by the end of June 2025, the total value of Saudi Arabia’s project market stood at over USD 1.98 trillion. Of this, USD 912.3 Bn was in the design stage, USD 419.3 Bn in execution, USD 351.1 Bn in various stages of tendering, USD 251.5 Bn in the study stage, and USD 55 Bn in the FEED (front-end engineering design) stage.

At the sectoral level, the Construction sector lost its position as the highest-value segment to the Transport and Power sectors, after experiencing a considerable 59.7% y-o-y decline. Awarded projects in the Construction sector totaled USD 2.3 Bn, compared to USD 5.8 Bn in Q2-2024. In parallel, the Oil Sector reported no contract awards during Q2-2025, a sharp drop from USD 1.7 Bn in the same quarter



of the previous year. The Transport Sector led with the highest value of awarded contracts at USD 3.0 Bn, though still down from USD 5.9 Bn in Q2-2024. The Water Sector followed, registering a 29.2% y-o-y decline in awarded contracts to USD 2.5 Bn during Q2-2025.

Among the most notable contracts awarded during the quarter was a USD 2 Bn backlog or reservation agreement with US multinational General Electric. The agreement includes multiple initiatives aimed at accelerating Saudi Arabia’s energy transition through the use of US technology and expertise. These initiatives feature a deal between the Saudi Electricity Company (SEC) and GE Vernova for the supply of US-made gas turbines, synchronous condensers, and balance of plant equipment.

Additionally, Aramco and GE Vernova announced a collaboration to provide maintenance services, repairs, and spare parts to support the operations of various power plants across the Kingdom. Another prominent project awarded in Q2-2025 was a USD 378 Mn contract to develop a residential project in the city of Al-Khobar. This followed a USD 131 Mn contract awarded to Building Construction Company (BCC), a subsidiary of Retal, for the construction of 371 residential units and related infrastructure within the Sedra housing community in Riyadh, a GIGA project being developed by Roshn.

UAE

The UAE emerged as the largest projects market in the GCC during Q2-2025, despite experiencing a 47.0% y-o-y decline in total contract awards to reach USD 14.0 Bn, down from USD 26.4 Bn in Q2-2024. This milestone was achieved as the UAE surpassed Saudi Arabia in Q1-2025 to become the leading projects market in the region. Moreover, the UAE’s share of total GCC project awards expanded significantly from 38.9% in Q2-2024 to 49.2% in the current reporting period. This notable shift reflects the successful implementation of wide-ranging structural reforms and carefully targeted investments aimed at accelerating the country’s economic diversification agenda.

In terms of first-half performance, total contracts awarded in the UAE during 1H-2025 declined by 12.1% y-o-y to USD 44.4 Bn, compared to USD 50.6 Bn in 1H-2024. The contraction was driven by broad-based declines across six of the eight major economic sectors.

The most significant decline was observed in the Construction sector, the largest segment, which saw a 61.6% y-o-y drop in awarded contracts during Q2-2024, falling to USD 4.9 Bn down from USD 12.9 Bn in the corresponding quarter of the previous year. During Q2-2025, the Gas Sector emerged as the UAE’s top-performing segment in terms of the absolute value of contracts awarded, followed by the Construction Sector (USD 4.9 Bn) and the Transport Sector (USD 1.7 Bn). A more detailed sectoral analysis shows the Gas Sector accounted for 37.6% of the UAE’s total project awards in Q2-2025, with awards valued at USD 5.3 Bn, despite a year-on-year decline of USD

300 Mn. In contrast, the Industrial Sector showed strong performance, recording a 35.8% y-o-y increase in awarded contracts. The Chemical Sector also witnessed a notable resurgence, with contract awards rising to USD 150 Mn after recording zero awards in Q2-2024.

Key contracts awarded during the quarter included a three-year USD 400 Mn agreement awarded to ADNOC Gas to supply LNG to Europe. The deal with Germany’s SEFE (Securing Energy for Europe) entails the delivery of 0.7 million tonnes of LNG. Separately, ADNOC Gas announced the final investment decision for the first phase of its USD 5 Bn Rich Gas Development Scheme.

The initial tranche, worth USD 2.8 Bn, was awarded to UK-headquartered Wood for the development of the Habshan facility. Wood later confirmed that the contract includes pass-through revenue and that the company expects to recognize approximately USD 400 Mn in revenue from EPCm services. The remaining two tranches of the Rich Gas Development Scheme include a USD 1.2 Bn award for the Das Island liquefaction facility and a USD 1.1 Bn award for the Asab and Bu Hasa facilities, these contracts have been granted to UK-headquartered Petrofac and Dubai-based Kent, respectively.

Kuwait

Kuwait recorded the smallest y-o-y decline in project awards in Q2-2025 that reached USD 1.8 Bn down 9.8% as compared to USD 2.0 Bn in Q2-2024. On the other hand, Kuwait stood out as the only GCC country to post y-o-y growth in total projects awarded during 1H-2025, reaching USD 3.3 Bn, up from USD 2.4 Bn in 1H-2024. This growth was primarily driven by infrastructure investments aligned with Kuwait’s Vision 2035, which emphasizes modernization across the Oil, Power, and Transport sectors.

From a sectoral perspective, the Gas Sector recorded a significant uptick in activity, with total awarded projects valued at USD 422 Mn in Q2-2025, compared to zero contracts in Q2-2024, making it one of only two sectors to register growth during the period. However, the Transport Sector led in absolute terms, accounting for the largest value of contract awards at USD 651 Mn, despite experiencing a 27.8% y-o-y decline from Q2-2024 levels. According to MEED Projects, Kuwait awarded USD 70 Mn worth of contracts in the Oil Sector during Q2-2025, again up from zero in the corresponding period of 2024. This reflects Kuwait’s ongoing upstream expansion, which is integral to its strategic target of producing 4 million barrels per day (b/d) by 2035.

As of Q2-2025, Kuwait’s production capacity stands at approximately 2.9 million b/d, with a short-term goal of reaching 3.2 million b/d by the end of 2026. In alignment with this strategy, Kuwait has also extended bidding deadlines for four strategic oil projects, collectively estimated at USD 1.5 Bn.

Among the most notable contracts awarded during the quarter was a USD 200 Mn deal secured by US-based National Energy Services Reunited Corporation (NESR). The five-year contract involves

the development of a 180,000-square-meter manufacturing facility, to be constructed in four phases. Known as the NESR Spark facility, the project is expected to incorporate advanced technologies focused on drilling optimization, well intervention, production enhancement, and sustainability solutions.

Qatar

The total value of contracts awarded in Qatar increased by 23.0% year-on-year to USD 1.3 Bn in Q2-2025, compared to USD 1.0 Bn in Q2-2024, according to data from MEED Projects. This growth was primarily driven by significant increases in project awards within Qatar’s Power, and Transport sectors. Notably, no contracts were awarded in the Oil, Gas, Chemical, and Industrial sectors during Q2-2025. Meanwhile, Qatar’s Construction Sector experienced a 87.0% y-o-y decline in contract awards during Q2-2025, falling to USD 69 Mn from USD 562 Mn in the same quarter of 2024. Conversely, the Power Sector saw a substantial surge, with contract awards reaching USD 834 Mn, up from USD 25 Mn in Q2-2024.

However, total projects awarded in Qatar during 1H-2025 declined by 31.1% to USD 6.7 Bn from USD 9.7 Bn in 1H-2024. Looking ahead, Qatar’s project market is expected to rebound. MEED reports that Qatar’s Public Works Authority (Ashghal) recently announced a USD 22 Bn five-year project plan covering a wide array of infrastructure developments scheduled for execution between 2025 and 2029. A flagship initiative within this plan is the strategic outfalls project, slated for launch in 2025, which aims to reuse stormwater for irrigation and cooling across northern and southern parts of Doha.

Notable projects during the quarter included the Ashghal has selected India’s Larsen & Toubro Energy Hydrocarbon (LTEH) for a USD 4 Bn to USD 5 Bn engineering, procurement, construction, and installation (EPCI) contract as part of the second phase of the North Field Production Sustainability (NPPS) project. This contract encompasses the construction and installation of two major gas compression systems—CP8S and CP4N—each weighing between 25,000 and 35,000 tonnes. The scope further includes building compression platforms, flare gas platforms, and associated infrastructure. Additionally, Ashghal’s plan outlines several public-private partnership (PPP) projects, including infrastructure works for over 5,500 residential plots across multiple locations.

GCC Projects Market Outlook

Despite a sharp decline in contract awards during the first half of the year, the outlook for the GCC project market in 2025 remains positive. Contract awards are expected to gain momentum in the second half of the year, driven primarily by Saudi Arabia. Following a record-breaking year in project activity, the region is well-positioned for another period of robust contract awards. Multiple positive factors across the GCC are anticipated to support and sustain this momentum throughout the remainder of the year. Among these, notable growth is anticipated in Saudi Arabia’s project awards during the second half of 2025. According to MEED Projects, Saudi Arabia accounts for approximately USD 873.2 Bn or over 50% of the GCC’s upcoming pre-execution projects. The UAE ranks second with USD 417.9 Bn, representing 24.2% of the GCC’s total upcoming contracts.

Saudi Arabia’s leading planned but yet unawarded project in 2025, currently in the bidding stage, is the USD 80 Bn CARE nuclear power reactor project under King Abdullah City for Atomic & Renewable Energy. Additionally, the top planned and unawarded projects in Saudi Arabia that are in the design or FEED (front-end engineering design) stage include a USD 10 Bn battery energy storage system contract owned by the Saudi Power Procurement Company.

Overall, the GCC’s pipeline of pre-execution stage contracts totals approximately USD 1.73 trillion. Kuwait holds the fourthlargest share of this pipeline at 6.6%, equivalent to USD 114.8 Bn. The upcoming GCC contract pipeline is segmented as follows: USD 586.0 Bn in the design stage, USD 625.5 Bn in the study stage, USD 133.9 Bn in the main contract pre-qualification stage, USD 106.3 Bn in the main contract bidding stage, USD 162.6 billion in the bid evaluation stage, and USD 115.2 Bn in the FEED stage.

Pilot program integrates Microsoft Copilot into curriculum

Educator explores generative AI’s role in the classroom



College students will likely be asked to use AI features in business productivity applications once they enter the workforce. What’s the best way to teach them how to effectively use them? (The Conversation)

By Camille Banger
University of Wisconsin-Stout

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

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The tech world says generative artificial intelligence is essential for the future of work and learning. But as an educator, I still wonder: Is it really worth bringing it into the classroom? Will these tools truly help students learn, or create new challenges we haven’t yet faced?

Like many other people in higher education, I was skeptical but knew I couldn’t ignore it. So, instead of waiting for all the answers, I decided to dive in and discover what preparing students for an AI-powered world really means beyond the hype. Last semester, I developed a business technology class where the latest generative AI tools were woven into the curriculum.

What I found is that AI productivity products have a learning curve, much like other applications that students, and ultimately white-collar workers, use in knowledge work. But I needed to adjust how I taught the class to emphasize critical thinking, reflection on how these tools are being used and checks against the errors they produce.

It’s no secret that generative AI is changing how people work, learn and teach. According to the 2025 McKinsey Global Survey on AI, 78% of respondents said their organizations use AI in at least one business function, and many are actively reskilling their workforce or training them with new skills to meet the demands of this shift.

As program director of the Business Information Technology bachelor’s degree program at the University of Wisconsin-Stout, Wisconsin’s polytechnic university, I spend a lot of time thinking about how to prepare students for the workplace. I’m also an AI enthusiast, but a skeptical one. I believe in the power of these tools, but I also know they raise questions about ethics, responsibility and readiness.

So, I asked myself: How can I make sure our students are ready to use AI and understand it?

In spring 2025, University of Wisconsin-Stout launched a pilot for a small group of faculty and staff to explore Microsoft 365 Copilot for business. Since it works alongside tools such as Word, Excel, Outlook, PowerPoint, OneDrive and Teams, which are products our students already use, I saw an opportunity to bring these latest AI features to them as well.

To do that, I built an ex-

ploratory project into our senior capstone course. Students were asked to use Copilot for Business throughout the semester, keep a journal reflecting on their experience and develop practical use cases for how AI could support them both as students and future professionals. I didn’t assign specific tasks. Instead, I encouraged them to explore freely.

My goal wasn’t to turn them into AI experts overnight. I wanted them to build comfort, fluency and critical awareness about how and when to use AI tools in real-world contexts.

What stood out to me the most was how quickly students moved from curiosity to confidence.

Many of them had already experimented with tools such as ChatGPT and Google Gemini, but Copilot for Business was a little different. It worked with their own documents, emails, meeting notes and class materials, which made the experience more personal and immediately relevant.

In their journals, students described how they used Copilot to summarize Teams video meetings, draft PowerPoint slides and write more polished emails. One student said it saved them time by generating summaries they could review after a meeting instead of taking notes during the call or rewatching a recording. Another

used it to check their assignment against the rubric - a scoring tool that outlines the criteria and performance levels for assessing student work - to help them feel more confident before submitting their work.

Several students admitted they struggled at first to write effective prompts - the typed requests that guide the AI to generate content - and had to experiment to get the results they wanted. A few reflected on instances where Copilot, like other generative AI tools, produced inaccurate or made-up information, or hallucinations, and said they learned to double-check its responses. This helped them understand the importance of verifying AI-generated content, especially in academic and professional settings.

Some students also said they had to remind themselves to use Copilot instead of falling back on other tools they were more familiar with. In some cases, they simply forgot Copilot was available. That feedback showed me how important it is to give students time and space to build new habits around emerging technologies.

While Copilot for Business worked well for this project, its higher cost compared with previous desktop productivity apps may limit its use in future classes and raises ethical questions about

access.

That said, I plan to continue expanding the use of generative AI tools across my courses. Instead of treating AI as a one-off topic, I want it to become part of the flow of everyday academic work. My goal is to help students build AI literacy and use these tools responsibly and thoughtfully, as a support for their learning, not a replacement for it.

Historically, software programs enabled people to produce content, such as text documents, slides or the like, whereas generative AI tools produce the “work” based on user prompts. This shift requires a higher level of awareness about what students are learning and how they’re engaging with the materials and the AI tool.

This pilot project reminded me that integrating AI into the classroom isn’t just about giving students access to new tools. It’s about creating space to explore, experiment, reflect and think critically about how these tools fit into their personal and professional lives and, most importantly, how they work.

As an educator, I’m also thinking about the deeper questions this technology raises. How do we ensure that students continue developing original thoughts and critical thinking when AI can easily generate ideas or content? How can we preserve meaningful learning while still taking advantage of the efficiency these tools offer? And what kinds of assignments can help students use AI effectively while still demonstrating their own thinking?

These aren’t just theoretical concerns. Early studies have identified the risks of “cognitive offloading” when performing tasks, such as writing essays with AI. Studies have also shown that using AI can reduce cognitive effort and even affect students’ confidence levels in their thinking. This highlights the importance of incorporating critical thinking activities alongside AI use.

These questions aren’t easy, but they are important. Higher education has an important role to play in helping students use AI and understand its impact and their responsibility in shaping how it’s used.

Striking the right balance between fostering original thought and critical thinking with AI can be tricky. One way I’ve approached this is encouraging students to first create their content on their own, then use AI for review. This way, they maintain ownership of their work and see AI as a helpful tool rather than a shortcut. It’s all about knowing when to leverage AI to refine or enhance their ideas.

One piece of advice I received that really stuck with me was this: Start small, be transparent and talk openly with your students. That’s what I did, and it’s what I’ll continue doing as I enter this next chapter of teaching and learning in the age of AI. (AP)

‘AI as a learning aid, not a shortcut’

‘Trump’s AI vision may boost fossil fuel use’

Data center surge risks higher utility costs

AI growth drives surge in energy demand, mostly from fossil fuels

NEW YORK, July 26, (AP): President Donald Trump’s plan to boost artificial intelligence and build data centers across the U.S. could speed up a building boom that was already expected to strain the nation’s ability to power it.

The White House released the “AI Action Plan” Wednesday, vowing to expedite permitting for construction of energy-intensive data centers as it looks to make the country a leader in a business that tech companies and others are pouring billions of dollars into.

The plan says to combat “radical climate dogma,” a number of restrictions - including clean air and water laws - could be lifted, aligning with Trump’s “American energy dominance” agenda and his efforts to undercut clean energy.

Here’s what you need to know. Massive amounts of electricity are needed to support the complex servers, equipment and

more for AI. Electricity demand from data centers worldwide is set to more than double by 2030, to slightly more than the entire electricity consumption of Japan today, the International Energy Agency said earlier this year.

In many cases, that electricity may come from burning coal or natural gas. These fossil fuels emit planet-warming greenhouse gas emissions, including carbon dioxide and methane. This in turn is tied to extreme weather events that are becoming more severe, frequent and costly.

The data centers used to fuel AI also need a tremendous amount of water to keep cool. That means they can strain water sources in areas that may have little to spare.

Typically, tech giants, up-and-comers and other developers try to keep an existing power plant online to meet demand, experts say, and most existing power plants in the U.S. are still producing electricity using fossil fuels -

most often natural gas.

In certain areas of the U.S., a combination of renewables and energy storage in the form of batteries are coming online.

But tapping into nuclear power is especially of interest as a way to reduce data center-induced emissions while still meeting demand and staying competitive.

Amazon said last month it would spend \$20 billion on data center sites in Pennsylvania, including one alongside a nuclear power plant. The investment allows Amazon to plug right into the plant, a scrutinized but faster approach for the company’s development timeline.

Meta recently signed a deal to secure nuclear power to meet its computing needs. Microsoft plans to buy energy from the Three Mile Island nuclear power plant, and Google previously signed a contract to purchase it from multiple small modular reactors in the works.

Data centers are often built

where electricity is cheapest, and often, that’s not from renewables. And sometimes data centers are cited as a reason to extend the lives of traditional, fossil-fuel-burning power plants.

But just this week, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres called on the world’s largest tech players to fuel their data center needs entirely with renewables by 2030. It’s necessary to use fewer fossil fuels, he said.

Experts say it’s possible for developers, investors and the tech industry to decarbonize.

However, though industry can do a lot with clean energy, the emerging demands are so big that it can’t be clean energy alone, said University of Pennsylvania engineering professor Benjamin Lee.

More generative AI, ChatGPT and massive data centers means “relying on wind and solar alone with batteries becomes really, really expensive,” Lee added, hence the attention on natural

gas, but also nuclear.

Regardless of what powers AI, the simple law of supply and demand makes it all but certain that costs for consumers will rise.

New data center projects might require both new energy generation and existing generation. Developers might also invest in batteries or other infrastructure like transmission lines.

All of this costs money, and it needs to be paid for from somewhere.

“In a lot of places in the U.S., they are seeing that rates are going up because utilities are making these moves to try to plan,” said Amanda Smith, a senior scientist at research organization Project Drawdown.

“They’re planning transmission infrastructure, new power plants for the growth and the load that’s projected, which is what we want them to do,” she added. “But we as ratepayers will wind up seeing rates go up to cover that.”

Actor says he's changed 'immeasurably' after 'Rust' case

Baldwin on his love for 'Peanuts' and life after trial

SAN DIEGO, July 26, (AP): Alec Baldwin says the year since his trial suddenly ended with a dismissal has been far better than the few years that preceded it, and the effect that time has had on him has been "immeasurable."

"Something as powerful as that happens in your life, you don't know how much it changes you," he said. "I can't even tell you how different I am from three-and-a-half years ago. And what I want and what I don't want, and how I want to live my life and not live my life."

The 67-year-old actor spoke to The Associated Press at San Diego's Comic-Con International, where he was part of a panel on 75 years of Charles Schulz's "Peanuts," whose simplicity, existential philosophy and moral outlook have been very much on his mind.

Baldwin spoke while a suited Snoopy character stood nearby after posing for photos with him.

In a foreword Baldwin wrote for "The Complete Peanuts 1977-1978," he said while reading Schulz's newspaper comic strip every day as a child, he realized Charlie Brown, more than anyone, wanted the things he wanted.

Chief among those wants are "the desire to have friends and the desire to hold your friends close to you."

That hasn't changed in the years since.

"Come on, what man my age doesn't relate to Charlie Brown? If Charlie Brown was 67 years old, he'd be me, but he wouldn't have been stupid enough to have seven (small) children," he said with a laugh.

But he aspires to the qualities of a different character.

"Lucy. I want to be Lucy. Lucy is in charge. She's got it all figured out," he said. "She pauses for a moment of self-awareness, but not too long."

Baldwin said he admired Schulz's simple line drawings combined with the real circumstances of the characters, embodied by real children's voices when the animated holiday specials emerged in his childhood.

"It's so complicated and simple at the same time, which is what I think makes it beautiful," he said.

And he admired Schulz's willingness to embrace melancholy, and deeper darknesses, in stories about inner struggle that needed no villains.

"A dog sitting on top of a dog house would have the same impact on you as, like, Nietzsche, he said," looking across the room at Snoopy. "They should have named the dog Nietzsche."

Baldwin's career has had several distinct phases. Early on he played tough husbands and boyfriends in supporting roles including "Married to the Mob" and "Working Girl." He moved on to heroic leading man in "The Hunt for Red October" and "The Shadow."

Downshifting to memorable character parts, he showed his gift for manly speeches in "Glengarry Glen Ross" and "The Departed," and his comedy prowess in seven seasons of "30 Rock" and as a constant host and guest on "Saturday Night Live."

In July 2024 his trial in New Mexico on an involuntary manslaughter charge in the 2021 shooting death of cinematographer Halyna Hutchins on the set of the Western "Rust" fell apart halfway through. A judge dismissed the case on allegations authorities withheld evidence.

"I can't believe that happened on that day the way it happened," he said. "And it couldn't have been better for us in certain terms because of the malice and so forth and everything that's embodied in that whole situation."

The next phase is uncertain. He says he's "just trying to move forward with my wife and my family."

He and wife Hilaria and their seven small kids recently appeared on the TLC reality series "The Baldwins."

He says he has successfully sold his young ones on "Peanuts," especially the Halloween and Christmas specials, as he did with his now nearly 30-year-old daughter Ireland when she was young.

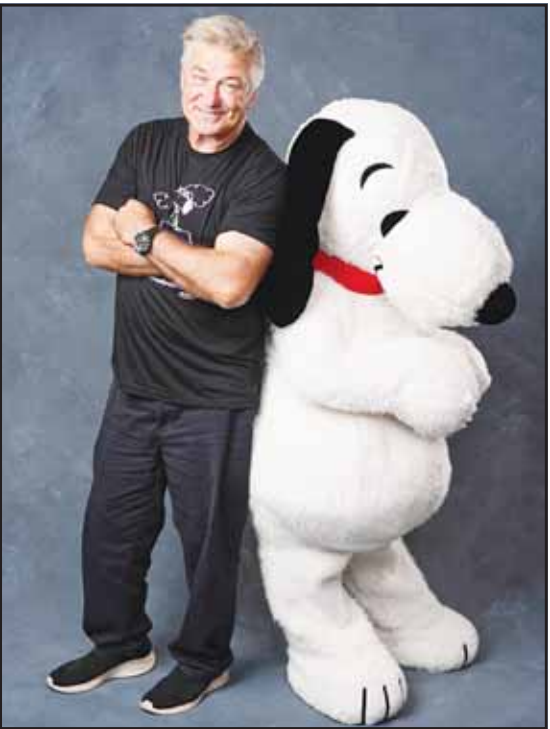
He notices their personalities zig-zagging between the traits of Schulz's characters.

"They're Charlie Brown, now they're Snoopy, now they're Schroeder, now they're Linus, now they're ...-Pen," he said. "They're ...-Pen most of the time, I must say."

And their house is full of themed toys.

He keeps a small Snoopy figure among the things in his office, a reminder to try to maintain "love, kindness, patience."

"Peanuts are still kind of like, in that zone," he said. "Let's just try to be good people."



Alec Baldwin, (left), and a person dressed as the character Snoopy from 'Peanuts' poses for a portrait to promote the 75th anniversary of 'Peanuts' during Comic-Con International on Thursday, July 24, in San Diego. (AP)

Variety

LONDON: British actor **Micheal Ward** has been charged with rape and sexual assault, police said Friday.

The 27-year-old faces two counts of rape and three counts of sexual assault, the Metropolitan Police force said. The charges relate to one woman and the offenses reportedly took place in January 2023.



Ward

Ward denied the charges and said in a statement that he has "full faith" that his name will be cleared in court. He's due to appear at London's Thames Magistrates' Court on Aug. 28.

Ward has appeared in films including "Blue Story," "The Book of Clarence" and the recently released American political satire "Eddington."

In 2020, he won the Rising Star award at the British Academy Film Awards, or BAFTAs. He was nominated for an acting BAFTA for Sam Mendes' "Empire of Light" and for a BAFTA television award for the Steve McQueen-directed series "Small Axe." (AP)

VIENNA: An Austrian court on Friday convicted an acquaintance of the main suspect in last year's foiled plan to attack Taylor Swift concerts in Vienna on terrorism charges unrelated to the plot and sentenced him to two years in prison.

The state court in Wiener Neustadt convicted the 18-year-old defendant, whose name was given only as Luca K. in line with local privacy rules, of involvement with a terrorist organization and criminal organization, the Austria Press Agency reported. He largely admitted to the accusations, which included sharing propaganda of the Islamic State group and glorifying an IS sympathizer who killed four people in Vienna in 2020.

The suspect, who converted to Islam in 2022, was arrested shortly before the planned Swift concerts in August last year but was not charged with involvement in the plot. (AP)

LOS ANGELES: Rapper GloRilla was arrested this week on felony drug charges after "a significant amount of marijuana" was found by police while they investigated a burglary at her home in Atlanta.

GloRilla, whose real name is Gloria Woods, voluntarily turned herself in Tuesday and was released on \$22,260 bond the same day, according to the Forsyth County Sheriff's Office.

Deputies were called to the rapper's home at about 1:30 a.m. Sunday on reports of a burglary. Woods wasn't present, and had performed during halftime of the WNBA All-Star Game on Saturday in Indianapolis.

Three suspects entered the home and were stealing items when an occupant of the house fired a weapon at the intruders. The suspects fled the scene and did not appear to have been injured, according to the sheriff's office.

A drug task force secured a search warrant for the home after deputies noticed a "strong odor consistent with illegal narcotics" while investigating the burglary. The task force discovered marijuana "in plain view inside the master bedroom closet," according to a statement from the sheriff's office.

Woods was charged with possession of marijuana and possession of a controlled substance.

"Instead of Focusing on finding the Suspects, they focus on some cannabis," Woods wrote on X. "Long story short my house gets home invaded and Im the only one that gets arrested."

The suspects weren't located, "despite an extensive search," the sheriff's office wrote in a statement sent to The Associated Press. The investigation into the burglary is ongoing and detectives recovered physical and trace forensic evidence believed to belong to the suspects, the office wrote.

Woods' attorneys, Drew Findling and Marissa Goldberg, wrote in a statement the suspects took off with "high value jewelry" when they realized the home wasn't vacant. (AP)

Comic-Con



A person dressed as the character Frendo the clown, (left), and Katie Douglas pose for a portrait to promote 'Clown in a Cornfield' during Comic-Con International on Friday, July 25, in San Diego. (AP)

'Tron', 'Predator', and 'Alien' dominate the Comic-Con

Fanning straps in for sci-fi in 'Predator'

SAN DIEGO, July 26, (AP): The Grid has overtaken Comic-Con.

Disney unveiled details about "Tron: Ares," which stars Jared Leto, Jeff Bridges and Greta Lee at an evening presentation in Comic-Con's famed Hall H. It will be the third feature film in the "Tron" franchise that kicked off with the hit 1982 film and had a 2010 sequel, "Tron: Legacy."

The original starred Bridges as a computer hacker who gets trapped in a digital world. The Oscar-winner drew the biggest applause when introduced during the panel.

"Tron: Ares" sees the Grid breaking through the real world.

The other major presentations Friday included updates on the final season of "Outlander" and its prequel series "Outlander: Blood of My Blood," "Alien: Earth" and "Predator: Badlands."

An estimated 135,000 people from around the globe are expected to attend Comic-Con 2025, which runs through Sunday in downtown San Diego.

Fans on opening day got a preview of "Five Nights at Freddy's 2," "The Toxic Avenger," and a joke-filled session with comedians Gabriel "Fluffy" Iglesias and Jo Koy.

The Predator is on the hunt again.

Director Dan Trachtenberg brought new footage from "Predator: Badlands" to Comic-Con's Hall H, showing off an unfinished cut of the movie's first 15 minutes and bringing the film's stars.

The massive convention hall erupted in cheers at clip, which featured a family of Predators fighting. The early scenes set the stakes for the movie, which is about a Predator sent on its first hunt on an unforgiving planet.

Trachtenberg said one inspiration behind the movie was the realization that "The Predator never wins." He wanted to see what that would look like but didn't want to make a slasher film, he said.

Elle Fanning, who plays a cyborg who spends much of the film strapped to the young Predator's back, said her first foray into sci-fi presented many new acting challenges.

"I was really strapped to his back for hours and hours," she said.

While that was physically challenging, she said, at least she wasn't acting across from a tennis ball, which is often used to give actors a sense of the scale of computer-generated characters.

"Badlands" changed the Predator costume from previous iterations, keeping everything as a tangible costume except



Elle Fanning attends a panel for 'Predator: Badlands' during Comic-Con International on July 25. (AP)

for the face. That allowed her to act opposite Dimitrius Schuster-Koloamatangi, which Trachtenberg said allowed for more emotional range from the Predator.

The movie takes place on a deadly planet where Trachtenberg said all the plants and animals are trying to kill the Predator. Moderator Kevin Smith (yes, the "Clerks" director) likened it to "essentially Australia in space."

Trachtenberg also showed a clip that will be added to the animated "Killer of Killers" movie, which will become a new end credits scene. It shows an expansive prison of cryogenically frozen beings, three of whom are the human protagonists - all killers of Predators - from the first two "Predator" movies and "Prey."

The new scene was added to the film, which streams on Hulu Friday night.

"Predator: Badlands" arrives in theaters Nov. 7.

It won't be long before audiences get to see the Xenomorph in "Alien: Earth." But there are some new alien life forms creator Noah Hawley will introduce in the upcoming

FX series.

Hawley and the cast screened the first episode for a packed Hall H at Comic-Con to cheers and a few scared noises when a new creepy-crawly alien creature claimed its first victim.

Hawley, who created the "Fargo" series, said showing audiences new creatures is central to recapturing the feel of the original "Alien" movie.

One of the things he's good at is "understanding what the original movie made me feel and why and trying to create it anew," he said.

Part of the power of Ridley Scott's "Alien" is "the discovery of the life cycle of this creature," Hawley said. He said he was trying to capture the "genetic revulsion of 'Alien' for the first time."

The show stars Sydney Chandler as a new life-form created when the consciousness of a young girl is transferred into an adult body with superhuman strength and speed.

Asked how she reacted to seeing the Xenomorph on set for the first time, Chandler said, "I almost peed. I became a kid again."

"A xenomorph was in my night terrors as a kid."

The first episode introduces the doomed crew of the USS Maginot and the aftermath its crash-landing in an Earth city after some of its specimens break free.

Set in 2120, it unspools two years before the events of "Alien." The early moments establish the world as a place controlled by massive corporations and where humans, cyborgs and synthetic humans coexist.

Babou Ceesay plays a cyborg whose mission is to protect the alien species at all costs. Humanlike, he has an arm that was likened Friday to a Swiss Army knife.

But Ceesay said his character has been away from Earth for more than 60 years and isn't as advanced as he seems: "He's coming back to a planet where he's essentially an iPhone 1 in an iPhone 20 world."

The show premieres Aug. 12 on FX.

The topic of the ultimate matchup between Aliens versus Predators came up during both sessions Friday. The matchup of the two fearsome aliens has been the subject of comic books, video games and a 2004 movie.

Hawley didn't spill any news about reboots.

Trachtenberg, who Smith described as the keeper of the Predator franchise now, had a simple answer: "Wouldn't it be cool?"

‘A complete intellectual and cultural phenomenon’

Lebanese composer Ziad Rahbani, son of Fayrouz, dies at 69

BEIRUT, July 26, (AP): Ziad Rahbani, a visionary Lebanese composer, playwright, pianist and political provocateur, died on Saturday, at the age of 69, according to the state-run National News Agency.

The death was confirmed by a person close to Rahbani who spoke on condition of anonymity. The cause of death was not immediately clear.

Born in 1956 in Antelias, near Beirut, Ziad was the eldest son of legendary Lebanese singer Fayrouz and late composer Assi Rahbani, one half of the famed Rahbani Brothers. From a young age, he showed signs of prodigious talent, composing his first musical work at just 17 years old. Raised among artistic royalty, his world was steeped in music, theater, and political consciousness - a combination that would define his life's work.

His mother, considered to be the most famous and esteemed performer in the Arab world, performed some of his compositions at her sellout concerts, blending Lebanese folklore with Western syncopation and phrasing.

Lebanese President Joseph Aoun mourned Rahbani's death as a national loss, describing him as "not just an artist, but a complete intellectual and cultural phenomenon." In a statement, Aoun praised Rahbani as "a living conscience, a rebellious voice against injustice, and an honest mirror reflecting the suffering and marginalized."

He highlighted how Rahbani's fusion of classical, jazz and Oriental music "opened new windows for Lebanese cultural expression" and elevated it to global levels. "Ziad was a natural extension of the Rahbani family, which gave Lebanon much beauty and dignity," the president added.

While his parents helped construct a golden era of Lebanese musical theater steeped in idealism and nostalgia, Rah-



Ziad Rahbani, (centre), a visionary Lebanese composer, playwright and pianist, during an anti-government protest organized by the country's communist party, in Beirut, Lebanon, Sunday, Dec. 16, 2018. (AP)

bani charged onto the scene with irreverent satire, unflinching political critique and jazz-inflected scores that mirrored

the chaos and contradictions of a Lebanon at war with itself.

"I admire the music of composers like Charlie Parker, Stan Getz and Dizzy Gillespie," he once said. "But my music is not Western, it's Lebanese, with a different way of expression."

Rahbani's music reflected the hybrid heritage of Lebanon, which until the civil war erupted in 1975 was a cultural melting pot where East met West. But it was also deeply rooted in the traumatic events of the sectarian strife, the bloody street battles between rival militias and three years of violent Israeli occupation after the 1982 invasion.

His breakout play, *Nazl el-Sourour* (Happiness Hotel), premiered in 1974 when he was only 17 and portrayed a society disfigured by class inequality and repression. The tragicomic narrative follows a group of workers who hijack a restaurant to demand their rights, only to be dismissed by the political elite. With this bold debut, Rahbani revealed his enduring theme: that Lebanese society was fractured not only by war but by entrenched power.

A leftist Greek Orthodox, Rahbani also wrote plays and satirical radio shows centered on his violent environment that mock the sectarian divisions of his country.

Rahbani's subsequent plays solidified his reputation as the voice of the disenchanted. In *Bennesbeh Labokra Chou?* (What About Tomorrow?), he plays a jaded bar pianist in post-civil war Beirut who drifts through a surreal landscape of broken dreams, corruption and absurdity. The work features some of Rahbani's most poignant music and biting commentary, including the famous line, "They say tomorrow will be better, but what about today?"

Prime Minister Nawaf Salam also mourned Rahbani's

loss, describing him as "an exceptional and creative artist-a free voice who remained true to the values of justice and dignity."

More than just a playwright, Rahbani was a composer of staggering range. He infused traditional Arabic melodies with jazz, funk and classical influences, creating a hybrid sound that became instantly recognizable. His live performances were legendary, whether playing piano in smoky clubs in Hamra, one of Beirut's major commercial districts that harbors a multifaceted identity, or orchestrating large-scale productions.

His collaborations with Fayrouz, especially during the late 1970s and 1980s, ushered in a darker, more politically charged phase in her career. Songs like *Ouverture 83*, *Bala Wala Chi* (Without Anything), and *Kifak Inta* (How Are You) reflected Ziad's brooding compositions and lyrical introspection.

Rahbani came under fire from Arab traditionalists for his pioneering efforts to bridge the gap between Arab and Western culture with music.

In recent years, Ziad appeared less in the public eye, yet his influence never waned. Younger generations rediscovered his plays online and sampled his music in protest movements. He continued to compose and write, speaking often of his frustration with Lebanon's political stagnation and decaying public life.

Rahbani is survived by his mother, Fayrouz, now 90, his sister Reema and brother Hali.

Lebanese pop star Elissa joined the outpouring of tributes to Ziad Rahbani, writing on X, "Ziad Rahbani was not an ordinary artist ... With his loss today, Lebanon has lost a part of itself and a big piece of its collective memory."

Music

Obituary

‘A unique talent’

Cleo Laine, iconic jazz voice of UK, dies at 97

LONDON, July 26, (AP): Cleo Laine, whose husky contralto was one of the most distinctive voices in jazz and who was regarded by many as Britain's greatest contribution to the quintessentially American music, has died. She was 97.

The Stables, a charity and venue Laine founded with her late jazz musician husband John Dankworth, said Friday it was "greatly saddened" by the news that "one of its founders and Life President, Dame Cleo Laine has passed away."

Monica Ferguson, artistic director of The Stables, said Laine "will be greatly missed, but her unique talent will always be remembered."

Laine's career spanned the Atlantic and crossed genres: She sang the songs of Kurt Weill, Arnold Schoenberg and Robert Schumann; she acted on stage and on film, and even played pivotal character in a production of Benjamin Britten's "Noye's Fludde."

Laine's life and art were intimately bound up with band leader Dankworth, who gave her a job and her stage name in 1951, and married her seven years later. Both were still performing after their 80th birthdays. Dankworth died in 2010 at 82.

In 1997, Laine became the first British jazz artist to be made a dame, the female equivalent of a knight.

"It is British jazz that should have received the accolade for its service to me," she said when the honor was announced. "It has given me a wonderful life, a successful career and an opportunity to travel the globe doing what I love to do."

Lessons

Laine was born Clementina Dinah Campbell in 1927. Her father, Alexander Campbell, was a Jamaican who loved opera and earned money during the Depression as a street singer. Despite hard times, her British mother, Minnie, made sure that her daughter had piano, voice and dance lessons.

She began performing at local events at age 3, and at age 12 she got a role as a movie extra in "The Thief of Bagdad." Leaving school at 14, Laine went to work as a hairdresser and faced repeated rejection in her efforts to get a job as a singer.

A decade later, in 1951, she tried out for the Johnny Dankworth Seven, and succeeded. "Clementina Campbell" was judged too long for a marquee, so she became Cleo Laine.

"John said that when he heard me, I didn't sound like anyone else who was singing at the time,"

Laine once said. "I guess the reason I didn't get the other jobs is that they were looking for a singer who did sound like somebody else."

Laine had a remarkable range, from tenor to contralto, and a sound often described as "smoky."

Dankworth, in an interview with the Irish Independent, recalled Laine's audition.

"They were all sitting there with stony faces, so I asked the Scottish trumpet player Jimmy Deuchar, who was looking very glum and was the hardest nut of all, whether he thought she had something. 'Something?' he said, 'She's got everything!'"

Offered 6 pounds a week, Laine demanded - and got - 7 pounds.

"They used to call me 'Scruff', although I don't think I was scruffy. It was just that having come from the sticks, I didn't know how to put things together as well as the other singers of the day," she told the Irish Independent. "And anyway, I didn't have the money, because they weren't paying me enough."

Recognition

Recognition came swiftly. Laine was runner-up in Melody Maker's "girl singer" category in 1952, and topped the list in 1956 and 1957.

She married Dankworth - and quit his band - in 1958, a year after her divorce from her first husband, George Langridge. As Dankworth's band prospered, Laine began to feel underused.

"I thought, no, I'm not going to just sit on the band and be a singer of songs every now and again when he fancied it. So it was then that I decided I wasn't going to stay with the band and I was going to go off and try to do something solo-wise," she said in a BBC documentary.

"When I said I was leaving, he said, 'Will you marry me?' That was a good ploy, wasn't it, huh?"

They were married on March 18, 1958. A son, Alec, was born in 1960, and daughter Jacqueline followed in 1963.

Despite her happy marriage, Laine forged a career independent of Dankworth.

"Whenever anybody starts putting a label on me, I say, 'Oh, no you don't,' and I go and do something different," Laine told The Associated Press in 1985 when she was appearing on stage in New York in "The Mystery of Edwin Drood."

Her stage career began in 1958 when she was invited to join the cast of a West Indian play, "Flesh to a Tiger," at the Royal Court Theatre, and was surprised to find herself in the lead role. She won a Moscow Arts Theatre Award for her performance.



Beyoncé, (center left), and her daughter, Blue Ivy Carter, perform during halftime of an NFL football game between the Baltimore Ravens and Houston Texans Wednesday, Dec. 25, 2024, in Houston. (AP)

Beyoncé's Cowboy Carter tour draws to a close

Blue Ivy emerges as a next-Gen star

LOS ANGELES, July 26, (AP): "Who they came to see?" Beyoncé asks as she performs her 2023 single "My House" during the Cowboy Carter tour. For many, the answer has been Blue Ivy.

Blue Ivy Carter, the Grammy-winning artist's 13-year-old daughter, is more present than ever on stage, and fans are impressed by the growth from her first performance years ago to now.

Isabella Kerr, 15, has admired Beyoncé for years, but said she attended the Cowboy Carter tour specifically to experience Blue Ivy's moves in person.

"People are saying, 'Oh, she's a mini Beyoncé,' but no, I think she's the first Blue. Everything about her when she's on stage is electrifying," said Kerr.

The Cowboy Carter tour concludes Saturday in Las Vegas. The tour's 30 previously stops have fans buzzing that Blue Ivy is well on her way to being a next generation powerhouse.

Blue first graced the stage at 11 years old during her mother's 2023 Renaissance tour, appearing during the legacy-celebrating anthems "My Power" and "Black Parade." Supporters anticipated her performance at each stop.

She performed again during "Beyoncé Bowl," the NFL Christmas Day Halftime Show that was just nominated for four Emmy Awards. She danced alongside the icon as she performed songs from the "Cowboy Carter" album for the first time.

"Even the difference between the Renaissance Tour and now, you can tell she's really grown in her

confidence," said fan and artist Olivia Ellis. "You can tell she has a different vibe about her."

On the Cowboy Carter tour, she can almost be mistaken for one of Beyoncé's professional dancers. She is on stage for nearly every song and has a solo recreating her mother's choreography from her 2006 "Déjà-vu" music video, a nod to the undeniable similarities between the two.

Online videos of Blue display professionalism comparable to her mother's during the Cowboy Carter tour. During a rainy New Jersey stop, she brought out towels to dry her area of the stage before nailing her "America Has a Problem" choreography.

In another unexpected moment during a Chicago show, her earring got caught on Beyoncé's hair. Blue remained calm, removed the jewelry and motioned to the singer that it was safe in her hand as they both seamlessly continued.

"It's the family business," said Kinitra D. Brooks, an academic and author of "The Lemonade Reader," a collection that explores the nuances of Beyoncé's 2016 visual album, "Lemonade." "She is literally studying under the best person doing it out there today. Why wouldn't she take advantage of that opportunity?"

In "Renaissance: A Film by Beyoncé," fans were given a behind-the-scenes look at the decision-making process the first time Blue was allowed to perform. Beyoncé expressed how nervous she was about her child being in front of thousands of people made her, revealing she initially said no.

"I did not think it was an appropriate place for an 11-year-old on a stadium stage," she said in the documentary. "I made a deal with her, and I said, 'If you practice and you show your commitment, I'll let you do one show.'" Blue Ivy fulfilled her end of the deal, and a fan base was formed: the "Ivy League."

Kerr says Blue's accomplishments inspire her to work harder to achieve her own dreams. "She worked to be on stage, and look at her now. If I work to what I want to be, I can be killing it like her."

At last month's Cowboy Carter Paris stop, members of the Beyhive and Ivy League finally got what they had been asking for - Blue Ivy merchandise. Shirts with the teen's face and the phrase "Déjà Blue" plastered on the front were available for purchase.

Prior to that, fans were creating their own custom pieces that highlighted Blue and Beyoncé's connection.

At the MetLife Stadium show, Ellis wore a custom corset top she painted, showcasing Blue Ivy and her 8-year-old sister, Rumi Carter, on stage with Beyoncé during "Protector," a track from the "Cowboy Carter" album that Rumi is featured on.

"I thought that would just be a really fun moment to highlight on a corset," she said. "It's just really cool to see her as a mom because we've all grown up with Beyoncé, and now it's like her show is kind of like a family affair."

Blue Ivy's confidence and professionalism are not only a testament to her hard work, but Beyoncé's motherhood.



Japanese director Kiyoshi Kurosawa acknowledges the applause from the audience, ahead of the official screening of his film 'Cloud' in Venice, Italy, on Aug. 31, 2024. (AP)

riod pieces are difficult to make due to the extraordinary costs of sets, props and costuming.

He also made it clear he isn't interested in directing science fiction, but rather pursues realism. However, he readily acknowledged that his films are all made

up, in fact, "a lie."

"Maybe this is my weakness, or my characteristic; I want to tell my stories in a setting of a very real modern-day society, yet I want to entertain," he said. "And so it's a contradiction that I aim for every time,"

"You create a lie, like a horrific character (in a realistic framework)," he said.

Kurosawa, who has managed to produce a film a year over his 40-year career, invests a lot of time researching the setting and backdrop of his films, including much reading, to make it as realistic as possible.

In his most recent thriller, "Cloud," a man who is down on his luck, portrayed by Masaki Suda, makes dubious profits by reselling items he finds online at far higher prices. It starts harmless enough, except, as the plot thickens, the protagonist is confronted by victims out for revenge.

Kurosawa is not one to hold back on violence, often gory and extreme but beautifully shot, sometimes almost comical in its bizarreness.

"Cure," a 1997 film about a police detective investigating a series of gruesome murders, starring Koji Yakusho, uses continuous shots purposely without cuts to bring out the varied emotions, and the coldness of the characters, sometimes changing viscerally within the same scene, to explore madness.



Cleo Laine performs at the Jazz at Lincoln Center concert, 'Here's to the Ladies: a Celebration of Great Women in Jazz,' in New York, Nov. 17, 2003. (AP)

Trained peers offer lifeline

Moms helping moms can bridge care gaps

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

By Sona Dimidjian and Anahi Collado

University of Colorado Boulder

For generations, women have relied on informal networks of friends, family and neighbors to navigate the complexities of birth and motherhood. Today, research is finally catching up to what generations of women have known: Peer support can be a lifeline.

Despite growing evidence, the unique wisdom and strength that arise when mothers help mothers has been surprisingly under-explored in the scientific literature, but that's beginning to change. Peer-delivered programs are beginning to bring together long-standing community traditions and structured, evidence-based approaches to support the mental health of new and expectant moms.

We are clinical psychologists at the University of Colorado Boulder Renée Crown Wellness Institute. Our work and research weaves together psychological science and the wisdom of mothers supporting mothers. Our program, Alma, supports women in restoring well-being in ways that are community-rooted, evidence-based and scalable.

Nearly 50% of parents report feeling overwhelmed by stress on most days. An even larger share, about 65%, experience feelings of loneliness, according to a 2024 report from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. These feelings hit mothers especially hard, the report says.

In 2025, mothers in the United States continue to shoulder most of the caregiving of children while also managing work, personal health and household responsibilities. The transition to motherhood is often marked by emotional and psychological strain. In fact, 10% to 20% of women experience depression during pregnancy, the postpartum period or both. Depression is one of the most common complications of childbirth. A similar number of women also face significant anxiety.

Resources

In many communities, mental health resources are scarce and stigma around mental health issues persists; therefore, many mothers are left to navigate such challenges alone and in silence. Antidepressants are widely prescribed, but research suggests that many women stop using antidepressants during pregnancy - yet they don't start therapy or an alternative treatment instead.

Psychotherapy is the most preferred care option among new and expectant mothers, but it is often inaccessible or nonexistent. This is due in part to a workforce shortage of mental health providers.

The shortage has contributed to long wait times, geographic disparities and cultural and language barriers between providers and patients. This is especially true for underserved populations. In fact, more than 75% of depressed mothers do not receive the care they need.

The science of peer support is part of a larger field exploring community health workers as one way to address the shortage of

mental health providers. Peer mentors are trusted individuals from the community who share common experiences or challenges with those they serve. Through specialized training, they are equipped to deliver education, offer mental health support and connect people with needed resources.

A study that analyzed 30 randomized clinical trials involving individuals with serious mental illness found that peer support was associated with significant improvements in clinical outcomes and personal recovery. Researchers have proposed that peer support creates space for learning and healing, especially when peers share lived experience, culture and language.

As clinical psychologists, we heard from mothers in our work and communities that wanted to help other moms recover from depression, navigate the challenges of motherhood and avoid feeling alone. This insight led us to co-create Alma, a peer-led mental health program based on behavioral activation.

Depression

Behavioral activation is a proven method for treating depression based on decades of randomized clinical trials, including in new and expectant mothers. It helps new and expectant mothers reengage in meaningful activities to improve mood and functioning.

Alma is based on the principle that depression must be understood in context and that changing what you do can change how you feel. One strategy we use is to help a mother identify an activity that brings a sense of accomplishment, connection or enjoyment - and then take small steps to schedule that activity. Mothers might also be guided on ways to ask for help and strengthen their support networks. Alma is offered in English and Spanish.

Peer mentors typically meet with moms once a week for six to eight sessions. Sessions can take place in person or virtually, allowing flexibility that honors each family's needs. Traditionally, peer mentors have been recruited through long-standing relationships with trusted community organizations and word-of-mouth referrals. This approach has helped ensure that mentors are deeply rooted in the communities they serve. Alma peer mentors are compensated for their time, which recognizes the value of their lived expertise, their training and the work involved in providing peer mentoring and support.

"This was the first time I felt like someone understood me, without me having to explain everything," shared one mother during a post-program interview that all participants complete after finishing Alma.

To date, more than 700 mothers in Colorado have participated in Alma. In one of our studies, we focused on 126 Spanish-speaking Latina mothers who often face significant barriers to care, such as language differences, cost and stigma. For nearly 2 out of 3 mothers, symptoms of depression decreased enough to be considered a true, measurable recovery - not just a small change.

Notably, most of the depression improvement occurred within the first three Alma meetings. We also observed that peer mentors delivered the Alma program consistently and as intended.

Lenacapavir could help stop HIV transmission

EU regulator greenlights an injectable HIV drug

LONDON, July 26, (AP) - The European Medicines Agency has recommended authorizing a twice-yearly injectable drug aimed at preventing HIV, which scientists say could help end the virus' transmission.

In a statement on Friday, the EU drug regulator said its evaluations of lenacapavir, sold as Yeytuo in Europe by Gilead Sciences, showed the drug is "highly effective" and "considered to be of major public health interest." Once the regulator's guidance is accepted by the European Commission, the authorization is valid in all 27 EU member countries as well as Iceland, Norway and Liechtenstein.

Last year, studies suggested that lenacapavir, already used to treat people with HIV, was nearly 100% effective in stopping transmission in both women and men.

Winnie Byanyima, executive director of the U.N. AIDS agency, has said the drug "could change the trajectory of the HIV epidemic" if it is made available to everyone who needs it.

In June, the US Food and Drug Administration authorized lenacapavir to prevent HIV. Earlier this month, the World Health Organization recommend-

ed countries offer the drug as an additional option to people at risk of the virus.

Condoms help guard against HIV infection if used properly. Other medication aimed at preventing HIV include daily pills that people can take and another injectable drug called cabotegravir, which is given every two months. Lenacapavir's six-month protection makes it the longest-lasting type, an option that could attract people wary of more visits to health clinics or stigma from taking daily pills.

Critics have raised concerns, however, that lenacapavir may not be made widely enough available to stop global outbreaks of HIV. Drugmaker Gilead has said it will allow cheap, generic versions to be sold in 120 poor countries with high HIV rates - mostly in Africa, Southeast Asia and the Caribbean.

But it has excluded nearly all of Latin America, where rates are far lower but increasing, sparking concern the world is missing a critical opportunity to stop the disease.

Last year, there were about 630,000 AIDS deaths worldwide and more than 40 million people are estimated to have HIV, according to UNAIDS.

Meanwhile, the National AIDS Council of Mozambique has said that it will enhance the country's HIV prevention strategy with the introduction of a new injectable medication.

Francisco Mbofana, executive secretary of the National AIDS Council, shared the news on Thursday in an interview with state media Radio Mozambique, stressing that the new medication is intended exclusively for individuals who are not HIV-positive.

"This is an additional method we are introducing to complement the existing HIV prevention tools, and it is a pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) injection designed to create conditions that prevent HIV infection," said Mbofana.

The first shipment of the medication is expected to arrive in Mozambique during the first quarter of 2026. The 80,000 to 90,000 doses are anticipated to benefit between 30,000 and 40,000 individuals.

This development comes at a time when Mozambique is making notable progress in the fight against HIV, marked by a reduction in new infections, increased awareness of HIV status, and a decline in HIV-related deaths.

Malnutrition and hunger kill 122, including 83 children

More than 100,000 children in Gaza face mass death due to lack of milk

RAMALLAH, July 26, (Agencies) - The Government Media Office in Gaza warned on Saturday that more than 100,000 children in Gaza face the risk of mass death in an unprecedented and imminent humanitarian disaster.

More than 100,000 children aged around two, including 40,000 infants under one year old, face imminent mass death due to the complete lack of baby formula and nutritional supplements, the continued closure of crossings, and prevention of basic supplies, said the media office in a statement.

The mass killing perpetrated slowly against infants whose mothers have been feeding them water instead of baby formula for days due to policy of starvation and extermination pursued by the Israeli occupation forces, the statement added.

The death toll from famine and malnutrition has risen to 122, including 83 children.

The already catastrophic conditions in Gaza are fast deteriorating as the deadly starvation crisis deepens amid military operations that bring death and destruction, UN humanitarianists said Friday.

"Life is being drained out of Gaza, as systems and services are on the verge of collapse," said the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). "Just yesterday, the local health authorities announced that two more people died from starvation."

OCHA said hunger and malnutrition increase the risk of illnesses that weaken the immune system, especially among women, children, older people, and those with disabilities or chronic diseases.

Impact

"The consequences can turn deadly fast," the office said. "Food scarcity is also having a severe impact on pregnant and breastfeeding women, as their babies are more likely to be born with health complications."

OCHA said the trickle of supplies into the Gaza Strip is nowhere near adequate to address the immense needs.

The Times of Israel, citing an Israeli military civil affairs unit, said Israel would allow Jordan and the United Arab Emirates to airdrop humanitarian supplies to Gaza, in coordination with the Israel Defense Forces.

"We welcome all efforts to provide aid to people in Gaza who desperately need it," said Stephanie Tremblay, associate spokesperson for UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, on Friday. "We reiterate that the most efficient



Palestinians struggle to get donated food at a community kitchen, in Gaza City, northern Gaza Strip, Saturday, July 26. (AP)

way to bring in supplies is by road. This is why it is imperative that aid is allowed to enter through all crossings and via all available corridors."

On another front, OCHA said the UN relief chief has written a letter to the head of the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, the US-run, Israeli-backed system for distributing aid through four militarized hubs for the entire strip, as opposed to the traditional UN-led system of 400 community-based supply points.

Relief

Tom Fletcher, UN under-secretary-general for humanitarian affairs and emergency relief coordinator, said the world body stands ready to engage with any partner to ensure that desperately needed humanitarian aid reaches people in Gaza. However, he added that any such partnership must adhere to the globally accepted principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence.

He said aid must go where the needs are most significant, without discrimination, and that humanitarians answer to civilians in need, not the warring parties.

OCHA said safe, sustained humanitarian access is missing.

"Aid workers face constant danger, crossings are unreliable, and critical items are routinely blocked," the office said. "If Israel opens the crossings, lets fuel and equipment in, and allows humanitarian staff to operate safely, the United Nations will accelerate the delivery of food aid, health services, clean water and waste management, nutrition supplies, and shelter materi-

als."

Israeli airstrikes and gunshots overnight killed at least 25 people, according to Palestinian health officials and the ambulance service on Saturday, as ceasefire talks appear to have stalled and Gaza faces famine.

The majority of victims were killed by gunfire as they waited for aid trucks close to the Zikim crossing with Israel, said staff at Shifa hospital, where the bodies were brought.

Israel's army didn't respond to a request for comments about the latest shootings.

Those killed in strikes include four people in an apartment building in Gaza City, among others, hospital staff and the ambulance service said.

The strikes come as ceasefire talks between Israel and Hamas have hit a standstill after the US and Israel recalled their negotiating teams on Thursday, throwing the future of the talks into further uncertainty.

The United Nations and experts say that Palestinians in Gaza are at risk of famine, with reports of increasing numbers of people dying from causes related to malnutrition. While Israel's army says it's allowing aid into the enclave with no limit on the number of trucks that can enter, the UN says it is hampered by Israeli military restrictions on its movements and incidents of criminal looting.

The Zikim crossing shootings come days after at least 80 Palestinians were killed trying to reach aid entering through the same crossing. Israel's military said at the time its soldiers shot at a gathering of thousands of Palestinians who posed a threat, and that it was aware of some casualties.

Sepsis care

Tech boosts IV precision

SACRAMENTO, Calif., July 26, (AP) - Sutter Health, an integrated not-for-profit healthcare system based in Northern California, and Flosionics Medical have announced an expansion of the deployment of FloPatch, the first wireless wearable Doppler ultrasound device, across multiple hospital sites to support more precise and timely intravenous (IV) fluid management. This multisite deployment includes Sutter's Alta Bates Summit Medical Center, Summit Campus in Oakland and Sutter Santa Rosa Regional Hospital in Sonoma County. Implementations span the Emergency Department, Intensive Care Unit, Medical-Surgical Unit and Telemetry Unit. With these additions, six Sutter hospital campuses have now deployed FloPatch over the past year and include Sutter's Eden Medical Center in Castro Valley, Sutter's CPMC in San Francisco at CPMC Van Ness, Davies and Mission Bernal Campuses.

Complication

IV fluid overload is a common complication in emergency and intensive care settings, in part because predicting a patient's response to fluids is complex. Individual needs can vary widely and shift quickly during critical illness. In studies of patients with sepsis and septic shock - a life-threatening condition caused by the body's overwhelming response to infection - nearly one-third were found to be fluid unresponsive¹. Without early identification of fluid unresponsiveness, patients may receive excessive fluids, increasing their risk of serious complications such as pulmonary edema, where fluid accumulates in the lungs. By some estimates, fluid overload can extend the average hospital stay by three days and increase healthcare costs by more than \$15,000 per patient.

FloPatch is an FDA-cleared, wearable device that provides clinicians with a fast and non-invasive way to perform hemodynamic assessments, measuring a patient's heart and blood flow response to IV fluids to help guide personalized fluid therapy. Clinical studies have shown that dynamic fluid assessments can reduce the need for mechanical ventilation and renal replacement therapy, decrease ICU length of stay, and are associated with lower mortality.

"Our previous method of assessing fluid responsiveness was cumbersome and time-consuming. We often had to pull ICU nurses to perform evaluations in other units, which was disruptive and inefficient," said Dr. Nader Emami, ICU medical director at Sutter Santa Rosa Regional Hospital.

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We lost a great friend: Trump

Hogan brought wrestling to the masses – and leaves a lasting legacy

CLEARWATER, Fla., July 26, (AP): Hulk Hogan, the mustachioed, headscarf-wearing, bicep-busting icon of professional wrestling who turned the sport into a massive business and stretched his influence into TV, pop culture, and conservative politics during a long and scandal-plagued second act, died Thursday in Florida at age 71.

Hogan was pronounced dead at a hospital less than 90 minutes after medics in Clearwater arrived at his home to answer a morning call about a cardiac arrest, police said.

“There were no signs of foul play or suspicious activity,” Maj. Nate Burnside told reporters.

Hogan, whose real name was Terry Bollea, was perhaps the biggest star in WWE’s long history. He was the main draw for the first WrestleMania in 1985 and was a fixture for years, facing everyone from Andre The Giant and Randy Savage to The Rock and even WWE co-founder Vince McMahon.

But outside the ring, Hogan also found trouble. WWE in 2015 cut ties with him for three years, even removing him from its Hall of Fame, after it was reported that he was recorded using racial slurs about Blacks. He apologized and said his words were “unacceptable.”

Hogan won at least six WWE championships and was inducted into the Hall of Fame in 2005 and reinstated there in 2018. WWE matches are now held in professional sports stadiums, and millions of fans have watched the company’s weekly live television program, “Raw,” which debuted in January on Netflix.

“He was a trailblazer, the first performer who transitioned from being a wrestling star into a global phenomenon,” McMahon said of Hogan.

“Hulkamania,” as the energy he created was called, started running wild in the mid-1980s and pushed professional wrestling into the mainstream. He was a flag-waving American hero with the horseshoe mustache, red and yellow gear, and massive arms he called his “24-inch pythons.” Crowds were hysterical when he ripped off his T-shirt in the ring - a trademark move - revealing a tan, sculpted body.



In this April 3, 2005, file photo, Hulk Hogan fires up the crowd between matches during WrestleMania 21 in Los Angeles. (AP)

Hogan was also a celebrity outside the wrestling world, appearing in numerous movies and television shows, including a reality show about his life on VH1, “Hogan Knows Best.”

In recent years, Hogan added his celebrity to politics. At the 2024 Republican National Convention, he merged classic WWE maneuvers with then-candidate Donald Trump’s rhetoric to passionately endorse him for president.

“Let Trumpmania run wild, brother! Let Trumpmania rule again! Let Trump- amania make America great again!” Hogan shouted into the raucous crowd.

He ripped off a T-shirt emblazoned with a picture of himself on a motorcycle to reveal a bright red Trump-Vance campaign shirt underneath. Trump stood to applaud the move.

“We lost a great friend today, the “Hulkster.”” Trump said Thursday on Truth Social. “Hulk Hogan was MAGA all the way - Strong, tough, smart, but with the biggest heart.”

Hogan lately began to invest in alternatives to theatrical, professional wrestling, announcing plans in April to serve as the first commissioner for the Real American Freestyle organization, which describes itself as the “first unscripted pro wrestling” league in the world. The first event is Aug. 30 at Cleveland State University.

“The idea was so exciting that I got a chance to be involved with all these young people and help guide them in any way, especially to make them huge stars and create a future for them,” Hogan said. “People might be surprised, but wrestling is wrestling, brother.”

The league released a statement, saying it is now part of Hogan’s legacy, “and we intend to honor it.”

Hogan was born in Georgia but lived much of his life in the Tampa, Florida, area. He recalled skipping school to watch wrestlers at the Sportatorium, a professional wrestling studio in Tampa.

“I had been running my mouth, telling everybody I’m going to be a wrestler, and in a small town, the word gets out,” Hogan told the Tampa Bay Times in 2021. “And so when I went down there, they were lying low for me. They exercised me till I was ready to faint.”

The result: a broken leg and a subsequent warning from his dad.

“Don’t you ever let anybody hurt you again,” Hogan recalled his father saying. “So I went back four or five months later with a whole new attitude. The rest is history.”

Enrique delivers late brace, Orlando hands Crew first home loss of season

Montreal beats Revolution, snaps skid



New England Revolution forward Leonardo Campana, left, and CF Montréal midfielder Victor Loturi, right, vie for control of the ball during the second half of an MLS soccer match in Foxborough, Mass. (AP)

COLUMBUS, Ohio, July 26, (AP): Ramiro Enrique came on in the 67th minute and scored two goals, Martín Ojeda added a goal and two assists and Orlando City beat Columbus 3-1 to hand the Crew its first home loss of the season.

Orlando (11-6-8) has won two in a row following a four-game unbeaten streak.

Enrique, who replaced Luis Muriel, flicked a header, off an entry played in by Iván Angulo, from the center of the area inside the back post to make it 1-1 in the 76th. Then, in the 79th, Angulo played a rolling a first-touch cross that slipped past diving goalkeeper Patrick Schulte and Enrique redirected into a wide-open net to give Orlando City a 2-1 lead.

Pedro Gallese finished with six saves.

The Crew’s Diego Rossi converted from the penalty spot in the 66th minute to open the scoring.

Ojeda capped the scoring in the sixth minute of stoppage time, beating goalkeeper Patrick Schulte with a low shot inside the near post.

Ojeda has 14 goal contributions (five goals and nine assists) in the last 10 games.

Columbus (12-4-8) lost for the second time in its last eight.

The Crew had 61% possession and outshot Orlando 18-10.

Prince Owusu, Dante Sealy and Olger Escobar each scored a goal to

help CF Montreal beat the New England Revolution 3-1 to snap a four-game winless streak.

Montreal (4-15-6) went into the game with 15 points this season, fewest in MLS.

Caden Clark tapped a one-touch pass from just outside the area toward the penalty spot and Sealy slammed home a first-timer to give Montreal a 2-1 lead in the 36th. Clark, a 22-year-old midfielder in his fifth MLS season, has a career-high tying four assists this season.

After Jonathan Sirois punched away an arcing cross near the right post and fell to the ground, Luca Langoni skipped a shot from the right-center of the area that was blocked at the goal line by Joel Wa-

terman in the 85th.

New England (6-11-7) is winless, with five losses, in its last six.

Hirving Lozano scored a goal, Pablo Sisniega had his first shutout since 2022 and San Diego FC beat Nashville SC 1-0. Sisniega finished with two saves. San Diego (14-7-4) leads the Western Conference with 46 points.

Lozano scored on the counter-attack to give San Diego a 1-0 lead in the 53rd minute. Jeppe Tverskov played a ball-ahead from beyond midfield to Anders Dreyer near the right corner of the area before Dreyed tapped a pass with the outside of his foot to Lozano for a first-touch finish from near the penalty spot.

Dreyer has 14 of his 27 goal con-

tributions this season in the last 10 games and his 16 assists are four more than any other player in MLS.

Cristian Paredes scored just before halftime, Maxime Crépeau had his third shutout of the season and the Portland Timbers beat Los Angeles FC 1-0 to snap a three-game winless streak.

Ian Smith played an arcing corner kick into the center of the area and Paredes went up high for a header that deflected of the back post into the net to give Portland (10-7-7) a 1-0 lead in the 45th minute.

Crépeau has three saves this season. Los Angeles (10-6-6) played to a 3-3 tie with the LA Galaxy, the defending MLS Cup champions, on Saturday to snap a three-game win streak.

Alonso Martínez scored a hat trick with a boost from a new teammate and New York City defeated Dallas 4-3.

New York City on Friday announced the acquisition of Nicolás Fernández Mercu as a Designated Player from Elche CF of Spain on a contract through 2029. Mercu made his debut with the team on Friday, entering in the 61st minute, and assisted on Martínez’ third goal.

Martínez scored midway through the first half and rallied New York City with the tying goal in the 46th minute and the go-ahead goal in the 84th.

In a high-scoring first half, New York’s Jonathan Shore scored on a header off a corner kick by Maxi Moralez for a 1-0 lead in the 11th minute.

MLS suspends Messi and Alba for skipping All-Star Game

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla., July 26 (AP): Inter Miami’s Lionel Messi and Jordi Alba were suspended one match by Major League Soccer for skipping its All-Star Game, the league announced Friday.

Messi and Alba did not suit up for the match between the MLS and Liga MX of Mexico despite being voted to the game. Messi did not play to rest amid a packed schedule and Alba was dealing with a previous injury.

Per MLS rules, any player who doesn’t participate in the All-Star Game without prior approval

from the league is ineligible to compete in their club’s next match.

The players will miss Miami’s home match Saturday against FC Cincinnati, which sits atop the Eastern Conference standings.

As Inter Miami awaited the league’s decision, both Messi and Alba practiced with the club on Friday in anticipation of playing in Saturday’s match.

“I know Lionel Messi loves this league,” said MLS Commissioner Don Garber. “I don’t think

there’s a player - or anyone - who has done more for Major League Soccer than Messi. I fully understand, respect, and admire his commitment to Inter Miami, and I respect his decision.

“Unfortunately, we have a long-standing policy regarding participation in the All-Star Game, and we had to enforce it. It was a very difficult decision.”

Garber added that the league will re-evaluate the policy and work with players to “determine how the rule should evolve.”

Lynx dominates Aces

Liberty tops Mercury for fifth consecutive victory

NEW YORK, July 26, (AP): Sabrina Ionescu scored 29 points while Jonquel Jones added 20 points and 11 rebounds to help the New York Liberty beat the Phoenix Mercury 89-76 for its fifth consecutive win.

Leonie Fiebich added 13 points for the Liberty (17-6), who put more space between them and the third-place Mercury (15-9), who won the teams’ first two meetings this season.

New York trailed 54-49 midway through the third quarter before closing the period on an 18-5 run capped by Jones’ fadeaway shot that she got off just before the end of the quarter. That gave the Liberty a 67-59 lead.

The Liberty poured it on in the fourth behind Ionescu, who scored the first five points during a 10-2 run that gave the team a 82-64 advantage - its biggest of the game. The Mercury couldn’t get within single digits the rest of the way.

Alyssa Thomas had 20 points, 13 rebounds and eight assists for Phoenix. She fell just short of her 17th career triple-double and 13th in the regular season.

Lynx 109, Aces 78

In Minneapolis, Napheesa Collier scored 25 points, Courtney Williams added 23, and Minnesota beat Las Vegas Aces for its 14th straight home win.

Williams shot 10 for 12 from the field, including 3 for 4 on 3-pointers. Collier was 7 for 12 and made 10 of 13 free throws to go along with nine rebounds.

Bridget Carleton added 14 points, Kayla McBride scored 13 and Jessica Shepard had 10 points and 10 rebounds as the Lynx (22-4) won their fourth straight overall.

After leading 51-35 at halftime, Minnesota scored 34 points in the third quarter and led 85-61 heading to the fourth. In addition to shooting 9 for 20 on 3-pointers in the first three quarters, the Lynx added 22 free throws on 31 attempts. They finished 25 for 38 from the line and shot 54% overall, with 10 for 25 on 3s.

The Lynx reached 100 points with four minutes left in the fourth quarter and Anastasiia Olairi Kosu scored on back-to-back possessions near the one-minute mark



Minnesota Lynx forward Napheesa Collier (24) dribbles down the court during the first half of a WNBA basketball game in Minneapolis. (AP)

for the final score of the game and Minnesota’s largest lead of the night.

Valkyries 86, Wings 76

In San Francisco, Tiffany Hayes scored 17 points, Janelle Salaun added 16, and Golden State scored 56 points in the second half to rally past Dallas.

After being held to 30 points in the first half and falling behind by 12 early in the second half, the Valkyries scored 33 points in the third quarter to take a 63-60 lead heading to the fourth.

The Wings stayed within five points early in the fourth quarter and tied it at 71 on a short floater from Paige Bueckers.

Golden State led 75-72 with under three minutes remaining when Temi Fagbenle grabbed an offensive rebound to keep a possession alive. Her layup and subsequent three-point play gave the Valkyries a 78-72 lead.

Hayes made 5 of 6 free throws and Veronica Burton added 3 of 4 down the stretch wrap up the victory.

Bueckers scored 17 points, Arike Ogunbowale 16, Aziaha James 13 and Haley Jones 10 for Dallas (7-18).

Fagbenle scored 11 points and grabbed eight rebounds for Golden State (11-12). Carla Leite added 14 points and Cecilia Zandalasini scored 10.

‘Uganda ready to shine as CHAN co-host’

KAMPALA, July 26, (Xinhua): Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni has expressed pride that Uganda will be one of the hosts of the 2024 African Nations Championship (CHAN).

Uganda, along with Kenya and Tanzania, will co-host the tournament, which is set to feature 19 teams from August 2 to 30. The competition, organized by the Confederation of African Football (CAF), is exclusively contested by players who compete in their national domestic leagues.

CAF announced in January that the CHAN 2024 tournament would be postponed to August 2025 to allow more time for another qualifying round to decide the final two participants.

Speaking at the official launch of CHAN 2024 at the Kololo Ceremonial Grounds in Kampala , Museveni said Uganda is well-prepared to deliver a successful event.

“We are very happy that CHAN is coming to Uganda, and we are looking forward to hosting it,” said Museveni. “This tournament has given us a good challenge and is already driving infrastructure development, including stadium construction.” Museveni also emphasized that CHAN is more than just a football event. “It will not only showcase talent on the pitch but also promote tourism and regional integration,” he said.

Uganda’s First Lady and Minister of Education and Sports, Janet Museveni, thanked CAF for its support and reaffirmed the government’s commitment to delivering a memorable tournament. “It’s not just about hosting a football competition,” she said. “This is a demonstration that sports can bring people together.”

The President of the Federation of Uganda Football Associations (FUFA), Moses Hassim Magogo, said the launch was a deeply emotional moment for him. “It has always been my dream to bring a major football tournament to Uganda. That dream is now becoming a reality,” said Magogo.

This will be the first time that Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania co-host the CHAN tournament. Within the Council for East and Central Africa Football Associations (CECAFA) region, only Rwanda and Sudan have previously hosted the competition.

Brilliant unbeaten century by West Indies captain in vain

David scores fastest T20 century for Australia in series-clinching win

BASSETTERRE, St. Kitts, July 26, (AP): Tim David scored the fastest century for Australia in a Twenty20 international which lifted the tourists to a series-clinching six-wicket win over West Indies in the third game of a five-match series.

David and Mitchell Owen's unbroken 128-run stand guided Australia to 215-4 off 16.1 overs to seal the victory and an unassailable 3-0 series lead.

Making the most of the small dimensions at Warner Park in St. Kitts, David brought up his first international century from the final ball of the match with his sixth boundary. His blistering 102 not out, with 11 sixes, came from just 37 balls and bettered the mark of 43 balls set by current team-mate Josh Inglis against Scotland last year.

It was also the third fastest century among ICC member nations, with only India's Rohit Sharma and South Africa's David Miller bettering the mark with 35 balls, both in 2017.

"I didn't think I would have the opportunity to score 100 for Australia, so I'm so grateful for that opportunity and and pretty stoked," David said.

David's fireworks overshadowed a brilliant unbeaten century by West Indies captain Shai Hope (102 off 57 balls) which featured eight boundaries and six sixes to lead West Indies to 214-4 off its 20 overs.

Hope combined with opening partner Brandon King to put on 125 runs in 11.4 overs as the hosts made a rapid-fire start after losing the toss and being asked to bat first.

King made a spritely 62 off 36 balls before holing out to Sean Abbott off Mitchell Owen.

The skipper raised his deserved ton in the 19th over with a single off his 55th ball to join Chris Gayle as the only West Indies male player with centuries in all formats. Brief cameos from Shimron Hetmyer (9), Rovman Powell (9), Sherfane Rutherford (12) supported Hope's solo assault on Australia's bowlers and lifted the hosts

past 200.

Australia's chase started haphazardly with Glenn Maxwell - opening again with skipper Mitch Marsh - run out for 20 going for a tight single.

Inglis (15) was next to go failing to get enough distance on his strike into the stiff breeze and was caught at deep square leg off Romario Shepherd (2-39), who was in the team for the retired Andre Russell. Marsh (22) was caught behind off Jason Holder two overs later and when Cameron Green (11) fell the same way to be Shepherd's second wicket the tourists were at 87-4 and rocking.

Enter Tim David who brought his destructive power game to smash the West Indies bowlers to all corners of the small ground, and indeed often outside of Warner Park, as the target was whittled down in rapid time.

David raised his fifty off 16 balls, also an Australian record, and he only slowed down slightly in the next fifty as he teased the West Indies bowlers into his wide hitting

arc.

The Australian should have been stopped at 90 but King dropped a simple catch at deep mid-wicket off Shepherd to cruel any late chance the hosts may have had.

David was well-complemented by his fellow Tasmanian Owen (36 off 16) - who continued his bright start to his international career - as the pair's 128-run stand off 48 balls sealed the win.

"I honestly don't think we had enough runs on the board on a pitch like that, you need to understand the dimensions of the ground," Hope said. It's very difficult to defend a score of 200 at St. Kitts with that surface."

Australia had a three-wicket win to open the series on Sunday, while Inglis and Green led Australia to an eight-wicket victory in Wednesday's second match, spoiling Russell's last game for West Indies.

Australia's win streak in the Caribbean now stands at six-matches following the 3-0 test series sweep.

Wallabies denied, Lions win test series in dramatic finish



James Lowe of the British & Irish Lions, left, and Australia's Tom Wright battle for a high ball during the second rugby union test at the Melbourne Cricket Ground in Melbourne, Australia. (AP)

Keenan scores contentious last minute try

MELBOURNE, Australia, July 26, (AP): A contentious try in the last minute by Hugo Keenan capped an extraordinary comeback win for the British and Irish Lions over the Wallabies in the second test on Saturday, played in front of 90,000 fans at the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

The Lions rallied from 23-5 down in the first half to win the match 29-26 and seal an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match series which concludes in Sydney next weekend.

In 2001 and 2013 the Lions lost in Melbourne after winning the first match of a three-test series against the Wallabies to force the series to a decider.

But Keenan's try in the dying seconds allowed the Lions to avoid that fate for the first time. After winning the first test 29-17, they managed to overcome a vastly improved Australia that at times dominated Saturday's match.

"Lions, Lions, Lions!" Lions captain Majo Itoje chanted at the end of the match, rousing the almost 40,000 Lions fans among the crowd at the giant auditorium. "This is special. This will live long in the memory."

Wallabies captain Harry Wilson remonstrated with the officials after the match, asserting that Carlo Tizzano had illegally been taken out of play. But Keenan's try stood. The Wallabies had given



Hugo Keenan of the British & Irish Lions, who scored the winning try celebrates with fans after the second rugby union test against Australia at the Melbourne Cricket Ground in Melbourne, Australia. (AP)

everything only to be denied in the last moment.

"It hurts," Wilson said. "I'm so proud of this team. "We were written off but we came out and put our bodies on the line."

The first half was breathtaking for its non-stop action. The Wallabies scored three tries in seven minutes in a period of ascendancy in the middle of the half when the Lions buckled and seemed ready to break. With pace and physicality, throwing big bodies against the Lions defense and equally by defending with vigor, Australia gained the upper hand and led 23-5.

Giant lock Will Skelton and backrower Rob Valetini lifted the Wallabies forwards to a new level of physicality which at times made the Lions look battered and exhausted.

But at the point at which they seemed spent and the match seemed to have been taken away from them, the Lions produced an extraordinary rally to score two tries in the last five minutes of the half.

With tries to backrower Tom Curry and center Huw Jones, the Lions were able to go to halftime only six points down at 23-17.

Tom Lynagh scored the first points of the match with penalties in the fifth and 11th minutes. The Wallabies played composedly under pressure in their own half, confident in each other and the soundness of their gameplan.

But the first try went to the Lions. Jack Conan was over the Wallabies' line in the 15th but lost the ball in the act of scoring. A minute later Dan Sheehan did score with an acrobatic dive over a kneeling

defender after the Lions took a tapped penalty.

The conversion drifted wide and the Wallabies led 6-5. The Wallabies lost winger Harry Potter to a hamstring strain in the 20th minute and, with only two back reserves, were forced to put scrumhalf Tate McDermott on the wing.

The Wallabies went close to scoring through Jake Gordon, Len Ikitau and Fraser McReight before prop James Slipper scored in his 146th test and his second series against the Lions.

The Lions conceded a series of penalties and Freeman was shown a yellow card when he strayed offside in the leadup to the try.

Then, a quick double strike by the Wallabies. Gordon scored in the 29th minute, slicing through an inside gap as the Lions defense drifted too quickly, and fullback Tom Wright scored from the kick-off after Joseph Suaalii's stutter step split the Lions in midfield.

With their backs to the wall, the Lions responded. After playing with scraps of possession for much of the half, they managed to produced their first concerted attacks and first Tom Curry crossed from Conan's overhead pass, then Jones touched down.

The Wallabies scored the first points of the second half, a Lynagh penalty, and at times again the Lions looked to be just hanging on.

Again the Lions responded. Winger James Lowe slipped through Ikitau's tackle and back-handed a pass to Tadgh Beirne who scored. The conversion made the score 26-24 at the start of the last quarter.

Fallout from Club World Cup

Soccer players' union hits back at autocratic FIFA and Infantino

NEW YORK, July 26, (AP): The global soccer players' union hit back at FIFA and its president Gianni Infantino on Friday, saying their autocratic style of leadership was harming the rights of its members.

"Football needs responsible leadership, not emperors," the FIFPRO network said after a meeting of 58 national player unions responded to FIFA pursuing its agenda with unofficial player representatives.

"It needs fewer autocratic monologues and more genuine, inclusive and transparent dialogue," the union added.

FIFA announced two weeks ago it reached a consensus on key issues after Infantino hosted a group of mostly non-recognized officials in New York ahead of the Club World Cup final.

The latest rift between soccer's governing body and its players' unions flared while the European Commission in Brussels is considering a formal complaint against FIFA. It was filed by FIFPRO's European division and national leagues in Europe against FIFA's style of governance and decision-making.

FIFA denounced what it called Friday the union leadership's "increasingly divisive and contradictory tone" in pursuing a public relations battle "to preserve their own personal positions and interests."

FIFPRO said Friday its core concerns included an overloaded global match calendar with too many games for elite players, lack of physical and mental recovery periods and extreme playing conditions.

Players at the month-long Club World Cup in the United States reported feeling dizzy and unwell in the heat of daytime games played to appeal to worldwide TV audiences.

The 63-game tournament backed by Saudi Arabian money was lucrative for clubs, especially in Europe, though FIFA added it to the schedule without formally consulting players.

The tournament, FIFPRO said, was "celebrated by President Infantino despite being held under conditions that were extreme and inappropriate for any human being, demonstrating a troubling insensitivity to human rights, even when it concerns elite athletes.

"FIFPRO reaffirmed its unwavering commitment to protecting the rights of men and women players - rights which are being seriously undermined by commercial policies imposed by its autocratic system of governance," the Netherlands-based union said of FIFA.

"This is a model that puts the health of players at risk and sidelines those at the heart of the game," FIFPRO said, adding it was "unacceptable for an organization that claims global leadership to turn a blind eye to the basic needs of the players."

FIFA responded by challenging the union to publish its statutes and "transparent annual accounts."

"Let us be clear: you cannot preach transparency while operating in opacity," the world soccer body said.

FIFPRO has not had a formal working agreement with FIFA since the previous one expired in 2023.



In this file photo, President Donald Trump, from right, and FIFA President Gianni Infantino present Chelsea's Cole Palmer with the golden ball trophy after Chelsea won against Paris St Germain in the Club World Cup final, at MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford, N.J. (AP)

Betis completes signing of defender Gomez

Barcelona sells striker Victor to Sporting Braga

MADRID, July 26, (Xinhua): FC Barcelona has sold striker Pau Victor to Portuguese side Sporting Braga for a fee of around 12 million euros (13.2 million US dollars).

Both clubs confirmed the move on Friday evening after Victor was left out of the squad for Barcelona's tour of Japan and South Korea, which took off from the city earlier in the day.

The 23-year-old made 29 first team appearances for Barcelona last season, scoring two goals. However, most of those came from the substitutes' bench, with him totaling fewer than 400 minutes.

The previous season saw him impress with 20 goals for the Barcelona B-team on loan from Girona, which prompted Barca to make the move permanent.

He has signed a five-year contract for Braga with a release clause of 50 million euros (55 million US dollars).

Real Betis has made its seventh signing of the summer with central defender **Valentin Gomez** joining from Argentina's **Velez Sarsfield** for around five million euros (six million U.S. dollars).

Gomez, 22, made 124 appearances for Velez, scoring three goals.

The Argentinian's arrival continues a busy summer for Betis, as last season's UEFA Conference League finalist prepares to compete in La Liga and the Europa League after finishing sixth in La Liga.

The club has also signed central defenders **Natan** from **Napoli** and **Gonzalo Petit** from **Club Nacional**, along with goalkeepers **Alvaro Valles** and **Pau Lopez**, left-back **Junior Firpo** from **Leeds United** and winger **Rodrigo Riquelme** from **Atletico Madrid**.

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NEWS



McLaren driver Lando Norris of Britain, steers his car ahead of Haas driver Esteban Ocon of France during the sprint race ahead of the Formula One Grand Prix at the Spa-Francorchamps racetrack in Spa, Belgium. (AP)

Sports

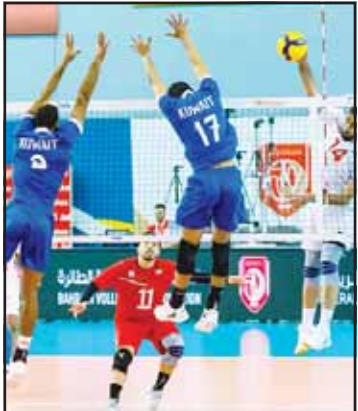
Kuwait volleyball team ends West Asia campaign in fifth

By Hasan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

MANAMA, July 26: Kuwait's national volleyball team wrapped up its campaign at the inaugural West Asia Championship by securing fifth place, following a commanding 3-0 win over the UAE in the fifth-place playoff match. The sets ended 25-17, 30-28, and 25-17 in favor of Al-Azraq. In another placement match, Jordan defeated Lebanon 3-0 to take seventh place.

Kuwait had a challenging start



Players in action during Kuwait and UAE match.

to the tournament, opening with a 0-3 loss to Oman – a result that had a lasting impact on its progression. Despite bouncing back with a 3-2 victory over Saudi Arabia and a close 2-3 loss to Qatar, Kuwait finished fourth in Group B. This set up a quarter-final clash with Group A winner Bahrain, which ended in a 0-3 defeat. However, Al-Azraq responded strongly in the classification stage, defeating both Jordan and the UAE to claim fifth place overall.

Player Abdulnasser Al-Enezi expressed mixed feelings after the final match. While pleased with the team's win over the UAE, he voiced disappointment at missing out on the semifinals. "Fifth place wasn't our ambition — we were aiming for a spot in the final four," he said. "Arriving just one day before the start of the tournament definitely affected our performance against Oman, and that impacted our path in the competition."

Al-Enezi added that the team includes several promising young players and stressed the importance of continued support and development to help them reach their full potential.

Blues face Egypt

Kuwait makes a losing start

By Hasan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

MANAMA, July 26: The Kuwait national basketball team is set to face Egypt today at 4:00 pm in the third round of the 26th Arab Basketball Championship, currently taking place in Bahrain until August 2. Later fixtures include Algeria vs. UAE at 6:00 pm and hosts Bahrain taking on Tunisia at 8:00 pm.

Kuwait began its campaign with a hard-fought 79-87 loss to the UAE. In other opening round results, Algeria defeated Tunisia 88-81, while Bahrain overcame Qatar 72-61.

In the match against the UAE, Kuwait was missing several key players, giving an opportunity for younger talents to step up. Among the standout performers were Ahmed Al-Foudari and Adel Al-Saeed, who impressed with their energy and skill.

The game started evenly, with the UAE narrowly edging the first quarter 23-21. Kuwait rallied in the second quarter, led by

strong efforts from Ahmed Al-Balushi and Mohammed Adnan, briefly taking the lead. However, the UAE regained control before halftime, leading 46-41. It extended its advantage in the third quarter to 68-60 and maintained its momentum to seal an 87-79 victory.



A Kuwaiti player controls the ball during the opening match between Kuwait and UAE.

'Contrasting styles' collide as Spain takes on England in Euro 2025 final

BASEL, Switzerland, July 26, (AP): A title game between defending champion England and World Cup winner Spain is the Women's European Championship final that many wanted. How they got to Basel on Sunday is a whole other story.

Spain has mostly cruised through its five games except for a late scare in a tense semifinal against Germany. England has trailed for long periods of three games and survived being on the brink of elimination in both knockout games.

Spain is a supremely technical team with a dream midfield pairing two-time Ballon d'Or winners Alexia Putellas and Aitana Bonmatí. England has incredible will to win and has called a pair of dramatic game-changers off the bench, Michelle Agyemang and Chloe Kelly.

"We always have the confidence that in terms of positioning and having possession, we tend to be very precise and it's difficult to take the ball off us," Putellas said. "So we're ready for anything."

It looks like an ideal final of contrasting styles. One made possible only because England's humbling opening 2-1 loss to France ultimately kept the title holder out of Spain's side of the knockout bracket.

Four vs. 219. That's the number of minutes Spain has trailed at Euro 2025 games compared to England.

Spain fell behind between the 10th and 14th minutes of a group-stage game against Italy when some starters were rested because the team was likely to finish top.



Players take part in a training session of England's soccer team on the eve of the Women's Euro 2025 final between England and Spain, in Zurich, Switzerland. (AP)

England gave up two first-half goals against France in their group, again to Sweden in the quarterfinals and one more to Italy in the semifinals. England's equalizing goals by Agyemang in the knockout games came in, respectively, the 81st and then the sixth minute of stoppage time.

"I think we've nearly killed her twice this tournament!" England's Ella Toone said of coach Sarina Wiegman. "She says we've definitely aged her."

Spain midfielder Patri Guijarro said of England's resolve: "There's no fragility. And I think that above all, their competitiveness, is what has got them this far. But what they're doing is not easy."

Spain and England each beat the other when winning their recent titles, and they traded wins in a UEFA Nations League group this year.

Kuwait youth team intensifies training in Serbia



Players supervised by officials during a training session in Serbia.

BELGRADE, July 26: The Kuwaiti youth national team continues its daily training sessions – held both morning and evening – as part of its ongoing camp in Serbia in preparation for upcoming competitions.

The coaching staff remains focused on raising the players' physical readiness, ensuring full squad preparedness, and strengthening team cohesion during this important phase.

ing this important phase.

Ayman Al-Husseini, member of the Kuwait Football Association's Board of Directors and head of the team's delegation, expressed his gratitude to Fakhad Al-Tawajer, Diplomatic Attaché at the Kuwaiti Embassy in Belgrade, for his consistent support and follow-up with the delegation throughout the camp.

Pogacar closes in on 4th Tour title

Groves wins penultimate stage



Australia's Kaden Groves crosses the finish line to win the twentieth stage of the Tour de France cycling race over 184.2 kilometers (114.5 miles) with start in Nantua and finish in Pontarlier, France. (AP)

PONTARLIER, France, July 26, (AP): Tadej Pogacar closed in on a fourth Tour de France title after safely finishing Saturday's penultimate stage and maintaining his big lead over arch-rival Jonas Vingegaard.

Australian rider Kaden Groves won stage 20 with a late solo breakaway, while Pogacar rolled over the line about seven minutes later in the same time as Vingegaard.

The Slovenian cycling star leads the two-time Tour winner Vingegaard by 4 minutes, 24 seconds, with German rider Florian Lipowitz 11:03 behind Pogacar in third overall.

Barring a heavy crash or illness, Pogacar was expected to celebrate Sunday and move level with British rider Chris Froome on four Tour titles. Victory would also give Pogacar a fifth Grand Tour after winning the Giro d'Italia in

dominant fashion last year.

However, Sunday's final stage is not a processional one, as is usually the case, and could potentially prove somewhat problematic toward the end with three consecutive climbs.

The 184.2-kilometer route through eastern France featured three small climbs and a moderately difficult one up Côte de Thésy before finishing in Pontarlier. But there was scant opportunity for Vingegaard to attack Pogacar.

As the riders set off Saturday in driving rain, the yellow jersey group stayed safely at the front until breakaways formed.

When the front group tackled the 3.6-kilometer Côte de Thésy, Frenchman Jordan Jegat launched a solo attack, but he was then overtaken by Australian rider Harrison Sweeny.

As rain fell heavily again with 40 kilometers, Sweeny opened up a 50-second lead, only to be reeled in shortly after.

The wet roads were treacherous at high speeds. Frenchman Romain Grégoire and Spaniard Iván Romeo crashed taking a sharp turn and slid sideways off their bikes. Both continued.

Groves surged ahead 16 kilometers out and held on for his first Tour stage win and 10th at major races. The 26-year-old has two at the Giro d'Italia and seven at the Spanish Vuelta.

Groves was 54 seconds ahead of Frank van den Broek and 59 clear of Pascal Eenkhoorn.

Verstappen claims sprint

Norris takes pole for F1's Belgian Grand Prix

SPA-FRANCORCHAMPS, Belgium, July 26, (AP): Lando Norris took pole position Saturday for Formula 1's Belgian Grand Prix after Max Verstappen won the sprint race earlier in the day.

Norris set the fastest time early in the final session. His McLaren teammate and title rival Oscar Piastri couldn't quite beat it on his final run, taking second place, 0.085 of a second off Norris' pace.

Charles Leclerc was third for Ferrari, with Verstappen fourth.

The likelihood of rain for Sunday's race could shake things up.

Verstappen overtook Oscar Piastri and drove "15 qualifying laps" to win the Formula 1 sprint race at the Belgian GP as Red Bull begins a new era without fired team principal Christian Horner.

Verstappen surged past Piastri on the straight on the first lap. The Australian was close behind Verstappen for the rest of the 15-lap sprint race but couldn't find a way past the four-time champion.

Lando Norris, in the other McLaren,



Red Bull driver Max Verstappen of the Netherlands waves after crossing the finish line to win the sprint race ahead of the Formula One Grand Prix at the Spa-Francorchamps racetrack in Spa, Belgium. (AP)

was third after retaking the place from Ferrari's Charles Leclerc and catching up to Piastri.

"You're keeping faster cars behind, so you have to drive over the limit of what you think is possible," Verstappen said.

"Tire management is out of the window, so that's what's making it really difficult. I'm just doing 15 qualifying laps to try and keep them behind on a track where tire management is important."

It was Verstappen's first race win of any sort since the Emilia-Romagna Grand Prix in May, and his first in a sprint since the United States Grand Prix last October.

Piastri extends his lead over Norris in the standings to nine points from eight. Verstappen is third, 68 points off the lead.

Leclerc held on to fourth and it was an impressive result for Haas, with Esteban Ocon fifth and Oliver Bearman seventh. Carlos Sainz, Jr. was sixth for Williams and Isack Hadjar took the final point for Racing Bulls in eighth.

Best of the Rest

NZ secures dramatic tri-series win: Two spectacular catches in the last over delivered by fast bowler Matt Henry earned New Zealand a dramatic three-run victory against South Africa in the final match of the tri-series on Saturday.

Michael Bracewell pulled off a sensational catch on the edge of the boundary at mid-wicket to dismiss dangerman Dewald Brevis for 31. Daryl Mitchell then dived full-length to grab a stunning two-hander off George Linde at long-on as South Africa was restricted to 177-6 and the Black Caps lifted the title.

Earlier, New Zealand made 180-5 with Devon Conway and Rachin Ravindra both scoring 47 and Tim Seifert hitting 30 after South Africa had won the toss and elected to field.

Brevis brought down the target to seven runs in the final over of tournament's highest wicket-taker Henry when he smashed two sixes against Jacob Duffy in the 19th over that featured a one-handed baseball-like swipe over long-on to a wide full toss.

However, Henry conceded just three runs in the 20th over to finish with 10 wickets in four games. New Zealand ended the tournament as the only unbeaten team with host Zimbabwe losing all four matches. (AP)