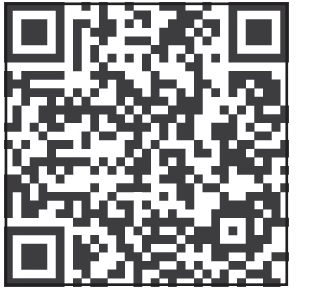




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Opinion

Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

First Deputy Prime Minister ... We want a more streamlined Visa Platform

FIRST of all, His Excellency the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef, I must appreciate you for the 'Kuwait Visa' platform.

It is a step in the right direction toward opening Kuwait to the world. It is in line with the move of other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, which preceded us years ago when they opened their borders to everyone; enabling them to benefit from this by enhancing trade and building projects, while consolidating a service-based economy. For those who do not realize its importance, this economy is a major contributor to the gross domestic product (GDP).

The Gulf countries' reliance on oil, without diversifying their sources of income, could ultimately lead to what happened to Nauru – a country that was once wealthy, thanks to its phosphate reserves.

Nauru got accustomed to rapid wealth without planning for the future, which led to its transformation into a failed State. It is now dependent on international aid.

This warning crisis has alerted many countries regarding the need to diversify their sources of income; a step that Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Qatar and Bahrain have taken.

Kuwait, however, has lagged behind due to parliamentary interventions when the National Assembly, in one form or another, was in power.

Despite the excellent step taken by the Ministry of Interior; those wishing to visit Kuwait for a project, family visit or tourism continue to face obstacles.

This means that the ministry entered through the door of openness, but exited through the window of secondary restrictions that do not exist in the same system of other Gulf states.

Previously, a woman wishing to visit her family was required to obtain a ridiculous 'not pregnant' certificate (for which, Kuwait is unique among all other countries in the world). It also required visitors to present a university degree certificate, among other things that are still in effect; and there are complications that seem even more absurd.

For instance, expatriates are prevented from bringing certain family members like grandchildren, because the 'Kuwait visa' does not have a box for grandchildren, does

not require a set of documents or has no 'box' for uploading such documents to the application.

Without a doubt, this means that the effort applied is zero. When someone submits an application and rejected under the pretext of 'security restrictions', there is no explanation for this restriction.

In reality and in other countries around the world, this is clarified in detail; so that people can understand the violation.

Perhaps, there is a similarity in names, which deprives Kuwait of the capital that one intended to invest in it.

Your Excellency, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, no one doubts your commitment to do everything beneficial to the country.

Nevertheless, we must speak frankly. This is not how things are done. The correct move is for us to see the benefits available in the world and work towards them, so that we can be the best.

If we want visitors to come to us, we must make things easy. However, if the intention is to make things difficult, that is another matter!

Your Excellency the Minister, we address our message to the entire government: Enough with the closure of the country – a result of the approach followed during the time of the National Assembly.

Today, Kuwait has about five million people, including four million expatriates. If each of them brings a relative to visit, this means significant economic activity, as well as a GDP that is almost equal to the income of a poor country.

Therefore, facilitate and develop the 'Kuwait Visa' platform; following the example of other Gulf countries whose GDPs are many times greater than Kuwait's.

Your Excellency the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior; facilitate, do not complicate, so that the flag can visit Kuwait.

What matters is that your security is strong and your eyes are open.

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Kuwaiti courage defies time at 35



KUNA photo

File photo shows Kuwait's oil wells ravaged and destroyed during the brutal Iraqi invasion.

FM salutes int'l allies on invasion anniversary

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 2, (KUNA): Kuwait marked on Saturday the 35th anniversary of the 1990 brutal Iraqi invasion, a blatant act of aggression aimed at erasing the nation's identity and sovereignty and attempting to wipe out the existence of an independent state.

The invasion by the former Iraqi regime led to widespread destruction, including the burning of 752 oil wells, the sabotage of vital infrastructure, and the planting of landmines, as part of a scorched-earth policy aimed at obstructing Kuwait's liberation.

The occupation ended on February 26, 1991, following an international coalition operation under United Nations Security Council (UNSC) mandates.

The Kuwaiti leadership, headed by the late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the late Amir - then Crown Prince - Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, and the late Amir - then Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister - Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, who played a central role in uniting the nation and mobilizing global support to restore Kuwait's sovereignty.

Following the liberation of Kuwait, the country adopted a policy of distinguishing between the former Iraqi regime and the Iraqi people, and it has ever since provided extensive humanitarian assistance to Iraq.

In July 2014, the State of Kuwait donated three million US

dollars to support humanitarian operations in Iraq, followed in 2015 by an unprecedented USD 200 million contribution to relief efforts for internally displaced persons (IDPs). The food aid included more than 50,000 food baskets distributed in the Kurdistan Region and other affected cities.

In July 2016, the country also pledged USD 176 million in humanitarian aid to Iraq during a donors' conference in the US capital, Washington, prompting the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to publicly commend its ongoing efforts to achieve stability in the region.

The State of Kuwait also played host to the International Conference for the Reconstruction of Iraq, which was held in 2018 and where pledges reached approximately USD 30 billion in humanitarian aid to Baghdad.

Kuwait continues to recover the remains of its martyrs and looted national property while maintaining its commitment to peace, regional stability, and strengthening fraternal ties with the Iraqi people.

First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah said, Friday marking the 35th anniversary of the Iraqi invasion, that such day, (August 2), is a critical historical turning point in the nation's journey.

In a statement to KUNA, Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef added, the occasion also revealed to the world the extent of Kuwaitis' solidarity and support for their legitimate leadership, as well as their firm belief that unity is capable of confronting the most daunting challenges.

Continued on Page 5

Scheming for Schengen: Kuwait authorities expose forgery gang

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 2: The Residency and Nationality Affairs Sector, represented by the General Department of Residence Affairs Investigations, has arrested an organized gang involved in forging official Kuwaiti documents intended for use in obtaining European visas for illegal immigration and asylum in the European Union member states, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a statement, the Ministry of Interior confirmed that the arrests were based on the directives of First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah, following his recent official visit to the Arab Re-

public of Egypt. The visit resulted in enhanced information exchange and joint security coordination.

The ministry explained that the gang specialized in forging a number of government documents, including work permits, amendments to salary and job titles, civil ID modifications with company names, falsified bank statements with counterfeit stamps, and forged salary certificates.

These forged documents were designed to meet the criteria set by European embassies for issuing Schengen

Continued on Page 5

Kuwait levels up in gaming

As part of its 17th Cultural Summer Festival, the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL) opened 'Made in Kuwait Electronic Games Expo' at the Avenues Mall, Phase 2, on Friday.

The three-day event provides the audience with a unique experience to play the innovative games and interact with - and express their opin-

ions to their developers, director of NCCAL's electronic games program Aminah Al-Saad told reporters.

The exhibits were designed by talented Kuwaiti youth, including programmers, musicians, cartoonists and storytellers, she said, adding that the Expo falls in the framework of efforts to promote the quality of domestically-developed digital products. (KUNA)



Photo by Mohamad Morsi

Shrimp haul marks a promising start to the fishing season, with over 8 tons caught on opening day.

Strong market turnout

Kuwaiti seafood bounty returns as shrimp fishing season begins

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 2: The shrimp fishing season officially began on Friday, August 1 in Kuwait's economic zone, following the issuance of necessary permits.

Engineer Salem Al-Hai, Director-General of the Public Authority for Agriculture Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR), stated in a press release that the launch of the season aims to support marine fish stocks and help supply shrimp to the local market following the end of the annual fishing ban period.

He urged all fishermen to strictly adhere to regulations to protect marine resources.

Al-Hai added that shrimp fishing within Kuwait's territorial waters will be permitted starting September 1, using environmentally friendly "Kofa

nets" through trawling methods.

Meanwhile, Secretary of the Kuwait Fishermen's Union Barrak Al-Subaie revealed that the Kuwaiti fishing fleet, consisting of 275 dinghies, launched operations to supply fresh shrimp to the local market, adding that local shrimp have made a strong return to the markets in abundant quantities.

He expressed optimism among fishermen, particularly following a successful start to the zubaidi fishing season, which began in mid-July, indicating that this season has helped stabilize the market and the fish prices, with medium-sized zubaidi fish (cod) now selling for between KD 40 and KD 60 per basket.

According to Al-Subaie, the catch over the past 24 hours included approximately 8 tons of shrimp and 3 tons of zubaidi.

Continued on Page 5

Radar road sweep nets 8 offenders, 225 violations

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 2: The Ministry of Interior announced the arrest of eight individuals, including wanted persons, and the issuance of 225 various traffic citations during a traffic campaign using mobile radar devices on Friday, August 1 on Mutlaa Road, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

According to a statement issued by the General Department of Public Relations and Security Media at the Ministry of Interior, the arrested individuals included five juveniles who were caught driving without licenses and one individual who was wanted on existing arrest warrants. Two others were placed in precautionary detention, and seven vehicles were impounded for serious traffic offenses.

The ministry explained that the

campaign was part of its efforts to apprehend violators and apply the law equally to all. Such traffic campaigns will continue daily in all governorates, particularly in areas prone to congestion and repeated violations.

Reaffirming its zero-tolerance policy, the ministry stated that it will not hesitate to take legal action against anyone who endangers public safety.

It urged all motorists to strictly follow traffic laws and pay close attention to warning signs and signals.

The ministry highlighted that the primary goal of these campaigns is preventive, and to promote a safer traffic environment rooted in legal responsibility and respect for the rules of the road.

News watch

KUWAIT CITY: The Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs has welcomed Portugal's decision to start procedures to officially recognize the State of Palestine.

In a press release, the ministry said Kuwait hails this significant step that contributes to achieving relevant UN Security Council (UNSC) resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative for empowering the Palestinian people to have self-determination and establish their independent statehood on the 1967 border with East Jerusalem as its capital. (KUNA)

ISLAMABAD: President of Iran, Dr Masoud Pezeshkian, arrived on Saturday in the eastern Lahore city, on a two-day visit to Pakistan.

He was received by provincial Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz on arrival. During his stay, the Iranian President is scheduled to meet his Pakistani counterpart Asif Ali Zardari and hold delegation-level talks with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. (KUNA)



8 InvestGB celebrates interns on 'Intern Day'



8 stc launches long-term incentive program

8 Moody's upgrades Warba Bank credit ratings across the board



KUNA photo

Visitors explore and test locally developed digital games at the 'Made in Kuwait Electronic Games Expo' launched by the NCCAL at The Avenues Mall as part of the 17th Cultural Summer Festival.

Prayer Timings			
Fajr	03:40	Asr	15:30
Sunrise ..	05:08	Maghrib ..	18:40
Zohr	11:54	Isha	20:05

Local

Weather			
Expected weather for next 24 hrs:			
By Day: Very hot with moderate to fresh northwesterly wind, with speeds of 20-55 km/h causing rising dust.			
By Night: Hot to rather hot with light to moderate northwesterly			
Station	Max Exp	Min Rec	
Kuwait City	49	38	
Kuwait Airport	49	37	
Abdaly	48	33	
Bubyan	47	32	
Jahra	49	35	
Salmiyah	46	36	
Ahmadi	44	32	
Nuwaisib	48	35	
Wafra	48	35	
Salmly	45	31	

Wound etched deep in memories

35 years on Kuwaiti women remember the dark days

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 2: Every year, on this day, a painful memory returns -- one steeped in lessons and laced with sorrow: the memory of the brutal Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. It is a wound etched deeply into the collective memory of every Kuwaiti man and woman.

Thirty five years have passed, yet the stories of resilience, sacrifice and unwavering unity continue to echo from generation to generation. They are reminders of a people who stood tall in the face of unimaginable adversity.

The newspaper amplifies the voices of Kuwaiti women who lived through those dark days; as they recounted their personal experiences, their emotions, and the indelible impact the invasion left on their lives.

The following testimonies serve as a powerful affirmation of the critical and courageous role that Kuwaiti women played during one of the most harrowing chapters in the history of the nation.

Attorney Sarah Al-Duaij disclosed “I will never forget the day when Saddam’s forces invaded Kuwait. I was in Egypt on a short work assignment. I left Kuwait on July 30, 1990 and took my son Abdullah with me; while my other son, Hisham, stayed with my sister. On the morning of Aug 2, I did something I never normally did: I turned on the radio in the hotel room. What I heard shook me to the core – cries from Kuwait Radio pleading for help: ‘Where are you, Arabs? We are being invaded in our sleep by those we once trusted.’ I rushed to the Kuwaiti Embassy in Cairo. By 10:00 am, the place was overflowing with distraught Kuwaitis. People were shouting, ‘Give us weapons, send us back to Kuwait!’ It was utter chaos, heartbreak, disbelief. I kept asking myself, ‘Are we now like Palestine? Are we destined to become a people in exile, living under occupation?’ I could not comprehend what was happening.”

Occupation

President and Founder of the Happiness and Positivity Association Counselor Najat Al-Hashash shared “even after 35 years, the memories are still vivid. It was no ordinary Thursday -- it was a day veiled in betrayal, in treachery. An Arab Muslim leader shattered the bonds of blood, faith and brotherhood. But Kuwaitis did not crumble. In the face of occupation, they rose with courage. Our people -- men, women and even children -- offered powerful images of resilience. They resisted. They fought. They made the aggressors pay the price through loss of lives and equipment. Those were



Kuwaitis worked as one to extinguish oil wells lit by the retreating Iraqi forces.

bitter days, but also days that revealed the greatness of the Kuwaiti spirit.”

Attorney Alaa Al-Saeedi stated that “Aug 2, 1990 marks one of the darkest moments in modern Kuwaiti history. It was a day of treachery, a day our peaceful homeland was invaded. Thirty five years later, we still carry the weight of those memories – the fear, the uncertainty, but also the unshakable faith in our return to freedom. My family, like so many others, lived through each anxious hour. Security vanished, and we relied on our faith and each other. Neighbors became like family. Hardship brought out the heroism in people. We believed, deeply and completely, that Kuwait would return – and thanks to Allah, and to the sacrifices of our martyrs and prisoners, it did.”

Resolve

Writer and entrepreneur Asrar Hayat recalled “35 years ago today, we awoke to the unimaginable -- the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. We couldn’t believe our eyes – tanks rolling through the streets of our peaceful city. The first emotion was fear – for our families, our nation, our future. But fear soon turned into resolve. A powerful desire to reclaim Kuwait surged through us. We leaned on each other, neighbors became our backbone, and the solidarity we felt carried us through. I will never forget the martyrs – brave, selfless souls – who laid down their lives to defend our land. Their blood nourishes the soil of this nation forever.”

Writer Ban Al-Rifai pointed out that “the invasion remains a painful scar on our collective memory even 35 years later. I remember feeling paralyzed by fear – not just for myself, but for my family, my loved ones. The days were dark, filled with confusion, sadness and uncertainty. A week before the invasion, I had finally obtained my driver’s license and was awaiting the delivery of a new car. That joy was short-lived. The invasion crushed it. Though I got my money back after liberation, the sense of loss, of dreams interrupted, futures paused still lingers. There were strange and haunting moments, too – bizarre behaviors of Iraqi soldiers that felt surreal. Yet, amid the chaos, Kuwaiti women stood tall. Their resilience became a source of strength. Their whispered prayers and quiet defiance echoed through the nights, a powerful undercurrent of resistance.”

Fashion designer Itidal Al-Ghaithi asserted that “on this day, 35 years ago, our lives changed forever. I still remember my aunt shaking me awake with the horrifying news that Iraqi forces had entered Kuwait. I rushed to the balcony and saw tanks rolling down our street. It was a moment that etched itself into my memory – a mix of disbelief and dread. That morning, panic swept over us; but, somehow, even in fear, the Kuwaiti spirit never broke.”

National unity at peak: Ahmadi Gov

‘Kuwaitis sacrificed lives for homeland’



Sheikh Humoud Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 2, (KUNA): Ahmadi Governor Sheikh Humoud Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah affirmed Friday the Kuwaiti people’s steadfastness and sacrifice during the 1990 Iraqi invasion had illustrated an honorable model of national unity and cohesion behind the wise political leadership.

Speaking to KUNA in a statement on the 35th anniversary of the invasion, the governor said the Kuwaitis had offered noble sacrifices to defend their dear homeland, recalling proudly Kuwaiti martyrs who had died for the sake of their homeland.

He expressed extreme appreciation and thanks for these honorable positions made by sisterly and friendly countries to support Kuwait and its fair issue, and harness all potential to help the country liberate its land.

He prayed Allah the Almighty to bestow mercy on the martyrs’ souls, and maintain security and stability in Kuwait, under the wise leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.



The Al-Qurain House where Kuwaiti resistance fighters laid down their lives and pictures of martyrs during the Iraqi invasion put up on walls inside the house.



KUNA photos

‘Brave Kuwaitis stood behind wise leadership’

Scars remain on Failaka Isle: Col Marriot

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 2: Defense Attaché at the British Embassy in Kuwait Naval Staff Colonel Neil Marriot affirmed that the memory of the brutal Iraqi invasion of Kuwait will remain etched in history.

He revealed that his recent visit to Failaka Island was a moment of reflection on the scars of that dark era, still visible on the island.

In a video clip posted on his Instagram account, Marriot said Failaka Island “tells a powerful story about the resilience of Kuwaitis who refused to surrender to aggression. I saw destroyed tanks and armored vehicles left behind after the invasion – a painful reminder of the violence and devastation that the country experienced at the time.”

He walked among the ruins of homes, whose walls tell painful tales of loss. He visited the old Bank of Kuwait and the Middle East building, whose walls were pierced by bullets from inside and outside.

He saw the destroyed fire station, the burned cooperative society, and the teachers’ residences which, in turn, tell another story of pain. He added “every corner of the island speaks of an unfulfilled dream.”

He stated that “Kuwait remained steadfast, with its leadership, government and people standing united in the face of aggression.” He confirmed that the United Kingdom supported Kuwait at the time by contributing more than 52,000 troops; along with tanks, ships and aircraft, in defense of its sovereignty and freedom.

He concluded his remarks with a moving message:



Col Neil Marriot

“To the martyrs of Kuwait, your sacrifice will remain an inextinguishable beacon. To Kuwait, your dignity is engraved in the memory of generations ... unforgettable and untouchable.”

Kuwaiti martyrs ... timeless legacy of heroism and national sacrifice

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 2, (KUNA): With unmatched courage and sacrifice, Kuwait’s martyrs wrote eternal chapters of heroism during the brutal 1990 Iraqi invasion.

From soldiers on the battlefield to civilians and resistance fighters who sacrificed their lives in covert operations or under torture, they became enduring symbols of national pride and resilience.

The Kuwaiti resistance stood as a beacon of patriotism, uniting citizens in bold, high-risk missions, including intelligence gathering, sabotaging Iraqi supply lines, and direct strikes against the invasion forces.

Following the liberation of Kuwait, the government moved swiftly to honor its heroes, establishing the Martyrs’ Office in 1991 to care for their families and honor their legacy.

Landmark projects such as Al-Shaheed Park and Al-Qurain Martyrs Museum now stand as living testaments to their bravery.

The sacrifices of the Kuwaiti martyrs continue to inspire new generations, instilling the enduring values of unity, patriotism, and unwavering devotion to the homeland.

Saudi, Bahraini envoys laud Kuwaiti sons, daughters to resist occupation

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 2: Ambassador of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques to Kuwait Prince Sultan bin Saad Al Saud praised the sacrifice, courage and bravery of the sons and daughters of Kuwait in resisting the brutal Iraqi occupation of Kuwait on Aug 2, 1990; until Kuwait was returned to its people and leadership who exerted tremendous efforts and made sacrifices to restore the country to its former glory.

He prayed to Almighty Allah to bestow His mercy upon the innocent martyrs of Kuwait and upon HH the late Amirs of Kuwait, Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad, Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah, Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad and Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad.

He also implored Allah to protect His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled and Kuwait from all forms of harm and misfortune.

Meanwhile, the Bahraini Ambassador to Kuwait Salah Al-Maliki disclosed that “on the anniversary of the brutal invasion and the painful history that I witnessed when I was 16 years old; I can only stand today, 35 years later,



Prince Sultan



Salah Al-Maliki

with utmost reverence before its towering towers of pride, security and safety, and pray to Allah Almighty to have mercy on the former Amirs of the State of Kuwait (may Allah have mercy on them), who devoted their lives to serving the country of goodness, prosperity and steadfastness, and its noble and generous people.”

He added “I witnessed the events of the invasion, with its painful days and bitterness, day by day, due to the close, high and precious status that Kuwait holds for every Bahraini family; strengthened by kinship, family blood ties, marriage and a depth of history that distinguishes it from other peoples.”

He asked the Almighty to protect sisterly Kuwait under the banner of its leader, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah (may Allah protect him and grant him health and a long life); and all the honorable Al-Sabah family and the loyal and dear Kuwaiti people from all harm, and to have mercy on its righteous martyrs who sacrificed their lives for the precious soil of Kuwait, and for its banner to remain flying high among nations, free and impregnable against everyone who opposes it.

Expedite termination of top brass: CEO

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 2: Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) Sheikh Nawaf Al-Saud has asked the heads of subsidiaries to expedite the termination of team leaders, managers and other employees at the same level.

This decision was taken at a time that KPC announced increasing the acceptance rate for technical diploma holders from 50 percent to 71 percent. It applies to employees, who have completed 35 years of service and are

registered with the Public Institution for Social Security (PIFSS), provided they are given at least three months notice prior to the end of service.

Sources stated that the decision stipulates extension in exceptional cases -- a maximum of three years or until they reach the age of 60, whichever comes first -- as per the criteria and conditions.

Sources disclosed that the extension decision mandates the CEO of the concerned oil company to submit a letter of recommendation to the KPC CEO, indicating the justifications for extension.

They added the oil sector will soon witness the issuance of a decision to increase the number of nationals employed in the subsidiaries through the publication of more job advertisements and filling vacancies in the subsidiaries. They affirmed that the CEO prioritizes preserving Kuwaiti human expertise in the oil sector.

Meanwhile , Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC) has completed the transfer of assets and operations of LPG cylinder filling plants, as well as the employees of Kuwait Oil Tanker Company (KOTC), to be under its financial responsibility.

diwaniya

ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

‘A successful project is run by original owner’

“TO the Minister of Information, or in other words, to the media and cultural leadership responsible for managing the state’s official media and cultural affairs ... It appears that the Kuwaitization policy, which has been in place since the founding of the modern state after independence, is no longer a priority for those entrusted with overseeing media and cultural matters . This is particularly concerning, as leaders in these fields should not only uphold this policy but lead by example in implementing it.” Kuwaiti journalist **Hassan Ali Karam** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“Even during the early days of establishing the foundations of official media, there were capable Kuwaiti professionals who managed and led the media sector.



Hassan Ali Karam

“In simple terms, there were broadcasters, program presenters, and newscasters. I am certain that the current young staff managing media affairs, in all ranks, have not lived through or kept pace with the era of the founding generation from the 1950s and 1960s.

“I am referring to the era that included names like Hamad Al-Momen and Abdurrazzaq Al-Sayyid (brother of the artist Abdulhamid Al-Sayyid), as well as female voices such as Basma Sulaiman and Sheikha Al-Zahem. These were among the Kuwaiti voices that introduced the iconic “Here is Kuwait” soundtrack on news broadcasts and various radio programs.

“The late Hamad Al-Momen was the knight of radio and the maestro of news broadcasts, along with Salem Al-Fahad Al-Tabikh, Majed Al-Shatti, and Mohammad Al-Rashed Al-Mulla (father of journalist Hessa Al-Mulla).

“As the “kingspins” of the ivory tower know, most of these individuals did not hold university degrees. Yet, they were inspiring, deeply passionate about media, and committed to reading and learning.

“If there are members of the current generation who carry on what they established, they represent an extension of those earlier pioneers.

“What the “kingspins” of the Ministry of Information resist, however, is how easily they can drag their pens to issue retirement notices.

“The question is - Where did this alien, unprecedented, and foreign practice in the media come from?

“A journalist should only retire due to ill health or for valid reasons such as transferring from one media role to another.

“Media is not a transactional job; it is an art, a form of creativity, and a passion. Creativity is measured by effort, not by job title.

“There are media professionals on international television channels who have reached advanced ages, yet they continue to contribute, innovate, and present programs, attracting millions of followers.

“So why are media professionals on official channels treated like mere “transitional” employees?

“For example, how many Kuwaiti newsreaders are there on radio and television to justify retiring them while they are still at the peak of their creative and productive lives?

“Take, for instance, Youssef Mustafa, Iman Ahmed Shehab, Fatima Al-Qattan, and others. Do the gentlemen in the upper floors of the Media Building know that Iman Shehab comes from a distinguished media family?

“Who remembers Saleh Shehab, the Assistant Undersecretary for Tourism and Press and a pioneer in tourism promotion?

“Who remembers radio personality Abdulaziz Shehab, the distinguished voice who broadcast Friday prayers and Hajj seasons and also read the news bulletins? Or our colleague and journalist Youssef Shehab, author of the “Sharbaka” column in Al-Qabas newspaper?

“There are other successful broadcasters, newsreaders, and program presenters, both in language and voice, but it seems the “kingspins” of the media don’t care about showcasing a successful Kuwaiti media personality on screen or reading the news bulletin on Kuwait Radio.

“Kuwaiti media is approaching 100 years old if we consider the early efforts of pioneers like Youssef Sherine Behbehani Yaqoub and Murad Sherine, and their attempts to introduce television.

“Among the Kuwaiti artists who contributed to Sherine’s radio station were Mahmoud Al-Kuwaiti and others.

“Kuwait has been and will remain a center of creativity, but the ivory tower crew in the ministry building doesn’t like to hear this and refuses to accept it.

“Nonetheless, our media will remain foreign to us, to Kuwait, and to Kuwaitis as long as those “outsiders” continue to dominate our media affairs.”

Also:

“Let us speak realistically and frankly. Although opinions differ on the events of October 7, 2023, some believe they achieved nothing, while others see them as having brought the Palestinian cause to the forefront of global attention. These events have undeniably brought about significant changes over the course of 663 days,” columnist Eng. **Adel Al-Jarallah Al-Kharafi** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“Regardless of our stance on the matter, whether we agree or disagree, there are many positives to acknowledge. The greatest of these is the widespread support from international public opinion for the Gaza issue. Today, we see France, England, and other European countries moving toward recognizing the Palestinian state, while many countries have

boycotted Israel. Even the American stance has shifted recently, with Donald Trump changing his position on the issue of famine.

“He said bluntly, “I think everyone, unless they are callous or worse, insane, has no choice but to see how horrific it is when children, whether the discussion is about famine or not, are starving.”

“It is true that what is happening in Gaza has gone beyond madness and has convinced the entire world that the only way to stop this war is by establishing a fully sovereign Palestinian state. This can only be achieved through a force capable of convincing more countries that no government can erase a people and seize their land based on selective interpretations of historical rights.

“For decades, Israel has worked to portray itself as the victim, but since October 7, 2023, it has revealed its true face. The brutality with which it has acted has surpassed all expectations. This is why the world has begun to condemn and boycott it.

“Today, Israel stands as a pariah entity. Public opinion is the most powerful force when it moves in the right direction. Consequently, the US president has shifted his tone and started using emotional language regarding the Palestinians.

“The question now is - Doesn’t this global popular movement need to harness the capabilities of Arab countries and their media to build a global soft power in support of Palestine?”

“Arab and Islamic countries possess significant media platforms and capabilities, as well as the diplomatic power to send a clear message to the world that the time has come for Palestinians to have a state. In this context, international public opinion must be leveraged, as it is the most powerful weapon in this war. The dreams of the Palestinian people will not be realized unless there is a unified Arab force actively playing its role on all fronts, especially in light of the significant shift that has taken place in Europe.”

□ □ □

“It is impossible to discuss the improvement in quality of life in Kuwait without acknowledging the remarkable progress made by Kuwait Municipality in recent years. As part of the government’s vision to enhance public services for both citizens and residents, the municipality has taken concrete steps toward modernization and development by placing technology and the needs of the people at the core of its priorities,” Saudi writer **Hajar Al-Salem** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“Kuwait Municipality realized early the importance of digital transformation and launched a range of electronic platforms and smart applications that brought services closer to users and made them more efficient. Citizens no longer need to stand in long lines to obtain a construction license, file a complaint, or pay a fine, as these transactions can now be completed within minutes through the app or website.

“This advancement also included the introduction of electronic payment systems, saving a lot of time and effort. Also, online services for submitting complaints and suggestions were implemented, allowing citizens to actively participate as true partners in enhancing municipal performance.

“Another positive development has been the simplification of procedures for issuing building permits and urban planning. Applications can now be submitted electronically, with significantly reduced waiting times, thanks to effective coordination with relevant authorities.

“Public health and a clean environment have always been top priorities for Kuwait Municipality. In this regard, the municipality has



Al-Salem

increased the frequency of inspection campaigns targeting markets, restaurants, and public facilities to ensure compliance with health and environmental standards. It has also launched intensive awareness campaigns to educate the community on the importance of environmental preservation and active participation in cleanliness efforts.

“In response to escalating environmental challenges, Kuwait Municipality has introduced pioneering waste collection and recycling initiatives, including the implementation of smart containers, as a step toward more sustainable urban living. The municipality has also placed special emphasis on expanding green spaces, recognizing their positive impact on both the environment and residents’ well-being.

“There is no doubt that parks and public gardens have become a vital part of modern urban life. In response, Kuwait Municipality has launched development projects, established new parks, and enhanced operation and maintenance services to ensure their sustainability and effectiveness. These efforts have helped create a more attractive and comfortable urban environment for citizens.

“In the age of digital media, Kuwait Municipality has also understood the importance of community engagement by strengthening its presence on social media platforms, bringing it closer to the public. The progress we see today in the municipality’s services reflects ongoing government efforts to realize an ambitious vision for a better future. As this approach continues, we look forward to seeing Kuwait emerge as a leading model in smart and integrated urban management.”

— Compiled by Mahmoud Attiyeh/Simi K. Kutty

Major drugs gang with global links busted

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 2: In a major breakthrough, the General Department for Drug Control, part of the Criminal Security Sector, has dismantled what is considered the largest international gang involved in smuggling and distributing psychotropic drugs – most notably Lyrica – within Kuwait, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily .

This successful operation coincided with the interception of a large shipment arriving via air cargo from Hong Kong. Based on intelligence provided by the Anti-Narcotics Department, the General Administration of Customs intercepted a consignment containing 270,000 narcotic capsules.

The Ministry of Interior reported that the primary suspect in this case is a Kuwaiti inmate known as “M.H.”, currently serving time in the central prison for multiple drug trafficking charges and court convictions. Investigators traced the activities of one of his outside accomplices, “R.Sh.”, an individual residing illegally in the country. He was caught red-handed while selling psychotropic drugs to an undercover agent.

Further investigations led authorities to a remote barn in the Kabd area, rented by a citizen identified as “A.Kh.” for KD 600 per month. A raid was carried out at the location,



Mol photo

The two main defendants.

where the suspect violently resisted arrest, resulting in damage to police vehicles.

The operation culminated in the seizure of more than 500,000 capsules from the barn, raising the total confiscated quantity to ap-

proximately 800,000 capsules. Additionally, a quantity of powdered Lyrica was also discovered, with the total haul estimated to be worth a significant amount on the black market.

Article 8 woman in illegal facelift

Vet substitutes plastic surgeon

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 2: **The General Department of Criminal Investigations, represented by the Hawally Investigations Department, arrested an Arab national, who was working as a veterinarian at an agricultural contracting company, for impersonating a plastic surgeon and practicing cosmetic medicine without a license, reports Al-Seyassah daily.**

The suspect was working inside an unlicensed women’s salon in Sabah Al-Salem, which had been illegally converted into a cosmetic clinic.

The Ministry of Interior explained that the security raid led to the suspect’s arrest at the scene, where he admitted to administering cosmetic injections for up to KD 50, despite lacking any official medical license from the relevant authorities.

The cosmetic equipment, unlicensed medical supplies and injections, as well as a laser device intended for medical clinics, were seized during the raid.

Three female workers - one of African nationality and two of Arab nationality -

were also found practicing medical and cosmetic procedures without a license.

Investigations revealed that the salon owner falls under the category of individuals whose citizenship was recently revoked and is treated as Kuwaiti under Article 8. She runs a network of six salons and women’s health centers functioning as unlicensed beauty clinics.

The accused admitted to converting her salons into unlicensed clinics and acknowledged that her employees practice medicine without any official medical supervision.

She also admitted to having an Arab partner working with her, who currently resides outside the country.

An Arab expatriate, working as a pharmacist at the Sabah Al-Salem North clinic, was arrested for supplying the violating women’s salons with unlicensed imported cosmetic materials and medications through a company registered in his name, in violation of the medical profession regulations.

The Ministry of Interior affirmed its ongoing efforts to crack down on illegal practices that threaten public health and safety.

It called on citizens and residents to avoid dealing with any unlicensed entities to ensure community safety and maintain trust in the services provided.

Beware heatwave, Kuwaitis warned

MADRID, Aug 2, (KUNA): The State of Kuwait Embassy in Portugal on Friday urged the Kuwaiti nationals residing in Portugal to be cautious regarding the heatwave and ITS repercussions such as fires’ outbreak.

The embassy, in a statement, urged the citizens in a statement to heed instructions of the Portuguese authorities and

contact the Kuwaiti diplomatic mission if they need any help or explanation on the phone number: 351916666645+ round the clock.

Authorities have warned of fires in the north and center of the country amid the heatwave, forecast to maintain its grip until next Wednesday with the temperature hitting 44 degrees in some regions.

Woman perishes

Hit-and-run motorist surrenders to police

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 2: A Lebanese man is now detained at Salmiya Police Station; where he confessed to running over a Belarusian woman on Qatar Street, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

The suspect fled the scene after the accident, but turned himself at the police station later, claiming he acted reflexively in the aftermath of the incident.

The Operations Unit at the Ministry of Interior received a report regarding the hit-and-run involving an expatriate woman. Shortly afterward, the suspect arrived at the station and admitted to his involvement. The victim’s body was referred to forensic authorities, confirming that she was a Belarusian national.

A case of hit-and-run resulting in death was filed against the man.

In another incident, a 22-year-old male citizen died while his companion was injured when their four-wheel-drive vehicle overturned in Abdally Agricultural Area recently.

According to a security source, authorities received a report of a vehicle rollover in the area. Emergency personnel rushed to the scene and found two citizens in the vehicle. One was declared dead on the spot and the other sustained injuries.

A case of vehicle overturn resulting in one fatality was registered.

□ □ □

Hotline launched: The Military Police Command at the General Staff of Kuwait Army has launched hotline number 119 for receiving reports, complaints and violations related to the tasks and responsibilities of the Ministry of Defense round the clock, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

This move is line with the commitment of the ministry to improve communication channels with citizens and expatriates.

The Hotline No. 119 was designated for receiving reports related to ministry personnel and properties in order to fully support the efforts of the ministry, ensure the efficiency of response procedures, expedite the follow up process, and guarantee the confidentiality of information in handling reports.

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Crown Prince, PM extend wishes

Kuwait's HH Amir congratulates Pres of Switzerland on Nat'l Day

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 2, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a congratulatory cable on Friday to the President of the Swiss Confederation, Karin Keller-Sutter, on the occasion of her country's National Day.

In the cable, His Highness the Amir wished her good health and well-being, and further progress and prosperity for Switzerland and its friendly people.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad

Al-Sabah also sent a congratulatory cable on Friday to President Karin Keller-Sutter on the occasion of Switzerland's National Day.

His Highness the Crown Prince wished her continued good health and well-being, and further progress and prosperity for Switzerland and its friendly people.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah likewise sent a congratulatory cable on Friday to President Karin Keller-Sutter on the occasion of her country's National Day.



KUNA photo
The Minister of State for Communications Affairs receives the Charge d'Affaires of the Chinese Embassy in Kuwait.

PartNIR Forum invite extended

Kuwait leads DCO, eyes stronger China tech ties

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 2, (KUNA): Minister of State for Communications Affairs Omar Al-Omar discussed co-operation, mainly on a technological level, with Charge d'Affaires of the Chinese Embassy in Kuwait Liu Xi-ang, on Thursday.

A proposed MoU was mulled over in a manner that would guarantee alignment with the state's strategy of supporting tech-driven partnership between the two countries, noted a ministry statement.

On his part, Liu expressed content over Kuwait's current chairmanship of the Digital Cooperation Organization (DCO), praising the Gulf country's effective role in supporting digital innovation and policies on regional and global scales.

Hoping for a sustained digital cooperation between the two countries, Liu invited Minister Al-Omar to partake in the Partnership for the Industrial Revolution (PartNIR) Forum, scheduled for September.

Information Ministry implements strict professional dress code for employees

Circular bans casual wear and brand logos

By Mohammad Al-Enezi
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 2: The Information Ministry recently issued an administrative circular on the dress code for its employees.

This is just one of the steps that the ministry has been taking to present a unified and professional image in line with its role and mission to represent Kuwait both locally and abroad.

The directive aims to ensure that all employees and representatives maintain a consistent, appropriate and dignified appearance in all official settings.

The circular -- signed by Undersecretary of the ministry Dr. Nasser Muhaisen and reviewed by the Office of Assistant Undersecretary for Television Affairs Turki Al-Mutairi -- stipulates the following:

- All employees and representatives are required to maintain a modest and professional appearance appropriate to their official duties.
- Male employees must wear



Dr. Muhaisen

the traditional national dress (dishdasha, ghutra and agal) while on duty, whether in the ministry or during official assignments locally and abroad. Alternatively, formal suits in muted and elegant colors may be worn at events or meetings where appropriate.

- Female employees must wear modest, formal clothing suited to the nature of their media work or external representation. Makeup should be applied moderately and tastefully.
- Wearing sportswear, casual attire or clothing bearing visible brand logos is strictly forbidden.

Accessories or jewelry with brand insignias are also not permitted, as they detract from the professional appearance required in official capacities.

The ministry stressed that the dress code applies to all employees and representatives at official events -- whether internal or external, domestic or international.

Failure to comply with this directive will result in legal consequences, as the ministry is keen on upholding its professional standards and maintaining a dignified media presence in line with the official image of Kuwait.

Private sector tapped to cut costs, speed work

KAPP secures conditional nod for North Zour project

By Mohammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 2: Kuwait Authority for Partnership Projects (KAPP) has obtained conditional approval from the State Audit Bureau (SAB) to award the tender for the North Zour Power and Water Desalination Plant project (phases two and three) at a total cost of KD118.219 million.

The authority referred the tender to the bureau on July 21 for study, audit and review; followed by the approval of the contract in accordance with the relevant rules and regulations.

The project aims to meet the

growing electricity and water needs of the country, improve the grid, provide the basic infrastructure for implementing other State projects included in the national development plan, encourage private sector participation, and benefit from the expertise of the private sector in the implementation of construction and development projects. This will reduce the costs of constructing and operating power plants, expedite completion, and optimally utilize the natural resources of the country.

The project will be implemented according to the design, build, finance, operate and transfer model for an electricity

generation plant with a capacity of 2,700 megawatts; using combined-cycle technology, and a water desalination plant with a capacity of 120 million imperial gallons. It is located adjacent to the western part of North Zour Phase One and the northern part of the existing South Zour Plant -- approximately 100 kilometers south of Kuwait City on the Arabian Gulf coast. It will be implemented through the establishment of a public shareholding company in accordance with Law No. 39/2010 and Law No. 116/2014 and the executive regulations of both laws.

Furthermore, reports issued by

the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy revealed that it connected electricity for 3,854 customers in the residential, governmental, commercial, industrial, investment and agricultural sectors from January to June 2025. Private residential customers topped the list with 3,450 customers or 89.5 percent of the total.

In addition, four sub-feeders at the main Zahraa B transformer station went out of service on Thursday; resulting in power outage in some parts of Zahraa. Emergency teams rushed to the location and gradually restored power to the area.



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Foundation reaffirms commitment

KFAS concludes 2025 Science Generation Program for youth

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 2: Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) has concluded the 2025 Science Generation Program for high school students; with the participation of a distinguished group of students from Kuwait, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Qatar and the Sultanate of Oman.

The two-week program featured a dynamic mix of educational and field activities designed to equip youths with scientific communication skills; promote scientific literacy; and empower them with advanced capabilities in Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM).

In a press statement, KFAS disclosed that the program was conducted in two phases -- the first targeted intermediate students, while the second focused on the secondary level. It added that the program addressed the needs of different age groups and effectively built their scientific competencies.

The secondary level sessions were held in the College of Life Sciences at Kuwait University with a huge turnout of participants from the Gulf region. This is in line with the strategy of KFAS to develop future leaders in STEAM, foster cross-cultural collaboration, promote a science-informed society, and integrate STEAM more deeply into regional education systems.

Throughout the program, participants engaged in a range of activities; including planning and executing creative



KFAS photos
Top & above: Gulf youth gain hands-on experience at leading research institutions and industry sites.

initiatives aimed at encouraging scientific exploration among their peers in both school and community settings. These efforts reflected the students' emerging roles as agents of change and Science ambassadors in their respective countries.

The program included lectures delivered by experts, interactive workshops, and specialized sessions designed to enhance the students' public speaking, communication and presentation skills. Participants also

took part in field visits to leading scientific institutions; such as the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) and KFAS-affiliated centers like the Dasman Diabetes Institute. They visited the National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) headquarters; thereby, gaining insights into the intersection of Science and industry.

Students collaborated on group projects, which they presented before a panel of experts and an audience at the conclusion of the program.

KU President inspects admissions

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 2: Kuwait University President Dr. Dina Al-Mailam recently visited the Admissions and Registration Hall at Sabah Al-Salem University City, along with acting Dean of Admissions and Registration Dr. Fadel Aziz, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The visit aimed to follow up admission application procedures for the upcoming academic year (2025/2026) with more than 11,700 applications from Kuwaiti students so far.

During the visit, Al-Mailam looked into the progress of the registration process and engaged directly with the students and their parents, listening to their questions and concerns. She reaffirmed the commitment of the university to support students and to

guarantee that they have a smooth and efficient admissions experience. She praised the Admissions Team for the outstanding organization and the comprehensive services provided to students.

As the university closes for the day, reliable sources informed the daily that the results of admission for Kuwaiti students into various colleges -- based on equivalent grade assessments -- will be announced in the coming days. This announcement is expected to precede the start of application submissions for internal scholarships at private universities and the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) in early August in order to prevent overlaps and conflicts in student enrollment decisions.

Egypt’s Ambassador oversees smooth polling process

Egyptians in Kuwait cast votes in two-day Senate election

By Fares Ghaleb
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 2: Egyptian Ambassador to Kuwait and Head of the Electoral Committee in Kuwait Osama Shaltout, in cooperation with members of the diplomatic and consular mission from the electoral headquarters, supervised and ensured the availability of all necessary facilities for voters in the two-day Senate Election from 9:00 am to 9:00 pm Kuwait time on Friday and Saturday.

Shaltout called on members of the Egyptian community in Kuwait to exercise their constitutional right to participate in the voting process, stressing that the Embassy of Egypt has completed all preparations for the electoral process in cooperation with the Kuwaiti authorities in order to facilitate this



Egyptian Ambassador to Kuwait, Osama Shaltout, casts his vote in the Senate elections.

constitutional obligation for Egyptians in Kuwait to elect for their Senate candidates.



Egyptians in Kuwait line up to vote in Senate elections.

The embassy provided all means and methods to ensure voters’ comfort and enable them to cast their

votes with ease.

Shaltout expected a good turnout of Egyptians in Kuwait on both days of voting, especially since the embassy -- through its platforms and technical offices -- encouraged voters to exercise their right of suffrage, guaranteed by the Egyptian Constitution, by electing whoever they deemed fit to represent them in the Senate.

A large number of members of the Egyptian community flocked to the polling station before the opening of voting to participate in the electoral process conducted on Friday and Saturday.

The embassy provided free buses to transport voters from the assembly site on Green Island to the embassy headquarters in Daiya, with a secure return service after casting their votes.

The buses operated regularly throughout the two days of voting, starting at 8:45 am Kuwait time.

New cohort of instructors certified

BRCS organizes advanced first aid training course for trainers

MANAMA, Aug 2: The Bahrain Red Crescent Society, in collaboration with the International Committee of the Red Cross in Kuwait, has organized an advanced training course designed to prepare first aid trainers. The four-day programme was held at the Society’s headquarters and aimed at qualifying a new group of specialized trainers in the field of first aid, with the goal of strengthening public awareness and improving community capacity to respond swiftly and effectively in emergency situations.

The initial phase of the course placed a strong emphasis on the practical and medical aspects of first aid. Participants received comprehensive training on essential first aid guidelines, including cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) techniques for adults, children, and infants, as well as the proper use of automated external defibrillators (AEDs). The course also covered a wide range of critical topics such as managing cardiac emergencies, airway obstruction, and identifying various medical and environmental emergencies including heat exhaustion, heatstroke, drowning, and complications related to diabetes, asthma, and epilepsy. Additional modules focused on the classification and treatment of burns, different types of poisoning, and essential first aid procedures for fractures, bleeding, and spinal injuries.

The second phase of the training focused on the educational and instructional aspects of trainer preparation. Participants were introduced to the principles and importance of training in the field of first aid. The course offered insight into the various types of learners and the appropriate methods for engaging with them during training sessions. It also explored the cognitive, technical, and emotional attributes of an effective trainer. This phase included hands-on application and mastery of diverse training techniques, effective questioning strategies, and an in-depth understanding of behavioral patterns among trainees. The distinction between training and teaching was clarified, and participants were guided on how to distribute topics efficiently



Top & above: Photos during advanced first aid training course.

among trainee groups. The course concluded with a practical project, followed by performance evaluations and feedback sessions.

On this occasion, Mrs. Fatima Ahmed, Head of the First Aid Committee at the Bahrain Red Crescent Society, affirmed that the course successfully met its objectives by preparing a qualified group of trainers capable of promoting first aid

knowledge and training new cadres in this vital field, and stated, “This programme underscores the Bahrain Red Crescent Society’s strategic efforts to strengthen community preparedness and emergency response capabilities by developing a well-qualified network of specialized trainers equipped to deliver life-saving knowledge and promote first aid awareness across the Kingdom.”

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 2: Statistics from the Commercial Control Department at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry for the period July 1-30 revealed the registration of 1,357 violation reports – 1,215 inspection reports and 142 consumer complaint reports – under 30 categories of violations.

The newspaper obtained a copy of the violations report that the inspection teams headed by Director of the department Faisal Al-Ansari prepared.

The violations include the following:

- Failure to comply with regulations on advertising data, contracts and invoices;
- Failure to use the Arabic language;
- Price violations;
- Engaging in an activity without a license;
- Non-compliance with the prohibition of certain goods and their circu-

lation, including goods that violate public morals, goods printed with Quranic verses, images of His Highness the Amir, the State emblem and flag, bladed weapons, rifles, pistols, self-defense weapons and fireworks;- Violation of general provisions, such as refraining from selling goods or providing services, hiring domestic workers, and provisions regulating the sale and circulation of vegetables and fruits, such as retail within the vegetable market (‘farza’), displaying and selling vegetables and fruits without clear information (package weight and country of origin), and absence of a sign for selling vegetables and fruits (such as price, unit and weight);
- Violation of provisions regulating the sale and circulation of meat (sale of minced meat), provisions regulating after-sales services (failure of an agent to provide manufactured spare parts, failure to comply with the maintenance or repair period for warranted goods, and failure to provide alternative goods during the warranty period);
- Unjustified high prices for consumer goods per person;
- Violation of regulations governing the trading and sale of goods and services (closing a store with the intent to refrain from selling or providing services);

- Violation of regulations governing the advertising of prices of goods, food and services in shops and restaurants, such as retail sales activities, listing meat and food types on the menu, prices and weight of egg sandwiches and omelets, absence of the list of meat types and their condition, underweight grilled meat, additional fees and amounts on the value of goods, merchandise, materials, machinery or services, the licensee exceeding general price reductions by raising all or some of the selling prices, failure to place a list of prices clearly in Arabic, and failure to specify the goods and services excluded in the offer);
- Commercial fraud violations included the import, export, re-export, manufacture, production, sale, storage or transportation of counterfeit or adulterated goods, or materials used to produce adulterate goods, as well as deception or fraud regarding the type, origin, composition or expiration date of goods;
- Counterfeit goods violations included furniture, furnishings and accessories; mobile and wireless phones and accessories; cosmetics, perfumes and accessories; gifts, luxuries, shoes, watches, bags, accessories, and eyeglasses and accessories.

MoSA adds Sahel services for shareholders

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 2: As part of its push toward digital transformation and greater transparency in cooperative society operations, the Ministry of Social Affairs is set to launch a new package of digital services through the Sahel app, specifically for cooperative shareholders, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The new services will include notifications about general assembly meeting dates, a feature to update shareholder information (such as Civil ID and family card details), and regular alerts regarding inventory updates and maintenance activities.

The ministry affirmed that this initiative is in line with its efforts to im-

prove access to services and ensure shareholders can stay informed about developments within their cooperative societies in a timely and transparent manner.

It called on shareholders to follow the latest updates through the Sahel app to take full advantage of the new digital services

Continued from Page 1

Kuwaiti seafood

The price of a basket of “Shahamiya” shrimp has reached KD 20, while the price of “Umm Nughira” shrimp ranges between KD 47 and KD 60 in both the Sharq and Fahaaheel fish markets.

The daily fish auction in Fahaheel takes place at 8:00 am, while the Souq Sharq auction is held after the afternoon prayer. Both auctions have seen high turnout from citizens and consumers.

Al-Subaie described the fishermen’s joy as “indescribable,” citing the continuous support and oversight from relevant authorities who are actively working to deal with the challenges faced by the fishermen.

He stressed that the true reward for fishermen is the availability of fresh Kuwaiti seafood in the markets in large quantities and at affordable prices.

Al-Subaie also highlighted that fishermen, along with all those working to ensure food security, are essential partners in the country’s sustainable development efforts.

He said, “Food is a basic necessity of life. Ensuring its steady availability is a national responsibility.”

Al-Subaie expressed his appreciation for the efforts of all leaders in supporting the fishing sector, most notably the Minister of Electricity and Water Subaih Al-Mukhaizeem, Director-General of the Coast Guard Brigadier General Sheikh Mubarak Al-Yousef, Chair of PAAAFR Salem Al-Hai, Assistant Undersecretary of the Ministry of Finance Saad Al-Alati, and officials from the Kuwait National Petroleum Company and other supporting agencies.

He praised these leaders for their understanding of the legitimate demands of fishermen, noting that fishing is a time-honored profession deeply rooted in Kuwaiti heritage, and practiced by generations of forefathers.

Al-Subaie added that the profession continues to attract dedicated young Kuwaitis who remain optimistic about its future, thanks to God and the continued support of the nation’s leadership.

Scheming for

visas, with the aim of facilitating illegal immigration or asylum applications.

The document forgery ring consisted of four individuals - three Egyptian nationals and one Lebanese.

According to the ministry, the primary suspect is an Egyptian national residing abroad. He is believed to be the mastermind behind the operation, responsible for recruiting visa applicants, forging and delivering counterfeit documents, collecting payments, directing gang activities, and assigning tasks from overseas to contacts in Egypt.

Coordination is currently underway with Egyptian security authorities to pursue the necessary legal actions against him.

The second suspect, also Egyptian, is the brother of the main defendant. He is reported to have actively participated in carrying out the forgery operations and executing instructions received from his brother.

The third Egyptian suspect was in charge of booking embassy appointments, receiving reservation receipts, and passing them on to other members of the group.

Meanwhile, the Lebanese suspect was responsible for sending these reservation receipts to embassies to facilitate and expedite visa issuance processes.

Kuwaiti courage

Meanwhile, Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy Dr. Subaih Al-Mukhaizeem said, in a similar statement, that the Kuwaiti people presented the most wonderful examples of steadfastness and sacrifice, standing loyally and faithfully in defense of the homeland and its legitimacy during the brutal Iraqi invasion.

Marking the tragic occasion, Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Dr. Mohammad Al-Wasmi said that the people in Kuwait, during the brutal Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, set the most wonderful examples of their determination to liberate their coun-

try and adhere to legitimacy.

Minister of Justice Counselor Nasser Al-Sumait affirmed on the great national cohesion between the Kuwaiti people and their leadership during that time, which illustrated one of the noblest examples of steadfastness and perseverance in the pursuit of justice.

Al-Sumait, in a statement to KUNA, said that “we remember with appreciation and reverence the sacrifices of martyrs and heroes of the resistance.”

Kuwaiti Minister of Defense Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Sabah on Saturday said the anniversary of the August 2 (1990) Iraqi invasion of the country would remain a landmark in Kuwait’s history.

Marking its 35th anniversary, the minister said in a statement the Kuwaiti people’s steadfastness and their heroic sacrifices in facing the insidious aggression embodied the solid national unity.

He hailed the great sacrifices by the blessed Kuwaiti martyrs who deemed Kuwait with their blood, and prayed for their souls.

Moreover, the minister of defense praised the eminent role of the political leadership for liberating the country from the occupation’s claws, solidarity between the leadership and the people, the martyrs’ sacrifices and the people’s steadfastness.

He also noted that support by brotherly and friendly states was crucial for facing the aggression and liberating the State of Kuwait.

Furthermore, the minister affirmed that the Kuwaiti Armed Forces would remain ready and overhaul their capacities in line with their commitment to safeguard Kuwait and remain faithful to the martyrs, under the sagacious leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya said the memory of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait on August 2, 1990, would continue to be “a historical juncture” materializing the unity and steadfastness of the Ku-

waiti people.

“As we remember the sacrifices of martyrs, POWs and MIAs, we also recall with pride the honorable stances of our brothers and friends who stood up for our rights and international legitimacy,” he said in statements to KUNA on Friday.

The Kuwaiti leadership and people will always remember and hold in high esteem the contributions of the international military coalition to the liberation of Kuwait campaign (on February 24-28, 1991), the minister affirmed.

The memory of this bitter experience should serve as a motivation for strenuous work for promoting peace and security in the region and across the world, he stressed.

Al-Yahya reaffirmed Kuwait’s commitment to diplomatic approach prioritizing dialogue and peaceful means of settling disputes pursuant to the rules of the international law and the UN Charter.

Kuwaiti Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah affirmed Saturday that the 35th anniversary of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait marks an important moment to reflect on the resilience and unity demonstrated by the Kuwaiti people during one of the most challenging periods in the nation’s history.

In a statement to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), Minister Al-Huwailah said this anniversary embodies the values of sacrifice and steadfastness shown by Kuwaitis in defense of their homeland, dignity, and freedom, expressing pride in the unity and cohesion of the Kuwaiti people and their ongoing efforts to protect their nation and preserve its achievements.

She expressed her profound appreciation for Kuwait’s martyrs, who sacrificed their lives for the homeland, affirming that their memory will always be a guiding light for current and future generations.

She also commended the historic positions of friendly and brotherly countries that supported Kuwait during the invasion and contributed to its liberation, emphasizing that these positions represent the highest forms of humanitarian solidarity and brotherhood.

The minister prayed to Almighty Allah to protect Kuwait and bless it with continuous security, stability, and progress under the wise leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

Kuwait’s Minister of Education Eng. Sayed Jalal Al-Tabtabaei said on Saturday that the 35th anniversary of Iraq’s brutal August 2, 1990 invasion marks a national milestone: a time to recall one of Kuwait’s severest ordeals and the people’s unity behind their leadership until sovereignty was restored.

In a statement carried by the ministry, he noted that wars leave deep scars on every part of life, as the invasion halted schooling and disrupted the educational process, depriving students and teachers of their basic right to learn.

That bitter lesson, he added, showed that losing a homeland is irreplaceable and losing education is among the harshest consequences; together, homeland and education form the bedrock of human dignity and a stable, prosperous future.

Security and stability, therefore, are the foundation of sustainable learning and a thriving society, he added.

Al-Tabtabaei underlined that the Ministry’s mission extends beyond curricula to a comprehensive national project that shapes young people’s awareness and plants loyalty and belonging, with national identity as a fixed pillar safeguarding Kuwait’s security and stability.

Under Kuwait’s wise leadership, education remains a top priority, he said, mentioning that the ministry continues to create a safe, motivating learning environment, widen learning opportunities, and advance education at every stage, recognizing the importance of this right and the duty to protect and develop it.

He prayed that Allah Almighty would envelop Kuwait’s martyrs in mercy, guard the country from all harm, and keep the banner of knowledge flying high under the leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-

Hamad Al-Sabah, and the guidance of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

Kuwaiti Minister of Information and Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi proudly and reverently remembered the sacrifices of the Kuwaiti people during the Iraqi invasion in 1990.

In a statement to KUNA on the occasion of the 35th anniversary of the Iraqi invasion, Minister Al-Mutairi said that this anniversary is an important national milestone, praising the solidarity, unity, and loyalty of the Kuwaiti people.

He added that after 35 years, Kuwait continues its path of development, inspired by the sacrifices of its people and guided by national values and wise leadership.

He stressed the importance of fostering national awareness, preserving Kuwait’s true history, and instilling a deep sense of belonging and loyalty in the youth, who are the nation’s real wealth and its strongest defense for the future.

Minister Al-Mutairi prayed for mercy upon Kuwait’s righteous martyrs and for Kuwait more prosperity, security, and stability.

Kuwaiti Minister of Health (MoH) Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi remembered with pride on Saturday Kuwaitis’ sacrifices which were written in the country’s history, and showed steadfastness of people during the Iraqi invasion.

Commemorating the 35th anniversary of the Iraqi brutal invasion, August 2, 1990, Al-Awadhi said it is a landmark day as Kuwaiti nationals inside the country and beyond kept united behind their legitimate leader in a way that mirrored an eternal humanitarian and national scene.

At the heart of that battle, medical teams were up to responsibilities, despite the shortage of resources and tough conditions, he affirmed, noting that they provided care to those wounded.

“We are proud of our medical teams and all that contributed to providing services during the most challenging conditions,” he said.

These offerings will remain engraved into the country’s history and a source of inspiration of generations, he stated.

US Senate delays August recess for now as Trump presses for more confirmations

WASHINGTON, Aug 2, (AP): A stalemate over the pace of confirmations has delayed the Senate's yearly August recess, for now, as President Donald Trump declares that his nominees "should NOT BE FORCED TO WAIT" and as Democrats slow the process by forcing procedural votes on almost all of Trump's picks.

Caught in the middle, Senate Majority Leader John Thune says he will keep the Senate in session over the weekend, at least, to hold confirmation votes while also negotiating with Democrats to speed up consideration of dozens of nominees. The two sides haven't come to agreement yet, and it's still unclear if Trump, who has been publicly calling on Republicans to cancel their break, would be on-board with any bipartisan deal.

Thune said Friday he was leaving some of the negotiations to Trump and Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y.

"That's how this is going to get resolved," Thune said. "We'll see where that leads."

Senators in both parties are eager to leave Washington for their annual break, when many of them tour their states to talk to constituents. Republicans in particular are eager to return home and sell the massive tax and spending cuts package they passed in July as Democrats vow to use it against them in the 2026 midterm elections. The House, which has no role in the confirmation process, fled Washington a week ago.

But Trump has other plans.

"The Senate must stay in Session, taking no recess, until the entire Executive Calendar is CLEAR!!!" Trump posted on social media Thursday night, after a meeting with Thune at the White House. "We have to save our Country from the Lunatic Left. Republicans, for the health and safety of the USA, DO YOUR JOB, and confirm All Nominees."

Thune said this week that Republicans are considering changing the Senate's rules when they get back in September to



US Senate Majority Leader John Thune, left, speaks with Sen Lindsey Graham, during a dinner for Republican senators in the State Dining Room of the White House on July 18 in Washington. (AP)

make it easier to quickly approve a president's nominations - and to try and avoid a similar stalemate in the future. Democrats have blocked more nominees than usual this year, denying any quick unanimous consent votes and forcing roll calls on each one, a lengthy process that takes several days per nominee and allows for debate time.

Sen. John Kennedy, R-La., said Friday that Senate GOP leadership was "going back, drafting a specific rule for us to react to" as they try to plot a path forward.

Trump's latest makeover of 'The People's House'

WH announces new \$200 mln ballroom

WASHINGTON, Aug 2, (AP): The White House announced that construction on a massive, new \$200 million ballroom will begin in September and be ready before President Donald Trump's term ends in early 2029.

It will be the latest change introduced to what's known as "The People's House" since the Republican president returned to office in January. It also will be the first structural change to the Executive Mansion itself since the addition of the Truman balcony in 1948.

Trump has substantially redecorated the Oval Office through the addition of golden flourishes and cherubs, presidential portraits and other items, and installed massive flagpoles on the north and south lawns to fly the American flag. Workers are currently finishing up a project to replace the lawn in the Rose Garden with stone.

Trump for months has been promising to build a ballroom, saying the White House doesn't have space big enough for large events and scoffing at the notion of hosting heads of state and other guests in tents on the lawn as past administrations have done for state dinners attended by hundreds of guests.

The East Room, the largest room in the the White House, can accommodate about 200 people.

Trump said he's been planning the construction for some time.



White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt holds up photos of the planned new White House ballroom during a press briefing at the White House in Washington on July 31. (AP)

"They've wanted a ballroom at the White House for more than 150 years but there's never been a president that was good at ballrooms," Trump told reporters Thursday. "I'm good at building things and we're going to build quickly and on time. It'll be beautiful, top, top of the line."

He said the new ballroom would not interfere with the mansion itself.

"It'll be near it but not touching it and pays total respect to the existing building, which I'm the biggest fan of," he said of the White House. "It's my favorite. It's my favorite place. I love it."

Trump said the ballroom will serve administrations to come. "It'll be a great legacy project," he said. "I think it will be really beautiful."

The 90,000-square-foot ballroom will be built where the East Wing sits with a seated capacity of 650 people. The East Wing houses several offices, including the first lady's. Those offices will be temporarily relocated during construction and that wing of the building will be modernized and renovated, said White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt.

Decision a 'victory for the rule of law': Bass

Appeals court keeps order blocking WH from indiscriminate immigration sweeps

LOS ANGELES, Aug 2, (AP): A federal appeals court ruled Friday night to uphold a lower court's temporary order blocking the Trump administration from conducting indiscriminate immigration stops and arrests in Southern California.

A three-judge panel of the Ninth US Circuit Court of Appeals held a hearing Monday afternoon at which the federal government asked the court to overturn a temporary restraining order issued July 12 by Judge Maame E. Frimpong, arguing it hindered their enforcement of immigration law.

Immigrant advocacy groups filed suit last month accusing President Donald Trump's administration of systematically targeting brown-skinned people in Southern California during the administration's crackdown on illegal immigration. The lawsuit included three detained immigrants and two US citizens as plaintiffs.

In her order, Frimpong said there was a "mountain of evidence" that federal immigration enforcement tactics were violating the Constitution. She wrote the government cannot use factors such as apparent race or ethnicity, speaking Spanish or English with an accent, presence at a location such as a tow yard or car wash, or someone's occupation as the only basis for reasonable suspicion to detain someone.

The appeals court panel agreed and questioned the government's need to oppose an order preventing them from violating the constitution.

"If, as Defendants suggest, they are not conducting stops that lack reasonable suspicion, they can hardly claim to be irreparably harmed by an injunction aimed at preventing a subset of stops not supported by reasonable suspicion," the judges wrote.

A hearing for a preliminary injunction, which would be a more substantial court order as the lawsuit proceeds, is scheduled for September.

The Los Angeles region has been a battleground with the Trump administration over its aggressive immigration strategy that spurred protests and the deployment of the National Guards and Marines for several weeks. Federal



People wait outside of Glass House Farms, a day after an immigration raid on the facility on July 11, in Camarillo, Calif. (AP)

agents have rounded up immigrants without legal status to be in the US from Home Depots, car washes, bus stops, and farms, many who have lived in the country for decades.

Among the plaintiffs is Los Angeles resident Brian Gavidia, who was shown in a video taken by a friend June 13 being seized by federal agents as he yells, "I was born here in the states, East LA bro!"

They want to "send us back to a world where a US citizen ... can be grabbed, slammed against a fence and have his phone and ID taken from him just be-

cause he was working at a tow yard in a Latino neighborhood," American Civil Liberties Union attorney Mohammad Tajsar told the court Monday.

The federal government argued that it hadn't been given enough time to collect and present evidence in the lawsuit, given that it was filed shortly before the July 4 holiday and a hearing was held the following week.

"It's a very serious thing to say that multiple federal government agencies have a policy of violating the Constitution," attorney Jacob Roth said.

He also argued that the lower court's order was too broad, and that immigrant advocates did not present enough evidence to prove that the government had an official policy of stopping people without reasonable suspicion.

He referred to the four factors of race, language, presence at a location, and occupation that were listed in the temporary restraining order, saying the court should not be able to ban the government from using them at all. He also argued that the order was unclear on what exactly is permissible under law.

"Legally, I think it's appropriate to use the factors for reasonable suspicion," Roth said.

The judges sharply questioned the government over their arguments.

"No one has suggested that you cannot consider these factors at all," Judge Jennifer Sung said.

However, those factors alone only form a "broad profile" and don't satisfy the reasonable suspicion standard to stop someone, she said.

Sung, a Biden appointee, said that in an area like Los Angeles, where Latinos make up as much as half the population, those factors "cannot possibly weed out those who have undocumented status and those who have documented legal status."

She also asked: "What is the harm to being told not to do something that you claim you're already not doing?"

Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass called the Friday night decision a "victory for the rule of law" and said the city will protect residents from the "racial profiling and other illegal tactics" used by federal agents.

Trump orders 2 nuclear submarines moved over Medvedev's warning

WASHINGTON, Aug 2, (Agencies): US President Donald Trump said on Friday he has ordered two nuclear submarines "to be positioned in the appropriate regions" in response to remarks from Deputy Chairman of the Russian Security Council Dmitry Medvedev.

Trump did not specify in a Truth Social post the deployment locations, which are kept secret by the US military. Not all the US nuclear-powered submarines are equipped with nuclear weapons.

Medvedev on Monday accused Trump of playing the ultimatum game with Russia, warning "each new ultimatum is a threat and a step towards war. Not between Russia and Ukraine, but with his own country," he wrote on social media platform X.

Trump said Tuesday that his 10-day "deadline" for Moscow to end the conflict with Ukraine is in effect. He told reporters on his flight back to Washington following his visit to Scotland. Otherwise, "We're going to put on tariffs and stuff."

Meanwhile, Ukrainian drone attacks overnight into Saturday killed three



People remove debris after a Russian attack in the Sviatoshynskiy District of Kiev, Ukraine, on July 31. (Xinhua)

people, Russian officials said Saturday.

Russia's Defense Ministry said air defenses intercepted or destroyed 112 drones across eight Russian regions and the Russian-occupied Crimean

Peninsula.

A drone attack on the Rostov region, on the border with Ukraine, killed one person, acting governor Yuri Slyusar said.

Further from the front line, a woman was killed and two other people wounded in a drone strike on business premises in the Penza region, according to regional governor Oleg Melnichenko. In the Samara region, falling drone debris sparked a fire that killed an elderly resident, regional Gov Vyacheslav Fedorishchev said.

According to the Ukrainian air force, Russia launched 53 drones and decoys at Ukraine overnight into Saturday. It said that air defenses shot down or jammed 45 drones.

Eleven people were wounded in an overnight drone strike on the Kharkiv region, Gov Oleh Syniehubov said Saturday.

The reciprocal drone strikes followed a day of mourning in the Ukrainian capital Kyiv on Friday, after a Russian drone and missile attack killed 31 people, including five children, and wounded over 150.



Firefighters work as the fire progresses in A Cañiza, Pontevedra province, northwest Spain on July 30. (AP)

Estonian rescuers deployed to help Spain combat wildfires

The first Estonian rescue team was deployed to Spain to combat wildfires on Friday, with a second team scheduled to depart on Aug. 17. Each team consists of 20 rescuers.

This year, Spain has already experienced over 3,300 wildfires, which have affected more than 20,000 hectares of forests and natural areas.

One of the largest fires occurred in mid-July in the province of Tarragona (Catalonia), where flames scorched over 3,200 hectares and impacted the habitat of around 18,000 people. Three people lost their lives in the blaze, including one firefighter.

Estonian rescuers also assisted with wildfire suppression efforts in Spain in August of last year.

The first team will operate in the Castilla-La Mancha region from Aug. 1 to 16, and the second will work in Galicia from Aug. 17 to 30. Half of the team members participated in last year's mission, while the other half are new and lack prior experience in such operations.

In recent years, summer wildfires have become a serious issue in Southern Europe, and teams from other nations were brought in to assist, with coordination through the European Union Civil Protection Mechanism. (Xinhua)

Musk, social media powerhouse, boosts fortunes of hard-right figures in Europe

ROME, Aug 2, (AP): Hard-right commentators, politicians and activists in Europe have uncovered a secret to expanding their influence: engaging with Elon Musk.

Take the German politician from a party whose own domestic intelligence agency has designated as extremist. Her daily audience on X surged from 230,000 to 2.2 million on days Musk interacted with her posts. She went on to lead her party to its best-ever electoral showing.

Or the anti-immigration activist in Britain, who was banned from Twitter and sentenced to 18 months in prison for contempt of court. Since Musk let him back on the platform in late 2023, he's mentioned, reposted or replied to the billionaire more than 120 times on X - and gained nearly a million followers.

Even a little-known social-media influencer turned politician from Cyprus has benefited from the Musk effect. Before winning a surprise seat in the European Parliament, where he's advocated for Musk, the influencer seemed to have one ambition: to hug the world's richest man. He got his hug - and political endorsements. On days Musk has interacted with his account on X, the man's audience exploded from just over 300,000 to nearly 10 million views.

Elon Musk may have tumbled from political grace in Washington -- he stepped down as an adviser to President Donald Trump in May and has since traded insults with the president -- but as he works to build his own political party, his power on X remains unchecked.

Musk's influence on the platform he bought for \$44 billion has made him a kingmaker at home and abroad. Among



Elon Musk speaks at the Conservative Political Action Conference, CPAC, at the Gaylord National Resort & Convention Center on Feb. 20, 2025, in Oxon Hill, Md. (AP)

those he has chosen to cultivate are hard-right politicians and insurgent influencers across Europe, according to an Associated Press analysis of public data. His dominance, which has real-world financial and political impacts, is fueling concerns in Europe about foreign meddling -- not from Russia or China this time, but from the United States.

Europe

'Missiles to be deployed in Belarus': Russian President Vladimir Putin said Friday that Russia has started production of its newest hypersonic missiles and reaffirmed its plans to deploy them to ally Belarus later this year.

Sitting alongside Belarus President Alexander Lukashenko on Valaam Island near St. Petersburg, Putin said the military already has selected deployment sites in Belarus for the Oreshnik intermediate range ballistic missile.

"Preparatory work is ongoing, and most likely we will be done with it before the year's end," Putin said, adding that the first series of Oreshniks and their systems have been produced and entered military service.

Russia first used the Oreshnik, which is Russian for "ha-



Lukashenko

zelnut tree," against Ukraine in November, when it fired the experimental weapon at a factory in Dnipro that built missiles when Ukraine was part of the Soviet Union.

Putin has praised the Oreshnik's capabilities, saying its multiple warheads that plunge to a target at speeds up to Mach 10 are immune to being intercepted and are so powerful that the use of several of them in one conventional strike could be as devastating as a nuclear attack.

He warned the West that Moscow could use it against Ukraine's NATO allies who allowed Kyiv to use their longer-range missiles to strike inside Russia. (AP)

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Romania grants aid to flood victims: Families and individuals whose homes were damaged or destroyed by severe flooding in Romania will receive emergency financial aid, according to Raed Arafat, head of the Department for Emergency Situations of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

Arafat said on Friday that 41 homes were completely destroyed and over 680 were damaged in the country's Suceava County alone.

The floods, triggered by extreme weather on Sunday, have caused some of the worst damage seen in the region in recent years. (Xinhua)

Mount Lewotobi Laki Laki erupts again

Indonesia begins releasing hundreds of prisoners under president’s clemency plan

JAKARTA, Indonesia, Aug 2, (AP): Indonesia began releasing hundreds of inmates from its notoriously overcrowded prisons Friday after parliament approved the first stage of a wide-ranging clemency plan by President Prabowo Subianto aimed at building national solidarity.

House of Representatives Deputy Speaker Sufmi Dasco Ahmad and Law Minister Supratman Andi Agtas made the announcement late Thursday after a consultation between the government and party factions in the legislature.

Subianto surprised the nation barely two months after he took office in October by saying he planned to grant clemency to some 44,000 inmates nationwide - most of them imprisoned for political reasons - as a way to help unify the country.

Past Indonesian leaders have rarely used their amnesty powers, which require the approval of parliament.

The first group of 1,178 began leaving prisons Friday, after Subianto signed a Presidential Decree on the

clemency. It includes prominent rivals of former President Joko Widodo who were jailed during his term, as well as six Papuan independence activists serving prison sentences for treason as the government considers their movement unarmed.

Analysts have cautiously welcomed Subianto’s sweeping plan, which could see the release of thousands of inmates as Agtas said it would prioritize political prisoners and inmates with mental and chronic health illnesses, older people, juveniles and those convicted of blasphemy or insulting the country’s leader.

Among the prisoners set to be released are several prominent opposition figures, including Hasto Kristiyanto, the secretary general of the country’s only formal opposition party, the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle.

Kristiyanto, a former Widodo ally who later became a harsh critic, was released Friday evening from his cell at the anti-Corruption Commission’s detention center in South Jakarta where he had been jailed since February.

He was sentenced last week to 3 1/2



Indonesia’s former Trade Minister Tom Lembong, center, who was sentenced to more than four years, waves to the media as he leaves Cipinang prison in Jakarta, Indonesia on Aug 1. (AP)

years in prison for bribery in a 2019 legislative seat appointment scheme.

“We must learn from this incident

because we want justice to be served fairly,” Kristiyanto told a cheering crowd after his release. “I will never stop loving this country, no matter what happens.”

Agtas said parliament also approved an end to criminal proceedings against former Trade Minister Tom Lembong, a onetime Widodo ally who broke with him during the 2024 presidential election to support political rival Anies Baswedan. Lembong was accused of abusing his authority as minister and sentenced to more than four years in prison. He had been preparing to appeal before Subianto proposed him for clemency.

“Both (Kristiyanto and Lembong) have demonstrated service to the nation, and our priority now is to strengthen the unity of the nation,” Agtas said.

Agtas revised the initial number of prisoners to be released in the first phase to 1,178 from a previous estimate of 1,116, after his ministry recalculated its data. Authorities are

expected to submit a second list of 1,668 inmates to parliament in the near future, he added.

Also:

JAKARTA: Mount Lewotobi Laki Laki, one of **Indonesia’s** most active volcanoes, erupted for a second straight day, sending a column of volcanic materials and ash up to 18 kilometers (11 miles) into the sky early Saturday and blanketing villages with debris. No casualties were immediately reported.

Another eruption Friday evening had sent clouds of ash up to 10 kilometers (6.2 miles) high and had lit up the night sky with glowing lava and bolts of lightning. The two eruptions happened in a span of less than five hours.

Indonesia’s Geology Agency recorded an avalanche of searing gas clouds mixed with rocks and lava traveling up to 5 kilometers (3 miles) down the slopes of the mountain. Drone observations showed deep movement of magma, setting off tremors that registered on seismic monitors.

Protesters demand resignation of court-suspended Thai prime minister

BANGKOK, Aug 2, (Agencies): Protesters rallied Saturday in the Thai capital to demand the resignation of court-suspended Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra and in support of the armed forces following a violent border dispute with Cambodia that killed more than three dozen people and displaced over 260,000.

Gathered at Bangkok’s Victory Monument despite soaring temperatures, many sang patriotic songs and listened to speeches denouncing Paetongtarn and her father, former leader Thaksin Shinawatra, and voiced their backing of the country’s army, which has always retained real power in the Southeast Asian country. Police said there were about two thousand protesters by mid-afternoon, though more were expected to join as the temperature cooled.

Some locals accuse Paetongtarn and her family of allowing the conflict, which stretches back decades with both sides claiming pocket of lands near the shared borders, to escalate due to their close tied with Cambodian leader Hun Sen. A court suspended the prime minister last month after Hun Sen leaked a phone call in which she called him “uncle” and appeared to denigrate a Thai general, angering many.



Protesters waving Thailand flags gather at Victory Monument demanding Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra resign in Bangkok on Aug 2. (AP)

Meanwhile, an ASEAN interim observer group has inspected conflict-affected areas on the Cambodia-Thailand border after a ceasefire was reached, a Cambodian defense spokesperson said on Saturday.

The group included military attaché of Malaysia, the current chair of ASEAN, as well as Vietnamese and Philippine assistant military attachés, said Cambodian Defense Ministry’s Undersecretary of State and Spokesperson Maly Socheata.

Cambodia on Friday welcomed the return of two wounded soldiers who had been captured by the Thai army after the two sides had already implemented a ceasefire to end five days of combat over competing territorial claims.

Their repatriation comes amid accusations and bickering over whether either side had targeted civilians and breached the laws of war, and sharp nationalist feuding on social media.

South Korea’s jailed ex-prez Yoon resists questioning by taking off prison uniform

SEOUL, South Korea, Aug 2, (AP): South Korea’s jailed ex-President Yoon Suk Yeol again refused to attend questioning by investigators Friday, using a new method to resist: He took off his prison uniform and lay down on the floor at his detention room.

Yoon, removed from office in April over his ill-fated imposition of martial law, was sent back to prison last month as he stands a high-stakes trial over rebellion and other charges. Yoon, a conservative, faces investigations into other criminal allegations that are not related to his Dec. 3 martial law decree but target him, his wife and others.

On Friday, Min Joong-ki, a special counsel named by his liberal rival and new President Lee Jae Myung, sent investigators to retrieve Yoon from a detention center near Seoul after the former president twice defied requests to attend questioning. Min’s team is tasked with delving into allegations surrounding Yoon’s wife Kim Keon Hee, including that she and her husband exerted inappropriate influence on the then-ruling party’s election nomination process in 2022.

Min’s team had a court-issued detention warrant that authorized them to bring Yoon out of his detention facility by force, but said they were hoping for his voluntary cooperation.

“Without wearing his prison uniform, the suspect lay down on the floor and strongly resisted his detention,”



Former South Korean president Yoon Suk Yeol, (center), arrives at a court to attend a hearing to review his arrest warrant requested by special prosecutors in Seoul, South Korea on July 9. (AP)

assistant special counsel Oh Jeong-hee told a televised briefing.

Justice Minister Jung Sung-ho separately told lawmakers that Yoon took off his shorts and short-sleeved shirt and put them back on after investigators left.

Oh said her team members refrained from using physical means out of safety concerns, but notified Yoon that they would execute the warrant next time. She urged Yoon to cooperate as the Korean people are closely watching whether the enforcement of law is

applied to everyone equally.

Yu Jeong-hwa, a lawyer for Yoon, accused the special counsel team of trampling on Yoon’s dignity and honor by discussing his dress in prison, according to local media reports.

Yoon’s defense team earlier said Yoon was unable to attend his trial and undergo questioning by investigators because of health problems. They said in a statement Thursday that Yoon has cardiovascular, autonomic nervous system and eye issues.



In this handout photo released by Turkish Presidency, Turkey’s President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, center, Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, left, and Libyan Prime Minister Abdul-Hamid Dbeibah, pose for photos before their meeting in Istanbul, Turkey on Aug 1. (AP)

Libyan, Turkish and Italian leaders meet to address migration and Libya’s stability

ISTANBUL, Aug 2, (AP): Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan hosted Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni and Libyan Prime Minister Abdul-Hamid Dbeibah in Istanbul on Friday for a summit centered on addressing migration, enhancing cooperation, and supporting Libya’s political stability.

A statement issued by Meloni’s office following the closed-door session said the three discussed strengthening cooperation in the Mediterranean region, starting with the management of migration flows.

Meloni praised the “excellent results achieved” through collaboration with Turkey on migration control, saying that the lessons learned from working with Ankara should be used to support

the Libyan Government of National Unity’s efforts on migration, according to a statement by her office.

Erdogan stated that “long-term and sustainable” solutions were needed to eliminate the root cause of migration, according to a statement from his office.

Libya is a dominant transit point for migrants fleeing war and poverty in Africa and the Middle East. Drowning incidents near the country’s coast have been common. In December, at least 61 migrants, including women and children, drowned off the town of Zuwara on Libya’s western coast.

The Italian prime minister also reaffirmed Italy’s commitment “to Libya’s stability, unity, and independence,”

and its support for a Libyan-led, United Nations-facilitated political process leading to elections.

The Turkish presidential statement said the three leaders would reconvene to evaluate decisions taken, following lower-level technical meetings.

Oil-rich Libya plunged into chaos after a NATO-backed uprising toppled and killed longtime dictator Moammar Gadhafi in 2011. In the disarray that followed, the country split into rival administrations in the east and west, each backed by rogue militias and foreign governments.

Turkey has been allied with the Tripoli-based government in the west, but has recently taken steps to improve ties with the eastern-based government as well.

El Salvador opens path for President Bukele to stay in power indefinitely

SAN SALVADOR, El Salvador, Aug 2, (AP): El Salvador’s Legislative Assembly pushed through a constitutional reform overnight eliminating presidential term limits, fueling concerns on Friday that it paves the way for President Nayib Bukele to indefinitely stay in power.

Watchdogs and critics of the self-described “world’s coolest dictator” said they’ve seen this coming for years, watching Bukele’s administration slowly chip away at democratic institutions, attack opponents and consolidate power in the president’s hands.

Bukele, who regularly posts streams of tongue-in-cheek remarks on social media, remained notably silent Friday. His government didn’t respond to multiple requests for comment.

“It’s not surprising. But that doesn’t mean it’s not severe,” said Claudia Ortiz, one of the country’s few remaining opposition lawmakers. “The implication of this is more concentration of power, more risk of abuse of the rights of Salvadorans ... and the complete dismantling of all democratic checks and balances.”

On Thursday night, Bukele’s New Ideas party and its allies approved changes to El Salvador’s constitution, which were jammed through Congress by the party’s supermajority.

The changes will:

- The vote passed with 57 in favor and three opposed.
- Damian Merlo, a US lobbyist and consultant hired by Bukele’s administration, defended the changes, noting that many European countries don’t have term limits, and said the move only gives Bukele the option of reelection, not an automatic extension of his



El Salvador’s President Nayib Bukele gives a press conference in San Salvador, El Salvador on Jan 14. (AP)

mandate.

“It’s up to the people to decide who the leader will be,” Merlo said. “It’s been made very clear by the electorate they are very happy with the president and his political party - and this move represents the will of the people of El Salvador.”

Ortiz, the opposition congresswoman, called the defense “absurd,” and said that Merlo was citing countries - Germany and France - with democratic systems of government answering to the countries’ parliaments. In El Salvador, power is now entirely concentrated in the hands of Bukele, she said.

Bukele, 44, was first elected president in 2019 after founding the New Ideas party, casting aside the country’s traditional parties thoroughly discredited by corruption and lack of results.

Bukele’s highly controlled messaging of beating back the country’s gangs and rooting out corruption have gained traction in El Salvador, especially as homicide rates have sharply dropped.

But critics say many of the moves he has justified as tackling corruption and violence have actually whittled away at the country’s democracy.

Over the years, his attacks on opponents and critics have gradually escalated. In recent months, things have come to a head as Bukele has grown emboldened by his new alliance with US President Donald Trump. A number of high profile arrests and a slew of other actions have forced more than 100 members of civil society - lawyers, activists and journalists - to flee their country as political exiles in the span of months.

Colombian ex-prez sentenced to 12 years house arrest for bribery

BOGOTA, Colombia, Aug 2, (AP): Former Colombian president Alvaro Uribe was sentenced Friday to 12 years of house arrest for witness tampering and bribery in a historic case that gripped the South American nation and tarnished the conservative strongman’s legacy.

The sentence, which Uribe said will be appealed, followed a nearly six-month trial in which prosecutors presented evidence that he attempted to influence witnesses who accused the law-and-order leader of having links to a paramilitary group in the 1990s.

“Politics prevailed over the law in sentencing,” Uribe said after Friday’s hearing.

Uribe, 73, has denied any wrongdoing. He faced up to 12 years in prison after being convicted Monday.

His attorney had asked the court to allow Uribe to remain free while he appeals the verdict. Judge Sandra Heredia on Friday said she did not grant the defense’s request because it would be “easy” for the former president to leave the country to “evade the imposed sanction.”



Opponents of former president Alvaro Uribe gather outside the court on the day he was sentenced to 12 years under house arrest for witness tampering and bribery in Bogota, Colombia on Aug 1. (AP)

Subcontinent

Over 40 injured in Sri Lanka bus accident: Over 40 garment factory workers were injured when the bus they were traveling in veered off the road and plunged down a slope in Dehiwita, Sabaragamuwa Province, on Saturday morning, police said.

According to police, the injured have been admitted to a regional hospital for treatment.

Dehiwita is a mountainous region, and police reported that the road was slippery due to rain at the time of the accident. An investigation is underway to determine the exact cause of the crash. (Xinhua)

Pakistan train accident injures 27: Three cars of a passenger train derailed near Lahore in eastern Pakistan on Friday, injuring at least 27 people, including women and children, officials said.

The Islamabad Express was en route to Lahore when three of its cars went off the tracks in the town of Kala Shah Kaku, railways spokesperson Babar Raza told reporters.

He said emergency responders and paramedics were quickly dispatched to the site, and all the injured were listed in stable condition. (AP)

5 policemen killed in Pakistan: At least five policemen were killed in an overnight attack by armed bandits on a police checkpoint in Pakistan’s eastern province of Punjab, police said on Friday.

The incident took place in Rahim Yar Khan district, where dozens of heavily armed assailants targeted a checkpoint manned by Elite Force personnel, police spokesperson Irfan Ali Samo said.

“The bandits equipped with modern weapons attacked the post under the cover of darkness, killing our brave officers,” Samo, who also serves as the District Police Officer, told the media. (Xinhua)

Kuwaiti crude falls to \$75.03 pb

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 2, (KUNA): The price of Kuwaiti crude oil fell USD 1.16 to US 75.03 per barrel (pb) on Friday, compared to USD 76.19 pb on Thursday, said Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) on Saturday. Globally, the price of Brent crude dropped USD 2.03 to USD 69.67 pb, and West Texas Intermediate crude went down USD 1.93 to USD 67.33 pb.

Other Voices

Facing reality, embracing change

Time for KPC board to review strategic goals

By Kamel Al-Harami
Independent Oil Analyst

IT is time for the Board of Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) to take a hard look at the corporation's approved strategy. A comprehensive analysis and discussion are needed to evaluate whether KPC has achieved its objectives, or if it has fallen short, and the reasons.

KPC operates in 10 oil and oil-related sectors, covering the full spectrum from upstream to downstream activities. These include refining, local and international marketing, shipping, and operating Q8 gas stations in Europe and the Far East. In many ways, KPC resembles a fully integrated oil company, similar to its international counterparts such as ExxonMobil, Shell, BP, ConocoPhillips, and Total.

Kuwait currently produces between 2.6 to 2.7 million barrels of crude oil per day. KPC's strategic goal is to increase this output to 3 to 3.5 million barrels per day within the next 5 to 10 years. Ideally, this should be achieved within the next 5 years, as there is an urgent need to boost production to at least 3 million barrels per day to ensure our domestic refineries operate at full capacity.

In this way, Kuwait can generate higher returns, earning \$3 to \$6 more per barrel for finished products. With some of the world's most advanced refineries, both locally and overseas, Kuwait has a refining capacity of over 1.8 million barrels per day, which currently accounts for around 66 percent of its total crude production. This imbalance contradicts our

established policy of refining only 50 percent of total production and highlights the need to accelerate crude oil output to meet strategic goal of three million barrels per day.

To achieve this, Kuwait may need to call on international co-operation. Perhaps it is time to engage with major international oil companies, not merely as service providers, but as partners. These companies are no longer interested in rental contracts, but they seek equity participation and a share in any new oil discoveries.

The time has come for Kuwait to follow the example of our neighboring oil-producing countries, such as Iraq, Iran, the UAE, Qatar, and Bahrain, who have adopted models of shared ownership in new oil discoveries. While the specific terms of how many barrels are shared per new discovery remain confidential, the outcome is clear - increased oil production and, as a result, higher daily revenues from the sale of Kuwaiti crude oil.

Of course, some will strongly object, citing national sovereignty and the belief that we should not share our primary source of income and national wealth. However, the reality is that we lack the technical expertise and experience to manage complex oil reserves, especially those involving water-associated oil.

Kuwait, with crude oil reserves exceeding 90 billion barrels, cannot afford to lag behind while production remains stagnant at 2.7 million barrels per day.

It is time to face reality and set aside narrow self-interests. Like other oil-producing nations, we must focus on increasing production, boosting revenues, and reducing our annual budget deficits.

With greater crude oil production, KPC can improve operational efficiency and consequently generate more revenue for the state.

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Al-Harami

As part of efforts to empower youth and develop local talent

InvestGB celebrates interns on 'Intern Day'

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 2: Gulf Capital Investment Company, "InvestGB", the investment arm of Gulf Bank, celebrated Intern Day, a global occasion recognizing the contributions of interns; highlighting the success of its Internship Program and reinforcing its ongoing commitment to empowering Kuwaiti youth, fostering local talent, and building a strong and capable workforce.

During the Intern Day Event held at InvestGB's headquarters at Al Hamra Business Tower, interns participated in a variety of impactful activities, including networking sessions with InvestGB and Gulf Bank leadership teams, and InvestGB's senior management team. These interactive sessions provided interns the opportunity to share their insights, engage in numerous discussions, and receive valuable career tips and mentorship from InvestGB and Gulf Bank employees.

On this occasion, Ms. Sara AlMuzaini, Senior Vice-President of Human Resources at InvestGB stated: "At InvestGB, we believe that investing in young minds today is an investment in a stronger and more resilient future for Kuwait. We are proud to provide opportunities that empower the next generation and connect them to meaningful career pathways."

She added: "Since its inception in 2023, InvestGB's Internship Program has benefited over 50 high school and university students, with 8% of participants transitioning into fulltime roles at the company. The program has established itself as a trusted talent pipeline and a key pillar of InvestGB's youth and education strategy. Interns have represented more than 20 local and international institutions, including Kuwait University, Gulf University for Science and Technology, American University of Kuwait, Babson College, Bentley University, University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) and King's College London."

AlMuzaini continued: "As part of the third edition of the internship program for 2025, 33 interns between the ages of 17 and 25 were selected, with a demographic split of 48% female and 52% male. The program offers hands-on training, real-world exposure, and skill development to help students navigate an evolving job market with confidence and capability."

AlMuzaini noted that InvestGB's culture is deeply rooted in inclusion, national development, and investment in human capital, whether employees or interns. Women represent 43% of the company's workforce, while Kuwaitization stands at 70% of the total team.

She emphasized InvestGB's commitment to strengthening its role in the private sector



Hani Al Awadhi, CEO of InvestGB, and Dari Al-Bader, General Manager of Corporate Affairs at Gulf Bank, in a group photo with the interns.



Photo of the interns.

by supporting and developing national talent. Through training programs and other institutional initiatives, the company continues to contribute to the sustainable growth of the Kuwaiti economy by empowering the next generation of professionals.

She concluded: "At InvestGB, we are cultivating more than a workplace; we are building a community," added AlMuzaini. "Our culture is rooted in well-being, continuous development, and shared purpose, which directly contributes to our organizational excellence."

CEO hails upgrade as milestone

Moody's upgrades Warba Bank credit ratings across the board

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 2: Warba Bank achieved a major milestone with the announcement that Moody's Investors Service, a leading global credit rating agency, has upgraded the Bank's credit ratings across multiple categories. The decision reflects Warba Bank's strong financial performance, robust capital base, improved profitability and consistently stable asset quality.

This comprehensive rating upgrade marks a new chapter in the Bank's journey toward regional and global leadership in Islamic banking. Moody's raised Warba Bank's deposit rating from Baa2 to Baa1, upgraded the Baseline Credit Assessment (BCA) from ba3 to ba2, and increased the Local and Foreign Currency Counterparty Risk Rating from Baa1 to A3. The outlook has been revised to Stable.

Mr. Shaheen Hamad Al-Ghanem, Chief Executive Officer of Warba Bank, commented: "This upgrade is a global recognition of the remarkable progress Warba Bank has made in solidifying its position as a leading Islamic financial institution. It reflects the confidence that global markets have in our financial and operational strength and motivates us to continue delivering sustainable and high-quality results for our shareholders, customers and the national economy."

He added: "The milestone is a testament to the dedication of every individual at Warba Bank, whose collective efforts have translated into measurable success. It represents an important indicator of our progress toward becoming a regional leader in Islamic banking."

Al-Ghanem further emphasized: "We are proud to see Warba Bank's name ranked prominently in global credit reports. This reflects our enduring commitment to good governance, innovation and digital transformation. The upgrade is not only a recognition of past performance, but a gateway to a future of new opportunities where we remain focused on sustainable growth and long-term value creation for our community."

Key Drivers Behind the Upgrade
1. Strong Shareholder Support and Robust Capital Base

The upgrade of the BCA reflects exceptional shareholder backing, including support from government entities, and the successful recent capital increase. As of March 2025, the tangible common equity to risk-weighted assets ratio stood at 12.6%, indicating the Bank's strong ability to absorb future challenges.

2. Improved Profitability and Operational Efficiency

Warba Bank reported a return on



Shaheen Al-Ghanem, CEO of Warba Bank

tangible assets of 0.4% in March 2025, supported by enhanced operational efficiency and growing contribution from non-financing income streams. This demonstrates the Bank's ability to maintain sustainable profitability.

3. Stable Asset Quality
The Bank maintained a low non-performing financing ratio of 1.5% with a strong coverage ratio of 166%, underscoring its prudent risk management and conservative credit policies.

4. Stable Outlook
Moody's stable outlook reflects expectations of continued strong performance in asset quality, liquidity, and capital adequacy over the medium term, supported by a resilient business model and a promising operating environment.

- Deposit rating upgraded from Baa2 to Baa1
- Baseline Credit Assessment (BCA) upgraded from ba3 to ba2
- Local and Foreign Currency Counterparty Risk Rating upgraded from Baa1 to A3



Khalid Al-Sudairy, Raed Marei, and Abdulhadi Al-Herz stand in the middle of the company's human resources team.

Focusing on employee growth and retention

stc launches long-term incentive program

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 2: Kuwait Telecommunications Company - stc, a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers, enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, announced the launch of its Long-Term Incentive (LTI) Program, marking a first-of-its-kind initiative in Kuwait aimed at rewarding top talent as they progress with the Company. The program aligns with stc corporate culture which focuses on rewarding exceptional employees for driving business success, further motivating them to achieve new milestones.

The LTI Program was designed by stc as part of the Company's commitment to continuously invest in its people, especially as the organization continues to grow and evolve in a competitive and fast-paced environment. To recognize the sustained contributions of high-performing employees, stc introduced a range of benefits that will empower employees by feeling a sense of ownership to the Company, thereby enhancing their engagement in the Company's operation and culture through long-term value creation. stc is excited to leverage the J.P. Morgan Workplace Solutions platform to deliver a premier Long-Term Incentive Program, empowering stc employees with premier benefits and opportunities for growth.

The program was launched during a signing ceremony held at the company's headquarters. stc Kuwait's Chief Human Resources Officer, Mr. Raed Marei and Mr. Abdulhadi Al Herz from J.P. Morgan Workplace Solutions Saudi Arabia were present at the signing.

Additionally, the LTI Program will not only serve as a significant step in employee recognition and retention but also serve as an additional attribute that will strengthen the Company's position as an employer of choice in Kuwait's telecom and digital solutions sectors. The program aims to provide employees with financial benefits that accumulate and grow over the long-term that are tied to the Company's performance, further aligning employee efforts with those of the Company's growth and innovation goals.

Mr. Raed Marei CHRO of stc, said, "Our people are at the heart of everything we do, and this program reflects our belief in their critical role in driving healthy sustainable growth for the Company. As we continue to lead in digital transformation and innovation, it is essential to reward our top talents for their dedication and contributions, ensuring that they grow and succeed alongside stc. Through launching this program, we are not only investing in our employees but also reaffirming that their hard work is recognized and appreciated as a key driver of our success across the sectors in which we operate."



Marei:

- Our people are at the heart of everything we do, and this program reflects our belief in their critical role in driving healthy sustainable growth

Over the years, stc has built a solid reputation in Kuwait as an ideal employer of choice following its ranking as the number one ideal employer of choice for engineers and IT professionals in Kuwait according to Universum's custom research in 2024. The Company evolved its culture to be more empowering and conclusive, leading to higher employee retention rates and overall enhanced performance. Launching the LTI Program will further build on the milestones the Company has managed to achieve when recognizing and awarding its top talents for their exceptional performance which has placed stc as a pioneer in the telecom and digital solutions sectors.

Marei added, "With the introduction of the LTI Program, we are taking a strategic step towards building a motivated and high-performing workforce that aligns with our long-term vision. Our approach is to ensure that as stc continues to grow and expand, so do our people that are the backbone of our operation and growth trajectory. This program highlights our ongoing commitment to our people, who are instrumental in our journey to deliver an exceptional experience not just to our customers, but our stakeholders alike."

Reaffirming its commitment to talent growth & empowerment

Burgan Bank promotes Eng. Saud Al Hadbah to GM

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 2: In line with its ongoing dedication to human capital development and internal career advancement, Burgan Bank is proud to announce the promotion of Eng. Saud Al Hadbah to General Manager – General Services Administration.

As part of its holistic development strategy, Burgan Bank continues to promote from within, recognizing high-performing professionals with proven leadership and operational excellence. Eng. Al Hadbah’s promotion is a testament to the Bank’s belief in the potential of its people and its sustained efforts to remain an employer of choice in the Kuwaiti banking sector.

Commenting on the promotion, Mr. Fadel Mahmoud Abdullah, Chief Executive Officer – Kuwait at Burgan Bank, stated:“On behalf of Burgan Bank’s Board and Executive Management, I would like to extend our warmest congratulations to Eng. Saud Al Hadbah on his well-earned promotion. His leadership, deep operational knowledge, and institutional loyalty have consistently demonstrated the qualities we value most in our people. Investing in our talents is not just a goal – it’s a strategic pillar that defines how we grow and how we lead.”

He added: “At Burgan Bank, we believe that cultivating internal talent and providing clear pathways for growth is central to building a sustainable, future-ready organization. Eng. Al Hadbah’s elevation is not only well-deserved but symbolic of our broader mission: to enable homegrown leadership that can drive our operational ex-



Eng. Saud Al Hadbah, General Manager – General Services Administration at Burgan Bank

cellence, customer-centric mindset, and innovation-forward approach.”

Eng. Saud Al Hadbah began his journey with Burgan Bank in 2010, and over the years, has held several key roles across different departments. Prior to this promotion, he served as Deputy General Manager – General Services Administration, where he played a pivotal role in enhancing the Bank’s operational infrastructure and ensuring seamless service delivery across all functions and branches. His leadership in facilities management, procurement, and administrative operations has contributed significantly to the Bank’s operational agility and service efficiency.

With this promotion, Eng. Al Hadbah now assumes broader responsibilities in steering the

Bank’s General Services functions, including further integration of digital operational frameworks and supporting the Bank’s evolving transformation strategy from an infrastructure standpoint.

It serves to note that Burgan Bank, a certified Great Place to Work®, continues to maintain a robust development framework that nurtures talent across all levels of the organization – with a dedicated focus on identifying, equipping, and advancing future leaders.

About Burgan Bank

Established in 1977, Burgan Bank is a Kuwait-based conventional bank with a significant focus on the corporate and financial institution sectors. From its earliest days, the Bank has significantly sought to diversify its offering to cater to its growing retail and private banking customer base.

Burgan Bank has majority-owned subsidiaries, collectively known as the “Burgan Bank Group”, in the MENAT region. This Group is supported by one of the largest branch networks across the region and includes: Gulf Bank Algeria – AGB (Algeria), Tunis International Bank – TIB (Tunisia), Burgan Bank Turkey (Turkey) and United Gulf Bank (Bahrain). Furthermore, Burgan Bank has a presence in the UAE through its corporate office, Burgan Financial Services Limited.

The Bank has continuously improved its performance over the years, through an expanded revenue structure, diversified funding sources, and a strong capital base. The adoption of state-of-the-art services and technology has positioned it as a trendsetter in the

domestic market and within the MENA region. Moreover, Burgan Bank’s brand has been built on a foundation of real values – trust, commitment, excellence, and progression – which serve as a reminder of the high standards to which the Bank always aspires. In fact, the Bank’s core philosophy of ‘Driven by You’ is the foundation on which its products and services are continuously developed.

Burgan Bank has achieved the LEED v4.1 O+M: EB Gold Certification for its Head Office in Kuwait City. The Bank has also obtained the ISO/IEC 27001: 2022 Information Security Management Systems certificate (ISMS), ISO /IEC 27701:2019 Privacy Information Management Systems (PIMS), ISO/IEC 20000-1: 2018 Information Technology Service Management System (ITSMS) and was re-certified with the prestigious ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management System (QMS), making it one of the few banks in the GCC and Kuwait to receive such certification for five consecutive times. At the same time, the Bank has the distinction of being the only Bank in Kuwait to have won the JP Morgan Chase Quality Recognition Award for twenty consecutive years. Moreover, in a testament to its dedication to the development of its human capital, Burgan Bank is the first bank in Kuwait to be certified as a Great Place to Work®, earning the distinct honor in 2023.

Burgan Bank is a majority-owned subsidiary of KIPCO (Kuwait Projects Company), one of the largest holding companies in the MENA region.



Campaign photo

Campaign runs until year-end

KFH launches the ‘Salary Transfer Campaign’ with exclusive benefits

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 2: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has launched the ‘You deserve the benefits...when you transfer your salary’ campaign, encouraging Kuwaiti customers to transfer their salaries and enjoy exclusive benefits, rewards, and competitive offers.

The campaign, which runs until the end of the year, affirms KFH’s ongoing commitment to providing the best advantages, exclusive offers, while adding value to its products and services, and keeping pace with customers’ aspirations.

Through this initiative, Kuwaiti customers, working in the public or private sector, will receive a cash gift of up to KD 500 when transferring their salary of KD 400 or more to Al-Rabeh account. They also have the chance to earn up to 100,000 KFH Rewards bonus points redeemable for purchases at popular brands.

Additionally, customers can receive a KD 500 cash gift for referring new Kuwaiti customers, with a KD 100 for every successful referral they make and a maximum of five referrals per month.

The campaign boasts the Emergency Cash service, allowing customers to withdraw a portion of

their salaries in advance directly through the KFH app without fees. This service is subject to terms and conditions, based on salary tiers, and requires the customer’s salary to have been consistently credited to the account for the preceding three months.

Among the many other benefits is the opportunity to obtain a financing of up to KD 95 thousand under KFH’s housing and consumer financing offerings subject to terms and conditions.

These benefits reflect KFH’s commitment to providing the best services and products to customers across all segments. They also align with the Bank’s continuous efforts to uphold the highest standards of excellence and quality, focus on customers and meet their aspirations.

KFH remains committed to enhancing its suite of banking services and products in line with customers’ needs, aiming to provide them with modern innovative solutions that drive their satisfaction.

It is worth mentioning that KFH has achieved milestones in the quality of its services, capitalizing on the latest technologies and market demands in addition to tailoring its offerings to fit each segment of customers.

Kuwaiti issuances record 48% increase from last year, to a total value of \$3.39 bln through 4 issuances

Markaz report: GCC Fixed Income market sees \$92.04 bln in primary issuances during H1 2025 representing 5.5% decrease from last year

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 2: In its Fixed Income Report, Kuwait Financial Centre “Markaz” states that primary debt issuances of Bonds and Sukuk in the Gulf Cooperation Council (“GCC”) Countries amounted to USD 92.04 billion through 215 issuances during H1 2025, a 5.5% decrease from the same period last year, where issuances in H1 2024 amounted to USD 97.36 billion.

Issuances by Geography: Saudi-based issuances led the GCC during H1 2025, raising USD 47.93 billion through 71issuances, down from USD 59.73 billion in H12024 a decrease of 19.8%, and representing 52.1% of issuances during the year. UAE- based issuances ranked second, with USD 24.03 billion through 69 issuances, representing 26.1% of the market, an increase of 22.2% from the same period last year. Qatari entities were the third largest issuers in terms of value, with USD 10.0 billion issued through 58 issuances, representing 10.9% of the issuances over the period. Bahraini issuers follow, with a total issuance size of USD 5.62 billion through 7 issuances, a 49.7% increase from the same period last year. Kuwaiti issuances recorded a 48.0% increase from the same period last year, recording a total value of USD 3.39 billion through 4 issuances. Omani entities recorded the lowest value of issuances during the year, with USD 1.08 billion raised through 6 issuances, representing 1.2% of the total value of issuances.

Sovereign vs. Corporate: Total GCC corporate primary issuances increased by 67.7% in H12025, amounting to USD 60.20 billion raised, compared to USD 35.91 billion raised in H12024. Corporate issuances represented 65.4% of total issuances for the first half of 2025, contrasting with the preference of issuances in H1 2024 where more sovereign entities raised capital (Corporate issuances H1 2024: 36.9%). Government related corporate entities raised USD 11.2 billion through 11 issuances during the year, an increase of 1.8% from H1 2024 (USD 11.0 billion through 10 issuances). Total GCC sovereign primary issuances decreased by 48.2% in H12025, raising USD 31.85 billion throughout the year, representing 34.6% of total issuances.

Conventional vs. Sukuk: Conventional issuances increased by 7.8% inH12025 compared to H12024, raising a total of USD

51.61billion for theyear.Sukuk issuances, meanwhile,decreased by18.2% in H12025, resulting in a total value of USD 40.43 billion for the year so far. As for issuance preferences, H12025 saw an increased appetite for conventional issuances in the GCC, representing 56.1% of total issuances for theyear. This is a change in issuance preferences from H1 2024, where more Sukuk were issued than conventional bonds.

Sector Segmentation: The Financial sector led the bond and sukuk issuances in H12025, with total value of USD 40.1 billion through 167issuances representing 43.6% of total issuances. Government issuances follow, with USD 31.9 billion through 25 issuances, representing 34.6% of total issuances. This represents an increase for the financial sector (31.1%) and a decrease for government issuances (-48.2%) when compared to the same period last year. The energy sector follows, with USD 8.6 billion through 9 issuances, representing 9.4% of total issuances, with the remaining sectors together representing a small portion of total issuance (12.5%).

Maturity Profile: In H12025, primary issuances with less than 5-year tenors represented 46.9% of GCC debt capital markets with a total value amounting to USD 43.2 billion through 154 issuances. Primary issuances with5–10-year tenors followed, raising USD 31.1 billion through 43 issuances, representing 33.8% of total issuances. Primary issuances with 10–30-year tenors represented 9.6% of GCC debt capital markets with a total value of USD 8.8billion through 5 issuances during the year.One issuance came in with a maturity greater than (“GT”) 30 years with a value of USD 1 billion, while perpetual issuances saw an increase in both the size and number of issuances when compared to H12024, with a total value of USD 8.0 billion through 12 issuances.

Issue Size Profile: During H12025, GCC primary issuances ranged in size from USD 2.0 million to USD 5.0 billion. Issuances with issue size of USD 1 billion or greater raised the largest amount, totaling USD 54.5 billion through 32 issuances and representing 59.2% of the total amount issued in the GCC. Issuances sized between USD 500 million and USD 1 billion followed, with a total issuance size of USD 27.0 billion through 44 issuances. The

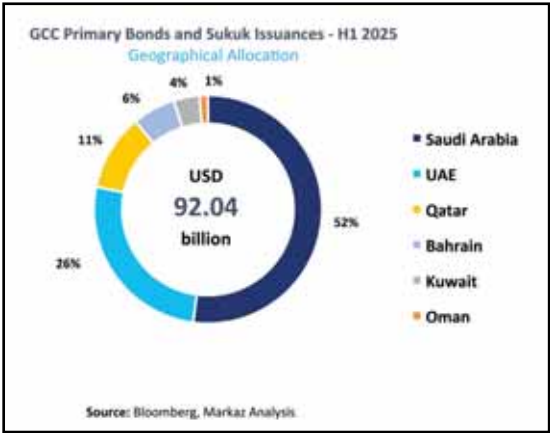
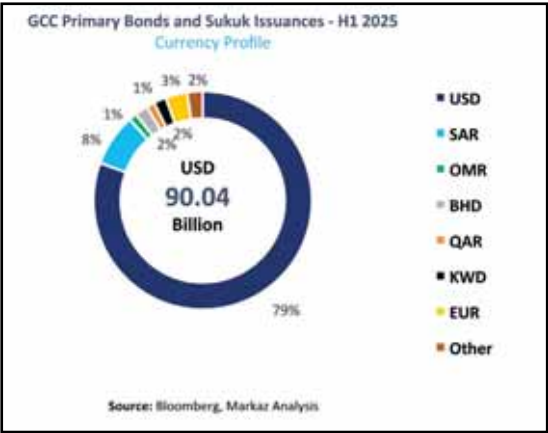
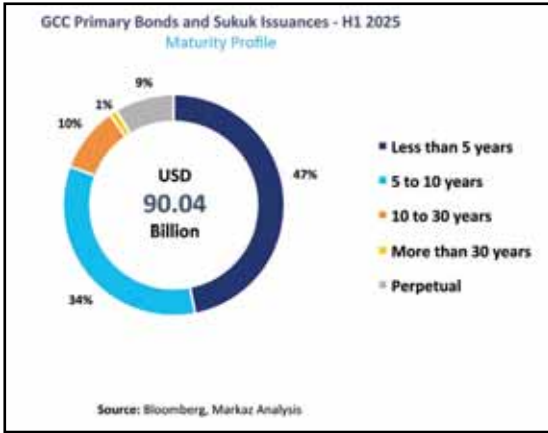
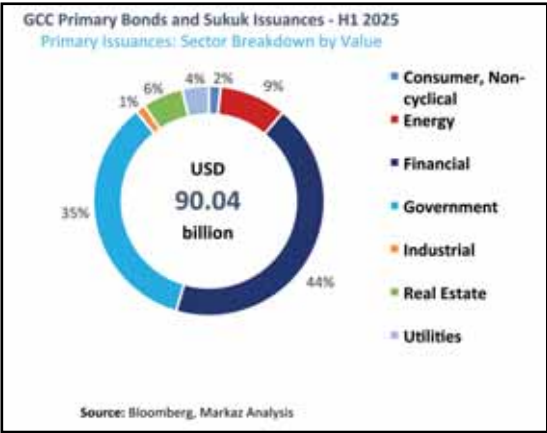
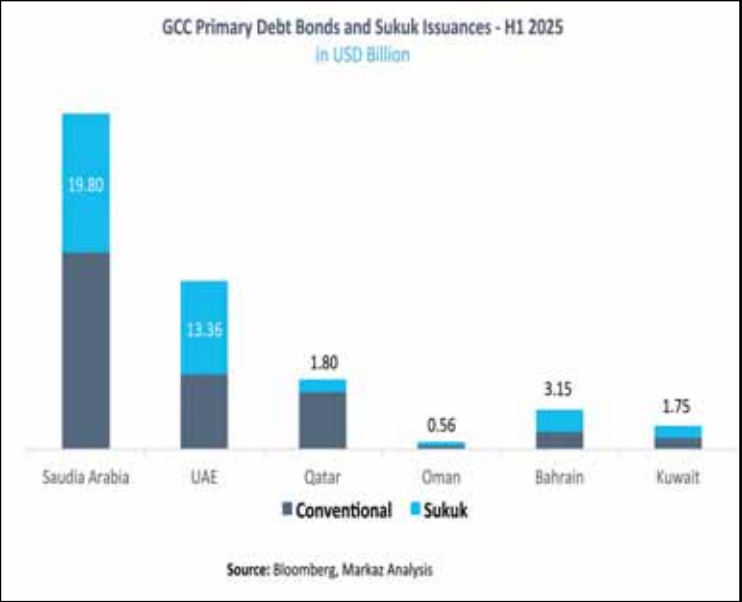
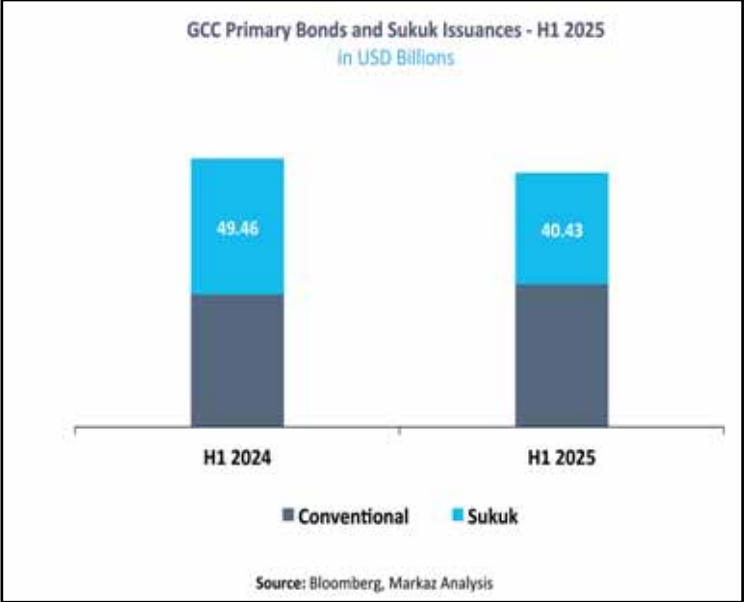
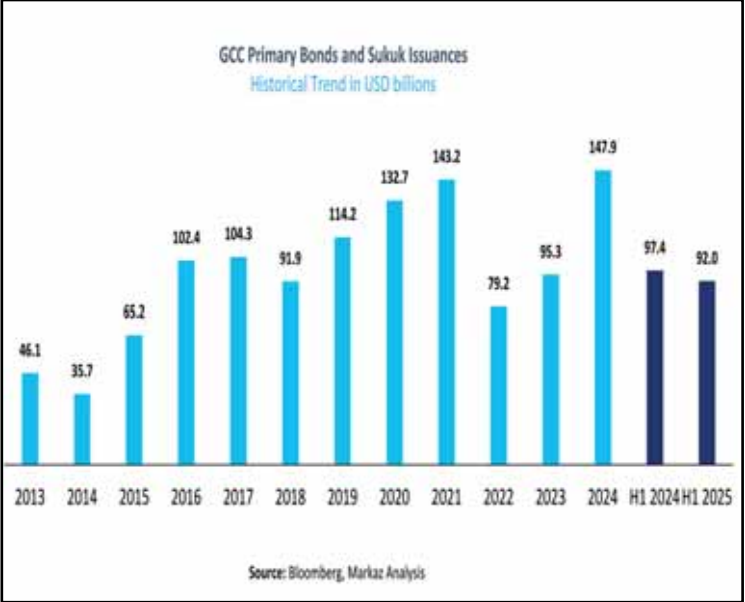
highest number of issuances was under USD 100 million issue size, where there were 105 issuances that raised a total amount of USD 3.2 billion during H12025.

Currency Profile: US Dollar-denominated issuances led the GCC Bonds and Sukuk primary market again in H12025, raising a total of USD 73.1 billion through 146 issuances, representing a substantial 79.4% of the total value raised in primary issuances during the year so far. The second largest issue currency was the Saudi Riyal (SAR), where SAR denominated issuances raised a total of USD 7.0 billion through 8 issuances. As for currencies bucketed under “Other” which totaled USD 2.0billion, the Hong Kong Dollar (HKD) represented 0.74% of total issuances with a total value of USD 682 million through 20 issuances.

Rating: In terms of value, a total of 74.0% of GCC Conventional and Sukuk bonds were rated in H12025 by at least one of the following rating agencies: Standard & Poor’s, Moody’s, Fitch and Capital Intelligence, an increase from H12024 (57.2% of all issuances rated). Issuances rated within the Investment Grade accounted for 67.7% of the total issuances during the year, while Sub-Investment Grade accounted for 6.3% of rated bonds.

About Kuwait Financial Centre “Markaz”

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



Job gains slow, inflation rises

Trump’s economic ‘golden age’ faces warnings amid weak data

WASHINGTON, Aug 2, (AP): For all of President Donald Trump’s promises of an economic “golden age,” a spate of weak indicators this week told a potentially worrisome story as the impacts of his policies are coming into focus.

Job gains are dwindling. Inflation is ticking upward. Growth has slowed compared with last year.

More than six months into his term, Trump’s blitz of tariff hikes and his new tax and spending bill have remodeled America’s trading, manufacturing, energy and tax systems to his own liking. He’s eager to take credit for any wins that might occur and is hunting for someone else to blame if the financial situation starts to totter.

But as of now, this is not the boom the Republican president promised, and his ability to blame his Democratic predecessor, Joe Biden, for any economic challenges has faded as the world economy hangs on his every word and social media post.

When Friday’s jobs report turned out to be decidedly bleak, Trump ignored the warnings in the data and fired the head of the agency that produces the monthly jobs figures.

“Important numbers like this must be fair and accurate, they can’t be manipulated for political purposes,” Trump said on Truth Social, without offering evidence for his claim. “The Economy is BOOMING.”

It’s possible that the disappointing numbers are growing pains from the rapid transformation caused by Trump and that stronger growth will return - or they may be a preview of even more disruption to come.

Trump’s aggressive use of tariffs, executive actions, spending cuts and tax code changes carries significant political risk if he is unable to deliver middle-class prosperity. The effects of his new tariffs are still several months away from rippling through the economy, right as many Trump allies in Congress will be campaigning in the midterm elections.

“Considering how early we are in his term, Trump’s had an unusually big impact on the economy already,” said Alex Conant, a Republican strategist at Firehouse Strategies. “The full inflationary impact of the tariffs won’t be felt until 2026. Unfortunately for Republicans, that’s also an election year.”

The White House portrayed the blitz of trade frameworks leading up to Thursday’s tariff announcement as proof of his negotiating prowess. The European Union, Japan, South Korea, the Philippines, Indonesia and other nations that the White House declined to name agreed that the U.S. could increase its tariffs on their goods without doing the same to American products. Trump simply set rates on other countries that lacked settlements.

The costs of those tariffs - taxes paid on imports to the U.S. - will be most felt by many Americans in the form of higher prices, but to what extent remains uncertain.

“For the White House and their allies, a key part of managing the expectations and politics of the Trump economy is maintaining vigilance when it comes to public perceptions,” said Kevin Madden, a Republican strategist.

Just 38% of adults approve of Trump’s handling of the economy, according to a July poll by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs. That’s down from the end of Trump’s first term when half of adults approved of his economic leadership.

The White House paints a rosier image, seeing the economy emerging from a period of uncertainty after Trump’s restructuring and repeating the economic gains seen

in his first term before the pandemic struck.

“President Trump is implementing the very same policy mix of deregulation, fairer trade, and pro-growth tax cuts at an even bigger scale - as these policies take effect, the best is yet to come,” White House spokesman Kush Desai said.

The economic numbers over the past week show the difficulties that Trump might face if the numbers continue on their current path:

- Friday’s jobs report showed that U.S. employers have shed 37,000 manufacturing jobs since Trump’s tariff launch in April, undermining prior White House claims of a factory revival.

- Net hiring has plummeted over the past three months with job gains of just 73,000 in July, 14,000 in June and 19,000 in May - a combined 258,000 jobs lower than previously indicated. On average last year, the economy added 168,000 jobs a month.

- A Thursday inflation report showed that prices have risen 2.6% over the year that ended in June, an increase in the personal consumption expenditures price index from 2.2% in April. Prices of heavily imported items, such as appliances, furniture, and toys and games, jumped from May to June.

- On Wednesday, a report on gross domestic product - the broadest measure of the U.S. economy - showed that it grew at an annual rate of less than 1.3% during the first half of the year, down sharply from 2.8% growth last year.

“The economy’s just kind of slogging forward,” said Guy Berger, senior fellow at the Burning Glass Institute, which studies employment trends. “Yes, the unemployment rate’s not going up, but we’re adding very few jobs. The economy’s been growing very slowly. It just looks like a ‘meh’ economy is continuing.”

Trump has sought to pin the blame for any economic troubles on Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell, saying the Fed should cut its benchmark interest rates even though doing so could generate more inflation.

Trump has publicly backed two Fed governors, Christopher Waller and Michelle Bowman, for voting for rate cuts at Wednesday’s meeting. But their logic is not what the president wants to hear. They were worried, in part, about a slowing job market.

But this is a major economic gamble being undertaken by Trump and those pushing for lower rates under the belief that mortgages will also become more affordable as a result and boost homebuying activity.

His tariff policy has changed repeatedly over the last six months, with the latest import tax numbers serving as a substitute for what the president announced in April, which provoked a stock market sell-off. It might not be a simple one-time adjustment as some Fed board members and Trump administration officials argue.

Of course, Trump can’t say no one warned him about the possible consequences of his economic policies.

Biden, then the outgoing president, did just that in a speech last December at the Brookings Institution, saying the cost of the tariffs would eventually hit American workers and businesses.

“He seems determined to impose steep, universal tariffs on all imported goods brought into this country on the mistaken belief that foreign countries will bear the cost of those tariffs rather than the American consumer,” Biden said. “I believe this approach is a major mistake.”

Trump urges Fed board to ‘override’ Powell on rates

President labels Powell ‘stubborn’

WASHINGTON, Aug 2, (AP): President Donald Trump on Friday called for the Federal Reserve’s board of governors to usurp the power of Fed Chair Jerome Powell, criticizing the head of the U.S. central bank for not cutting short-term interest rates.

Posting on his Truth Social platform, Trump called Powell “stubborn.” The Fed chair has been subjected to vicious verbal attacks by the Republican president over several months.

The Fed has the responsibility of stabilizing prices and maximizing employment. Powell has held its benchmark rate for overnight loans constant this year, saying that Fed officials needed to see what impact Trump’s massive tariffs had on inflation.

If Powell doesn’t “substantially” lower rates, Trump posted, “THE BOARD SHOULD ASSUME CONTROL, AND DO WHAT EVERYONE KNOWS HAS TO BE DONE!”

Two of the seven Fed governors, Christopher Waller and Michelle Bowman, issued statements Friday saying they see the tariffs as having a one-time impact on prices and the job market as most likely softening. As a result, the two dissented at the Fed meeting on Wednesday and pushed for slight rate cuts relative to what Trump was seeking.

Even though Trump, who nominated Waller and Bowman, has claimed the U.S. economy is booming, he welcomed their arguments and what he called their strong dissents.

After the Fed announced later Friday that governor Adriana Kugler will step down next week, Trump said Powell should follow her lead and leave, too.

“She knew he was doing the wrong thing



Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell walks off after speaking during a news conference following the Federal Open Market Committee meeting, Wednesday, July 30, 2025, in Washington. (AP)

on Interest Rates. He should resign, also!” Trump said on social media.

Friday’s jobs report showed a rapidly decelerating economy, as just 73,000 jobs were added in July and downward revisions brought down the June and May totals to 14,000 and 19,000, respectively.

Trump sees the rate cuts as leading to stronger growth and lower debt servicing costs for the federal government and homebuyers. The president argues there is virtually no inflation, even though the Fed’s preferred measure is running at an annual rate of 2.6%, slightly higher than the Fed’s 2% target.

Trump has called for slashing the Fed’s

benchmark rate by 3 percentage points, bringing it down dramatically from its current average of 4.33%. The risk is that a rate cut that large could cause more money to come into the economy than can be absorbed, possibly causing inflation to accelerate.

The Supreme Court suggested in a May ruling that Trump could not remove Powell for policy disagreements. This led the White House to investigate whether the Fed chair could be fired for cause because of the cost overruns in the Fed’s \$2.5 billion renovation projects.

Powell’s term as chair ends in May 2026, at which point Trump can put his Senate-confirmed pick in the seat.

US hiring slumps as Trump trade policies bite

WASHINGTON, Aug 2, (AP): U.S. hiring is slowing sharply as President Donald Trump’s erratic and radical trade policies paralyze businesses and raise doubts about the outlook for the world’s largest economy.

U.S. employers added just 73,000 jobs last month, the Labor Department reported Friday, well short of the 115,000 expected.

Worse, revisions shaved a stunning 258,000 jobs off May and June payrolls. And the unemployment rate ticked higher to 4.2% as Americans dropped out of the labor force and the ranks of the unemployed rose by 221,000.

“A notable deterioration in U.S. labor market conditions appears to be underway,” said Scott Anderson, chief U.S. economist at BMO Capital Markets. “We have been forecasting this since the tariff and trade war erupted this spring and more restrictive immigration restrictions were put in place. Overall, this report highlights the risk of a

harder landing for the labor market.”

Economists have been warning that the rift with every U.S. trading partner will begin to appear this summer and the Friday jobs report appeared to sound the bell.

“We’re finally in the eye of the hurricane,” said Daniel Zhao, chief economist at Glassdoor. “After months of warning signs, the July jobs report confirms that the slowdown isn’t just approaching-it’s here.”

U.S. markets recoiled at the jobs report and the Dow tumbled more than 600 points Friday.

But President Donald Trump responded to the weak report by calling for the firing of Erika McEntarfer, the director of the Labor Department’s Bureau of Labor Statistics, which compiles the jobs numbers. “I have directed my Team to fire this Biden Political Appointee, IMMEDIATELY,” Trump said on Truth Social. “She will be replaced with someone much more competent and qualified.”

Trump questioned the big revisions, but they are a standard part of the monthly jobs report. The Labor Department revises its numbers as more data comes in. Particularly since COVID-19, businesses have taken longer to respond to the government’s survey on hiring. As more data has come in later than in the past, the potential for large revisions has increased.

Revelations in the new data raise questions about the health of the job market and the economy as Trump pushes forward an unorthodox overhaul of American trade policy.

Trump has discarded decades of U.S. efforts to lower trade barriers globally, instead, imposing hefty import taxes - tariffs - on products from almost every country on earth. Trump believes the levies will bring manufacturing back to America and raise money to pay for the massive tax cuts he signed into law July 4.

US tariffs to hit highest levels since 1934 next week

What consumers can expect from import taxes as the US sets new tariff rates

WASHINGTON, Aug 2, (AP): It’s been almost 100 years since the U.S. had tariffs at the level they could reach next Friday.

Once President Donald Trump’s planned tariffs take effect, Americans will see an average tax of 18.3% for imported products, the highest rate since 1934, according to the Budget Lab at Yale, a non-partisan policy research center.

Late Thursday, Trump ordered new tariff rates for 66 countries, the European Union, Taiwan and the Falkland Islands. Among them: a 40% tariff on imports from Laos, a 39% tariff on goods from Switzerland and a 30% tariff on South African products.

Other trade partners, such as Cambodia and Bangladesh, had the tax rates on their exports to the U.S. reduced from levels the president had threatened to impose. Trump postponed the start date for all of the changes from Friday until Aug. 7.

Tariffs are a tax, and U.S. consumers are likely to foot at least part of the bill. The Budget Lab estimated that prices will increase 1.8% in the short term as a result of the trade war the U.S. waged this year. That’s the equivalent of a \$2,400 loss of income per U.S. household, the group said.

Companies are dealing with tariffs in various ways. Many automakers appear to be swallowing tariff costs for now. But the world’s largest eyewear maker, EssilorLuxottica, said it raised U.S. prices due to tariffs. The maker of Ray-Bans grinds lenses and sunglasses in Mexico, Thailand and China and exports premium frames from Italy.

“Retailers have been able to hold the line on pricing so far, but the new tariffs will impact merchandise in the coming weeks,” David French, chief lobbyist for the National Retail Federation, the nation’s largest retail trade group, said Friday.

“We have heard directly from small retailers who are concerned about their ability to stay in business in the face of these unsustainable tariff rates.”

Here’s what we know about the tariffs and what their impact will be on U.S. consumers:

Trump unveiled sweeping import taxes on goods coming into the U.S. from nearly every country in April. He said the “reciprocal” tariffs were meant to boost domestic manufacturing and restore fairness to global trade.

The president paused the country-specific tariffs a week later but applied a 10% tax to most imports. In early July, he began notifying countries that the higher tariffs would go into effect Aug. 1 unless they reached trade deals.

In announcing the new rates for dozens of countries on Thursday, Trump delayed their implementation until Aug. 7.

In the meantime, he announced a 35% tariff on imports from Canada would take effect Friday. But Trump delayed action on Mexico and China while negotiations continue.

Other duties not specific to countries also remained in place Friday, like a 50% tariff on imported aluminum and steel announced in June.

The Trump administration reached deals with the European Union,



A worker waits for customers at Roopam Sarees, which sells clothing imported from India, on Thursday, July 31, 2025, in Berkeley, Calif. (AP)

Japan and South Korea that put 15% tariffs in place. A deal with the Philippines puts 19% tariffs in place while a deal with Vietnam imposes a 20% levy. This week, Trump announced a 25% tariff on goods from India and ordered a 50% tariff on goods from Brazil.

The U.S. Court of International Trade, a federal court that specializes in trade disputes, ruled in May that Trump exceeded his authority when he invoked an emergency powers law to implement tariffs.

On Thursday, an 11-judge panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals considered the case, and judges expressed skepticism that Trump could impose tariffs without congressional approval. The case is expected to wind up before the U.S. Supreme Court.

The U.S. Commerce Department said Thursday that prices rose 2.6% in June, up from an annual pace of 2.4% in May and higher than the Federal Reserve’s goal of 2%. Furniture, computers and other items that often come from abroad were among the categories with higher average prices.

Wendong Zhang, an associate professor in the Dyson School of Applied Economics and Management at Cornell University, said U.S. consumers could see prices increases in the coming months for appliances and other products that contain a large amount of steel and aluminum.

But Zhang said a 15% tariff doesn’t mean prices will immediately rise by 15%. Companies were aware of the tariff deadlines, and tried to stockpile goods and take other measures to mitigate the impacts, he said.

Zhang noted that Trump’s trade deals often contain specific provisions designed to boost U.S. exports. The agreement with the European

Union, for example, calls for European companies to purchase \$750 billion worth of natural gas, oil and nuclear fuel from the U.S. over three years.

Some U.S. farmers could also see a potential upside, Zhang said. As part of its trade deal, Vietnam agreed to purchase \$2 billion in U.S. agricultural products over three years, including corn, wheat and soybeans, according to the International Trade Council.

But Zhang cautioned that agricultural agreements tend to be short-lived. Over the longer term, the uncertainty over tariffs could cause countries like China to back away from U.S. agricultural markets, he said.

The tariffs will almost certainly result in higher food prices, according to an analysis by the nonpartisan Tax Foundation. The U.S. simply doesn’t make enough of some products, like bananas or coffee, to satisfy demand. Fish, beer and liquor are also likely to get more expensive, the foundation said.

Ben Aneff, managing partner at Tribeca Wine Merchants and president of the U.S. Wine Trade Alliance, said shoppers would see prices rise 20% to 25% at his store and others starting Friday because of tariffs and the declining value of the dollar.

“Nobody can afford to eat the tariff. It gets passed on,” Aneff said.

Aneff said shoppers haven’t felt the impact from higher duties until now because distributors and retailers accelerated shipments from France and other European Union countries earlier in the year. But with the EU’s tariff rate set to go up to 15% in a week, Aneff expects European wine prices to jump 30% in September.

Ninety-seven percent of clothing and shoes sold in the U.S. are imported, primarily from Asia, according to the American Apparel & Footwear Association said. China leads the pack, but companies have been shifting more of their sourcing to Vietnam, Indonesia and India.

Steve Lamar, the trade group’s president and CEO, declined to estimate how much apparel and footwear prices may increase due to tariffs. But companies may offer fewer discounts or drop products starting this fall because they’re too expensive to produce, he said.

Matt Priest, president and CEO of the Footwear Distributors and Retailers of America, estimates prices for shoes are starting to go up for the back-to-school shopping season. He estimates price increases in the 5% to 10% range.

Some automakers have already raised prices to counteract tariffs. Luxury sports car maker Ferrari said Thursday it was waiting for more details of Trump’s trade deal with the European Union before scaling back a 10% surcharge it put in place in April on most vehicles in the U.S.

But for the most part, automakers haven’t raised prices as they waited for details. Kelley Blue Book, which monitors car pricing, said the average U.S. new car cost \$48,907 in June, which was up just \$108 from May.

But that could change. General Motors said last week that the impact of the tariffs could get more pronounced in the third quarter of the year. GM has estimated that the tariffs will cost it \$4 billion to \$5 billion this year.

Singer-actress hopes new album brings fans a sense of relief

On ‘Bite Me,’ Reneé Rapp punches back with confidence

NEW YORK, Aug 2, (AP): Reneé Rapp was clear on her intentions for her sophomore album, “Bite Me,” from the start. “I wanted to love this,” Rapp says. “I wanted to be able to walk away from this and be so proud of myself and impressed, no matter what anybody else thought.” Her first album, 2023’s “Snow Angel,” had been an experiment in figuring out her sound (a mix of pop, R&B and heart-wrenching ballads), and assembling a collection of songs that worked together. This album, out Friday, offered the chance to do it again, with an eye toward the way her life had changed in the intervening years.

“That intention, and also wanting to prove it to myself, was really grueling,” Rapp told The Associated Press. “And also really fun.”

The writing process gave Rapp, 25, an outlet to work through the burnout-inducing whirlwind that was her career in those two years. Uncharacteristically restrained in its vocal styling, the album’s lead single, “Leave Me Alone,” is strikingly open - clever zingers allude to her departure from HBO’s “...Lives of College Girls,” the media frenzy that surrounded her turn as Regina in the 2024 remake of “Mean Girls,” and the external pressure she felt to put out more music after the positive reception of “Snow Angel.” Basically, anything that’s been said about her in the last few years? She reframes it, poking fun at her reputation and the industry.

“Leave Me Alone” felt like a proper introduction to the album, Rapp says, and “Bite Me” - both a warning and a tease - the appropriate title. Paris Hilton and Monica Le-

winsky were among the famous faces that teased the album upon its announcement, donning merch emblazoned with the title in bold print. Rapp herself posed in front of a newsstand filled with mock tabloids depicting her as a diva, concealed behind big sunglasses and a fur coat, to promote the second single, “Mad.” (“That’s a Rapp!” the headline read.)

“It really feels just like a time capsule of those two years of my life, a lot having to do with the business and the industry and people’s expectations of me,” Rapp says of the album. “And then also me wanting things for myself and being confused where those two roads diverge.”

Rapp’s confidence and humor is evident across the album, just as it is on stage - “I write lyrics in the way that I talk,” she says. Many of the tracks tackle the destabilizing emotions that accompany the beginning and end of relationships, whether platonic or romantic, and how her now-very public career has amplified the challenges of creating, and maintaining, those connections.

“I’m so surrounded all the time, but I feel so lonely, and it feels really heavy and isolating. And I think a lot of that is just being an artist. And I also think a lot of that is just like the nature of like the business, for better or for worse,” she says. The can’t-be-bothered attitude heard on “Leave Me Alone” is countered by the ache of “That’s So Funny,” which recounts the end of a deeply affecting, but ultimately toxic friendship in Rapp’s signature soaring vocals.

That doesn’t mean Rapp isn’t also having fun. The cheeky “At Least I’m Hot” features Rapp’s girlfriend, the



This album cover image released by Interscope Records shows ‘Bite Me’ by Renee Rapp. (AP)

singer and guitarist Towa Bird. “I love when artists give you a clue into their lives, and the people who make their lives full,” Rapp said. The track, she says, is also just funny: “Who better to put on that than like the funniest person

alive?”

The album’s mix of emotions - heartache followed by the rush of a new crush, the impostor syndrome that accompanies the thrill of success - is something the AP Breakthrough Entertainer alum has been exploring since her 2022 EP, “Everything to Everyone.” She wants listeners to feel the conflict, too - and know that they aren’t alone in experiencing it.

In June, Rapp served as a grand marshal of the World Pride parade in Washington, D.C., alongside Laverne Cox and Deacon Maccubbin. “It can be difficult to feel resilient and empowered as a queer person,” Rapp said. “Because World Pride was in D.C., I was like, well, I can’t not be there.” She recalled a conversation with Cox, who dispelled some of Rapp’s fears of coming off as self-important in the role by emphasizing the power of showing up, and showing face. “Right now, when everything is so under attack, which it pretty much always is, it feels like that’s the time to be really loud.”

Rapp will launch the North American leg of her “Bite Me” tour at the iconic Red Rocks Amphitheater in September before making stops at New York’s Madison Square Garden and as a headliner at the Toronto stop of the All Things Go Festival. She’ll tour Europe in March.

As she readies for fans to hear the album, she hopes it offers them some reprieve, “I hope that the weight of the world doesn’t feel as massive,” she said. “It’s really easy to obsess over everything and be constantly lost in your head.”

Wraps up tour

Timberlake confirms he has Lyme disease

LOS ANGELES, Aug 2, (AP): Justin Timberlake has been diagnosed with Lyme disease, the former NSYNC star said on Instagram Thursday.

Timberlake shared the news in a post commemorating his Forget Tomorrow tour, which wrapped in Turkey on Wednesday, adding that the disease “can be relentlessly debilitating, both mentally and physically.”

The “SexyBack” singer, who described himself as a private person, wrote he considered ending the tour when diagnosed, but wrote that he “decided the joy that performing brings me far outweighs the fleeting stress my body was feeling. I’m so glad I kept going.”

Lyme disease is transmitted by Ixodes ticks, also known as deer ticks. It can cause flu-like conditions, neurological problems, joint pain and other symptoms. In the vast majority of cases, Lyme disease is successfully treated with antibiotics.

“I honestly don’t know what my future is onstage, but I’ll always cherish this run! And all of them before! It’s been the stuff of legend for me,” Timberlake wrote.

Timberlake canceled and postponed multiple shows throughout the tour’s run, citing health issues including bronchitis and laryngitis. Six of his US shows were postponed from October and November to February, the singer announced on Instagram. Timberlake ultimately canceled the last show of the US leg of the tour in Ohio due to the flu in February.

Representatives for Timberlake did not immediately respond to The Associated Press’ request for comment.

Timberlake pleaded guilty to driving while impaired in New York’s Hamptons in 2024. As part of his plea deal, the singer gave a public safety announcement in September, urging drivers not to get behind the wheel after drinking.

The 10-time Grammy winner ended the post thanking his wife, Jessica Biel, and their two sons, Silas and Phin, saying “nothing is more powerful than your unconditional love. You are my heart and my home. I’m on my way.”

Exactly how often Lyme disease strikes isn’t clear. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention cites insurance records suggesting 476,000 people are treated for Lyme disease in the US each year.

SF honors Jerry Garcia with street renaming

SAN FRANCISCO, Aug 2, (AP): A few hundred people gathered Friday to name a tiny San Francisco street after legendary Grateful Dead guitarist Jerry Garcia on what would have been his 83rd birthday and as part of a citywide celebration to mark the band’s 60th anniversary.

Harrington Street, which is one block long, will also be called “Jerry Garcia Street.” He died in 1995, but the band’s popularity has only grown as younger generations discover the Dead’s improvisational music, which blended rock, blues, folk and other styles.

Garcia spent part of his childhood in a modest home in the city’s diverse Excelsior neighborhood. He lived with his grandparents after the death of his father, Jose Ramon “Joe” Garcia.

“I hope that you all get a chance to enjoy the music, dance, hug, smile,” said daughter Trixie Garcia, growing emotional during her brief remarks. “Cherish what’s valuable, what’s significant in life.”

Tens of thousands of fans are in San Francisco to commemorate the Grateful Dead’s 60th anniversary with concerts and other activities throughout the city.

The latest iteration of the band, Dead & Company, with original Grateful Dead members Bob Weir and Mickey Hart, will play Golden Gate Park’s Polo Field for three days starting Friday. An estimated 60,000 attendees are expected each day.

Formed in 1965, the Grateful Dead played often and for free in their early years while living in a cheap Victorian home in the Haight-Ashbury neighborhood.



Mayor Daniel Lurie speaks to the crowd gathered for the Jerry Garcia Street Dedication Ceremony on Harrington Street on Friday, Aug. 1, in San Francisco. (AP)

Film



Lindsay Lohan poses for photographers upon arrival at the premiere of the film ‘Freakier Friday’ on Thursday, July 31, 2025, in London. (AP)

Sequel amplifies insanity but loses original charm

‘The Bad Guys 2’ goes bigger, not better

LOS ANGELES, Aug 2, (AP): The good news for fans of “The Bad Guys” is the new sequel is stellar. But that’s because a good portion is actually set in - are you kidding us? - outer space. “The Bad Guys 2” has clearly lost its moorings.

Returning director Pierre Perifel, writers Yoni Brenner and Etan Cohen and the same voice cast have done what all sequels do these days - amp it all up like everyone is on molly, try to hit the same emotional notes and layer an insane plot with the fate of the world at stake. It’s hard to watch a franchise drift so expensively and pointlessly in Earth’s orbit.

The gang is all back: Sam Rockwell as Mr. Wolf, Marc Maron as safe-cracker Mr. Snake, Craig Robinson as master of disguise Mr. Shark, Anthony Ramos as Mr. Piranha and Awkwafina as hacker Ms. Tarantula. We left them in the last movie walking out of prison early after good behavior and trying to turn their back on bad-hood.

It’s not that easy since would-be employers these days want to know about gaps in their job experience - they were robbing banks, after all - workplace trust issues and salary expectations. No one wants to hire a bunch of ex-cons.

“Anyone who wants to change has to start somewhere,” Mr. Wolf, pushing the George Clooney-like charm offensive, begs one dubious interviewer. “I’m just asking for a chance.”

A life on the straight-and-narrow is hard for four of the former baddies, but not Maron - so perfectly cast as the grouchy, self-loathing snake. Now he spends his days doing Vinyasa yoga, listening to Sabrina Carpenter’s “Espresso,” telling people “namaste” and sips wheatgrass kombucha with dandelion. He’s even more irritating.

Soon all five are caught in a series of traps and double-crosses by a new robbery crew - Danielle Brooks’ lollipop-licking venomous snow leopard, Maria Bakalova’s Bulgar-



This image released by Universal Pictures shows characters, (from left), Mr. Snake, voiced by Marc Maron, Mr. Shark, voiced by Craig Robinson, Mr. Wolf, voiced by Sam Rockwell, Mr. Piranha, voiced by Anthony Ramos, and Ms. Tarantula, voiced by Awkwafina in a scene from ‘The Bad Guys 2.’ (AP)

ian wild boar engineer and Natasha Lyonne’s wry raven, using her same vocal tick as on “Poker Face.” These dames have a plan to get very rich using a substance known as MacGuffinite, a clever - or lazy - joke on the object that everyone wants in a movie like this, which drives the plot.

There’s soon a trip to a Mexican wrestling festival and then a wedding needs crashing in order to gain control over a rocket owned by an Elon Musk-like billionaire - voice acted by Colin Jost - who runs the MoonX company. Then the rocket has to be stopped before a gadget aboard creates a “24-carat catastrophe.”

The animation is amazingly kinetic and with no corners cut, from tiny bugs illuminated in a light beam at night to the bumpy way a truck moves on the highway. The franchise’s love of vrooming and fishtailing Looney Tunes-like car chases stays intact, as does the wavy green air farts that emanate from Piranha.

vention and instructed not to return” and that affected attendees were encouraged to contact police.

Bussey had been scheduled as a featured guest for all three days of the event. He was initially charged with two counts of fourth-degree criminal sexual contact, one count of attempted criminal sexual contact and one count of harassment.

Bussey’s lawyer, Blair Zwillman, confirmed Friday that the other charges were dropped as part of a plea deal reached with prosecutors. The actor faces up to five years’ probation and fines when he is sentenced Sept. 18. (AP)

LOS ANGELES: And just like that, a universe of fun, friendship and fashion is coming to an end.

Michael Patrick King, showrunner of the “Sex and

the City” sequel “And Just Like That ...,” announced on Instagram that the series will end after the third season concludes. Fans have a two-part finale to savor later this month.

“It’s with great gratitude we thank all the viewers who have let these characters into their homes and their hearts over these many years,” he wrote.

King said he decided to wrap things up while writing the season’s final episode. He then split the finale into two episodes. The last episode will drop Aug. 14.

In a long, heartfelt Instagram post of her own, Sarah Jessica Parker, who played the iconic Carrie Bradshaw character in both series, called the sequel “all joy, adventure, the greatest kind of hard work alongside the most extraordinary talent.” She included a montage of Carrie’s fashion and moments.

Parker added: “I am better for every single day I spent with you. It will be forever before I forget. The whole thing. Thank you all. I love you so.”

Parker, Kristin Davis and Cynthia Nixon returned for the sequel. (AP)

Nashville pays homage to trailblazing singer

Jeannie Seely, soulful country singer, dies at 85

NEW YORK, Aug 2, (AP): Jeannie Seely, the soulful country music singer behind such standards like “Don’t Touch Me,” has died. She was 85.

Her publicist, Don Murry Grubbs, said she died Friday after succumbing to complications from an intestinal infection.

Known as “Miss Country Soul” for her unique vocal style, Seely was a trailblazer for women in country music, celebrated for her spirited nonconformity and for a string of undeniable hits in the ‘60s and ‘70s.

Her second husband, Gene Ward, died in December. In May, Seely revealed that she was in recovery after undergoing multiple back surgeries, two emergency procedures and spending 11 days in the ICU. She also suffered a bout of pneumonia.

“Rehab is pretty tough, but each day is looking brighter and last night, I saw a light at the end of the tunnel. And it was neon, so I knew it was mine!” she said in a statement at the time. “The unsinkable Seely is working her way back.”

Dolly Parton was one of several country music luminaries paying her tribute on Friday, saying she met Seely when they were both young and starting out in Nashville.

“She was one of my dearest friends,” Parton said on her social media accounts. “I think she was one of the greater singers in Nashville and she had a wonderful sense of humor. We had many wonderful laughs together, cried over certain things together and she will be missed.”

Seely was born in July 1940, in Titusville, Pennsylvania, about two hours north of Pittsburgh and raised in nearby Townville. Her love of country music was instant; her mother sang, and her father played the banjo. When she was a child, she sang on local radio programs and performed on local television. In her early 20s, she moved to Los Angeles to kick-start a career, taking a job with Liberty and Imperial Records in Hollywood.

She kept writing and recording. Nashville was next: She sang on Porter Wagoner’s show; she got a deal with Monument Records. Her greatest hit would arrive soon afterward: “Don’t Touch Me,” the crossover ballad written by Hank Cochran. The song earned Seely her first and only Grammy Award, for best country & western vocal performance in the female category.

Cochran and Seely were married in 1969 and divorced in 1979.

Seely broke boundaries in her career - at a time when country music expected a kind of subservience from its women performers, Seely was a bit of a rebel, known for wearing a miniskirt on the Grand Ole Opry stage when it was still taboo.

And she had a number of country hits in the ‘60s and ‘70s, including three Top 10 hits on what is now known as Billboard’s hot country songs chart: “Don’t Touch Me,” 1967’s “I’ll Love You More (Than You Need)” and 1973’s “Can I Sleep In Your Arms?”, adapted from the folk song “Can I Sleep In Your Barn Tonight Mister?”

In the years since, Seely continued to release albums, perform, and host, regularly appearing on country music programming. Her songs are considered classics, and have been recorded by everyone from Merle Haggard, Ray Price and Connie Smith to Ernest Tubb, Grandpa Jones, and Little Jimmy Dickens.

And Seely never stopped working in country music. Since 2018, she’s hosted the weekly “Sunday’s with Seely” on Willie Nelson’s Willie’s Roadhouse SiriusXM channel. That same year, she was inducted into the Music City Walk of Fame.



Jeannie Seely arrives at the 56th Annual CMA Awards in Nashville, Tenn., on Nov. 9, 2022. (AP)

The voice behind 600 books – and her own story

Whelan’s voice goes beyond audiobooks

NEW YORK, Aug 2, (AP): Chances are, you’ve heard Julia Whelan’s voice. She’s the award-winning narrator behind more than 600 audiobooks by a long list of bestselling authors including Taylor Jenkins Reid, Emily Henry, Michael Crichton, V.E. Schwab and Kristin Hannah. She’s also narrated long-form articles for The New Yorker, The Atlantic and Vanity Fair.

You may have read her own writing, too. Whelan’s first novel, 2018’s “My Oxford Year,” has been adapted to a Netflix film, out Friday, starring Sofia Carson. The story actually began as a screenplay by Allison Burnett and had been gestating in development for years. Whelan was brought in to help with the script because she had studied abroad at Oxford her junior year of college. Producers then asked if she thought it would make a good book.

“I was like, ‘Nothing has ever wanted to be a book more. Please let me do this,’” she recalls. It ended up an international bestseller. Her second novel, 2022’s “Thank You For Listening,” was critically praised. (“Thank You For Listening” is about a former actor-turned-audiobook narrator who falls in love with another audio-book narrator.)

You may have even seen Whelan on TV - she began her career as a child actor, with roles in “Fifteen and Pregnant” and on the series “Once and Again.” Despite her various pursuits, though, she has no plans to leave narration behind. “I feel like I was born to do it,” she said. “It’s everything that I love and that I’m good at and everything I want to be doing.”



Julia Whelan poses for a portrait on Thursday, July 24, 2025, in Los Angeles. (AP)

That’s a good thing, because the audio-book industry is growing. Statista projects this year it will reach \$9.84 billion because of smartphones, the increased popularity of audio content and people’s desire to multi-task. Despite the appetite for audiobooks, for narrators, “the financial aspect makes zero sense,” says Whelan. She’s founded her own publishing company, Audiobrary, to help narrators get paid more fairly.

Whelan, who has narrated as many as 70 books in one year, spoke to The Associated Press about the audiobook industry, Audiobrary and her own writing. Answers are edited for clarity and brevity.

AP: Why did you start your own audiobook publishing company?

Whelan: The only reason I was doing 70 books a year was because that’s how many books you have to do when you’re first starting out to keep your head above water because the rates are low. It would be OK if there were a kickback for success, but narrators don’t get royalties. As we’ve seen the industry grow and as we’ve seen the cache of certain narrators expand, and we know listeners will seek out audiobooks that their favorite narrators record. It doesn’t make sense to me that we should be cut out of the long-term financial benefit of success. Audiobrary does a profit-share model with writers, who I also feel don’t get enough percentage of the pie, and a royalty share for narrators. We are also a direct-to-consumer retail channel, so when you buy directly from us, you’re not giving 50-75% of that sale to a retailer. You’re giving it directly to the people who made the product.

AP: How do you prepare before narrating?

Whelan: I create character lists. I create pronunciation lists, and I do the necessary research for that. The prep time can vary book to book significantly, depending on how complicated the book is.

AP: If you feel a cold coming on, do you panic? Do you have to protect your voice?

Whelan: It ruins everything. I’m probably the only person left who wears a mask on a plane at this point, but everything falls apart if I get sick. You’re messed up for three or four months. Everything just gets delayed, especially when I was doing 70 books a year, there’s no room for error there.

AP: There are big-name celebrities who narrate audiobooks. Do you worry about them taking jobs?

Whelan: At this point, there’s still enough

work to go around and they are doing the books that have the budget frankly to use them. But I think that audiobook fans - not your casual audiobook user, but fans - have favorite narrators and they’re going to look for books by those narrators. So, in stunt-casting situations, sometimes someone is incredible at it, and they are perfect for the book. But sometimes it feels like a very craven, just marketing ploy. I don’t feel infringed upon by them, but I do worry about a future situation where most of the work is going to AI. I don’t lie awake at night worried, but everyone’s threatened right now. It’s very, very hard to even begin to predict what the future could look like.

AP: What do you say to people who are almost sheepish about admitting to listening to an audiobook instead of reading it?

Whelan: I think the kids would say that it’s ableist to say that if you didn’t read a book with your eyeballs, then you didn’t read it, considering many people have many limitations that would prevent them from physically reading a

book. So then are you telling them they’ve never read a book before? Actual data and studies show that listening to a book actually triggers the same response in the brain as reading it, and that the interpretation and understanding of that book is on par with having read it.

AP: When do you see yourself writing another novel?

Whelan: There’s been about four ideas that are constantly in rotation, but I think I’ve narrowed it down. I think I’m ready to at least start exploring one of them at the beginning of next year.

AP: Do you think “Thank You for Listening” could ever be adapted for the screen?

Whelan: I very much think we could. I have said no up to this point because, this time around, I want to be very creatively involved. There’s just too many things about audiobooks that someone could get wrong not knowing anything about the industry. I want to be involved so I’m willing to hold onto it until the right situation comes along.

Obituaries

Author Allan Ahlberg dead

Legendary accordionist Flaco Jimenez, dies at 86

HOUSTON, Aug 2, (AP): Flaco Jimenez, the legendary accordionist from San Antonio who won multiple Grammys and helped expand the popularity of conjunto, Tejano and Tex-Mex music, died Thursday. He was 86.

Jimenez’s death was announced Thursday evening by his family on social media. He was surrounded by family members when he died in the San Antonio home of his son Arturo Jimenez.

“Dad was in peace when he left. He started saying his goodbyes several days before. He said he was proud of himself for what he had done and he just leaves memories for the public to enjoy. He said he was ready to go,” Arturo Jimenez told The Associated Press in a phone interview on Friday.

Arturo Jimenez said a cause of death has not yet been determined. His father had been hospitalized in January after getting a blood clot in his leg. Doctors then discovered he had some vascular issues.



Flaco Jimenez poses with the Grammy that he won for Best Mexican-American Performance at the 38th annual Grammy Awards at the Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles, Wednesday, Feb. 28, 1996. (AP)

Born Leonardo Jimenez in 1939, he was known to his fans by his nickname of Flaco, which means skinny in Spanish.

He was the son of conjunto pioneer Santiago Jimenez. Conjunto is a musical genre that originated in South Texas and blends different genres and cultural influences.

According to the Butler School of Music at the University of Texas at Austin, the development of conjunto “began more than a century ago when Texans of Mexican heritage (Tejanos) took an interest in the accordion music of German, Polish, and Czech immigrants. The ensuing Tejano accordion music, accompanied by the bajo sexto (replacing the European tuba) soon came to represent the Tejano way of life, which was closely associated with working in the agricultural fields. The music remains unchanged and serves as a symbol that binds many Tejano communities in South and Central Texas.”

Jimenez refined his conjunto musical skills by playing in San Antonio saloons and dance halls. He began performing in the 1960s with fellow San Antonio native Douglas Sahm, the founding member of the Sir Douglas Quintet. Jimenez would later play with Bob Dylan, Dr. John, Ry Cooder and the Rolling Stones.

Throughout his career, Jimenez added other influences into conjunto music, including from country, rock and jazz.

created with his illustrator wife Janet Ahlberg, who died in 1994.

“Peepo!” (1981) gave a baby’s-eye-view of the world and was interactive in a delightfully analogue way, with peep-holes in the pages to spy the next scenes.

“The Jolly Postman” (1986) was even more inventive, incorporating postcards and letters in envelopes for children to engage with while they followed a letter-carrier delivering mail to fairy tale characters. Penguin Random House said it “pushed at the boundaries of what it is possible for a book to be.”

Ahlberg also wrote books of jokes, including “The Ha Ha Bonk Book,” and poetry for primary school-age children, including “Please Mrs. Butler” and “Heard it in the Playground.”

Born in 1938 and raised by adoptive parents in a working-class home in Oldbury, central England, Ahlberg worked as a “postman, plumber’s mate and grave digger,” according to his publisher, before becoming a teacher. He met Janet at teacher training college and the couple’s first book, “Here are the Brick Street Boys,” was published in 1975.

Then came “‘Burglar Bill” in 1977, about a burglar who steals a baby, and “Each Peach Pear Plum” in 1978, with its pages of intricately drawn nursery-rhyme characters. It won Janet the Kate Greenaway Medal for illustration, one of the most prestigious awards in children’s publishing. “The Jolly Christmas Postman” won the same prize in 1991.

“Just because a book is tiny and its readers are little doesn’t mean it can’t be perfect,” Ahlberg told The Guardian in 2006. “On its own scale, it can be as good as Tolstoy or Jane Austen.”

The couple’s work brought huge commercial success. “The Jolly Postman” has sold more than 6 million copies. The “Funnybones” series about a playful skeleton household was adapted for television.

British writer Allan Ahlberg, author of more than 150 children’s books including classics like “Each Peach Pear Plum” and “The Jolly Postman,” has died, his publisher said Friday. He was 87.

Penguin Random House said Ahlberg died on Tuesday. It did not give a cause of death.

Ahlberg’s books introduced generations of young children to reading through simple rhymes, sharp observation and gentle humor. Many were co-



Lynette Howell Taylor arrives at the Oscars in Los Angeles on March 2, 2025. (AP)

Taylor elected Oscars president

Veteran producer Lynette Howell Taylor has been elected president of the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences. Taylor will succeed Janet Yang in the role, presiding over the organization that puts on the Oscars, film academy CEO Bill Kramer said Thursday.

An academy member since 2014, Taylor has served the organization in several high-profile positions, including as vice president and chair of the awards committee. She’s also a prolific film producer whose works include “A Star Is Born” (2018), “Blue Valentine” and “The Accountant.” She also produced the 92nd Oscars broadcast. Taylor is now the fifth woman to lead the film academy. (AP)

Variety

LOS ANGELES: John Krasinski is returning to direct, write and produce “A Quiet Place Part III.” The film has been set for a July 9, 2027 theatrical release, Paramount Pictures said Friday.

The first film, released in 2018, was a box-office smash, earning some \$341 million worldwide on a budget of only \$17 million. It also established Krasinski, who starred alongside his wife Emily Blunt in the post-apocalyptic horror, as a bankable filmmaker. He returned to write and direct “A Quiet Place Part II,” the release of which was delayed over a year due to the pandemic.

The franchise also expanded to include a prequel, “A Quiet Place: Day One.” Krasinski produced but handed over the reins to filmmaker Michael Sarnoski. In total, the three films have grossed over \$892 million.

Krasinski on Friday posted a graphic with the numeral “III” and the release date on Instagram. No other details about cast or story were immediately

available. (AP)

NEW YORK: Prosecutors said they now expect music mogul Sean “Diddy” Combs could face a prison sentence “substantially higher” than the four to five years they once thought he was likely to face after his conviction on two prostitution-related charges.

They made the observation late Thursday in a Manhattan federal court written submission in which they also opposed Combs’ request this week to be released on \$50 million bail while he awaits an Oct. 3 sentencing.

In early July, Combs, 55, was acquitted of racketeering conspiracy and sex trafficking charges carrying potential life prison terms but was convicted of two counts of transportation to engage in prostitution for arranging for girlfriends

and male workers to travel to engage in sexual encounters that he filmed.

Each prostitution-related charge carries a potential maximum 10 years in prison.

Prosecutors said after the verdict that they thought federal sentencing guidelines meant to prevent wide disparities in sentencing for the same crimes would likely call for a prison term of four to five years. But they said Thursday they believe the guidelines range “will be substantially higher,” raising the risk Combs will flee.

Judge Arun Subramanian will have wide latitude in determining a sentence and can choose to ignore the guidelines, which are not mandatory. Combs’ lawyers have said they believe the guidelines, if properly calculated, will call for 21 to 27 months in prison.

On the day of the verdict, prosecutors won a bail fight after defense lawyer Marc Agnifilo argued Combs should be freed immediately on bail.

Subramanian denied the defense request, saying Combs had not met the burden of showing by clear and convincing evidence a “lack of danger to any person or the community.” But he said Agnifilo could renew the request. (AP)



Krasinski

Crew swaps in, old crew preps for return

SpaceX delivers new crew to ISS in just 15 hrs

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla., Aug 2, (AP): SpaceX delivered a fresh crew to the International Space Station on Saturday, making the trip in a quick 15 hours.

The four US, Russian and Japanese astronauts pulled up in their SpaceX capsule after launching from NASA's Kennedy Space Center. They will spend at least six months at the orbiting lab, swapping places with colleagues up there since March. SpaceX will bring those four back as early as Wednesday.

Moving in are NASA's Zena Cardman and Mike Fincke, Japan's Kimiya Yui and Russia's Oleg Platonov - each of whom had been originally assigned to other missions. "Hello, space station!" Fincke radioed as soon as the capsule docked high above the South Pacific.

Cardman and another astronaut were pulled from a SpaceX flight last year to make room for NASA's two stuck astronauts, Boeing Starliner test pilots Butch Wilmore and Suni Williams, whose space station stay went from one week to more than nine months. Fincke and Yui had been training for the next Starliner mission. But with Starliner grounded by thruster and other problems until 2026, the two switched to SpaceX.

Platonov was bumped from the Soyuz launch lineup a couple of years ago because of an undisclosed illness.

Their arrival temporarily puts the space station population at 11.

"It was such an unbelievably beautiful sight to see the space station come into our view for the first time," Cardman said once on board.

While their taxi flight was speedy by US standards, the Russians hold the record for the fastest trip to the space station - a lightning-fast three hours.



This image made from video provided by NASA and SpaceX shows from right in blue, Japan's Kimiya Yui, NASA's Zena Cardman and Mike Fincke and Russia's Oleg Platonov, with colleagues up there since March at the International Space Station during a welcome ceremony, Saturday, Aug. 2. (AP)

'Stay alert'

SA confirms new bird flu

CAPE TOWN, Aug 2, (Xinhua): Authorities in South Africa's Western Cape have confirmed new outbreaks of bird flu in the province, urging the public to "stay alert," but "not alarmed."

"The Western Cape Department of Agriculture wishes to alert poultry farmers and the general public to new outbreaks of high pathogenicity avian influenza, commonly referred to as bird flu," said the department in a statement released on Friday night.

Recent outbreaks have been confirmed in chickens in the North West and Mpumalanga provinces, along with a single outbreak in the Western Cape, detected in farmed ducks near Paarl in early July, the statement said, adding that the affected ducks, along with related flocks of chickens, were voluntarily and humanely culled to prevent further spread of the disease.

In addition to poultry cases, bird flu has caused fatalities among great white pelicans in the Cape Town area. "These are the first wild bird cases reported in the Western Cape since April 2024 and the first mass mortalities since 2022," the statement said.

While the situation is concerning, "consumers can be assured that poultry products from grocery stores are safe for consumption," it added.

Avian influenza is a viral disease that primarily affects birds. While the virus has occasionally infected mammals and humans abroad, the department emphasized that there is currently no evidence of human-to-human transmission and that the risk to humans remains low.

Nevertheless, officials advised the public not to handle sick or dead wild birds without proper protective gear and to report any unusual bird deaths to local authorities.

The department also urged farmers and poultry producers to apply strict biosecurity measures to reduce the risk of infection from wild or domestic birds.

Leptospirosis: The Philippines' Department of Health (DOH) on Saturday urged vigilance over the surge in leptospirosis cases in the country in the wake of heavy rains and floods triggered by tropical cyclones and the southwest monsoon in recent weeks.

"Please be reminded that leptospirosis could lead to death. Take action and consult with the doctors if you have symptoms, especially after wading in floodwaters," the DOH warned on social media.

The DOH recorded 3,037 leptospirosis cases nationwide from Jan. 1 to July 19 this year. Of the total cases, the agency said 1,114 were recorded after June 8, just a week after the country's state weather bureau declared the start of the rainy season.

Leptospirosis is a bacterial infection commonly spread through water contaminated with animal urine.

Leftover embryos leave families in emotional limbo

US couple welcomes a baby boy from a nearly 31-year-old frozen embryo

NEW YORK, Aug 2, (AP): A baby boy born last week to an Ohio couple developed from an embryo that had been frozen for more than 30 years in what is believed to be the longest storage time before a birth.

In what's known as embryo adoption, Lindsey and Tim Pierce used a handful of donated embryos that have been frozen since 1994 in pursuit of having a child after fighting infertility for years. Their son was born Saturday from an embryo that had been in storage for 11,148 days, which the Pierces' doctor says sets a record.

It's a concept that has been around since the 1990s but is gaining traction as some fertility clinics and advocates, often Christian-centered, oppose discarding leftover embryos because of their belief that life begins at or around conception and that all embryos deserve to be treated like children who need a home.

"I felt all along that these three little hopes, these little embryos, deserved to live just like my daughter did," said Linda Archerd, 62, who donated her embryos to the Pierces.

Just about 2% of births in the US are the result of in vitro fertilization, and an even smaller fraction involve donated embryos.

However, medical experts estimate about 1.5 million frozen embryos are currently being stored throughout the country, with many of those in limbo as parents wrestle with what to do with their leftover embryos created in IVF labs.

Further complicating the topic is a 2024 Alabama Supreme Court decision that said that frozen embryos have the legal status of children. State leaders have since devised a temporary solution shielding clinics from liability stemming from that ruling, though questions linger about remaining embryos.

Archerd says she turned to IVF in 1994. Back then, the ability to freeze,



This photo provided by Rejoice and Dr John David Gordon on July 31, 2025, shows Thaddeus Pierce. (AP)

thaw and transfer embryos was making key progress and opening the door for hopeful parents to create more embryos and increase their chances of a successful transfer.

Adoption

She wound up with four embryos and initially hoped to use them all. But after the birth of her daughter, Archerd and her husband divorced, disrupting her timeline for having more children.

As the years turned into decades, Archerd said she was wracked with guilt about what to do with the embryos as storage fees continued to rise.

Eventually, she found Snowflakes, a division of Nightlight Christian Adoptions, which offers open adoptions to donors from people like Archerd. She was also able to set preferences for what families would adopt her embryos.

"I wanted to be a part of this baby's life," she said. "And I wanted to know the adopting parents."

The process was tricky, requiring Archerd to contact her initial fertility doctor in Oregon and dig through paper records to get the proper documentation for the donation. The embryos then had to be shipped from Oregon to the Pierces' doctor in Tennessee. The clinic, Rejoice Fertility in Knoxville, refuses to discard frozen embryos and has become known for handling embryos stored in outdated and older containers.

Of the three donated embryos the Pierces received from Archerd, one didn't make the thaw. Two were transferred to Lindsey Pierce's womb, but just one successfully implanted.

According to Dr. John David Gordon, the transfer of the nearly 31-year-old embryo marks the longest-frozen embryo to result in a live birth. He would know: Gordon says his clinic assisted in the previous record, when Lydia and Timothy Ridgeway were born from embryos frozen for 30 years, or 10,905 days.

Global roadmap unveiled

China leads global liver cancer control efforts

SHANGHAI, Aug 2, (Xinhua): A landmark report on the global prevention and control of liver cancer, led by Chinese experts and recently published in The Lancet, presents a new international roadmap to tackle a growing global health burden.

The report, titled "The Lancet Commission on addressing the global hepatocellular carcinoma burden: comprehensive strategies from prevention to treatment," was released on July 28, World Hepatitis Day.

It is the first time in over 200 years that The Lancet has published global health research led by Chinese experts. The study also involved contributions from 51 specialists across countries and regions such as Japan, the Republic of Korea, the United States and Spain, among others.

The Lancet Commission was co-chaired by Fan Jia, an academician of the Chinese Academy of Sciences. Speaking at a press conference in Zhongshan Hospital affiliated with Fudan University in Shanghai, Fan emphasized what distinguishes the study from typical academic reviews.

Unlike standard reviews or research articles, the report focuses on implementable public health strategies, said Fan.

Liver cancer, which is often referred to as a silent killer due to its long latency and subtle early symptoms, poses a serious challenge to global public health systems. The published report systematically reviews global practices, including China's experience, and covers topics such as epidemiology, risk factor control, early diagnosis, pathology, imaging, treatment strategies and medical ethics.

Factors

One key finding is the shifting pattern in liver cancer aetiology. While hepatitis B and C remain the dominant risk factors, cases linked to metabolic dysfunction-associated steatotic liver disease (MASLD) and alcohol consumption are on the rise. Unhealthy lifestyle habits such as high-sugar diets and lifestyles that lead to obesity are also reshaping the global liver cancer landscape.

Despite these challenges, the report estimates that about 60 percent of liver cancer cases are preventable. "China has accumulated valuable experience in prevention and control," said Zhou Jian, president of Zhongshan Hospital. "From hepatitis B vaccination and early screening to improvements in clinical care, our efforts show that liver cancer can be managed like other chronic diseases such as hypertension or diabetes."

To reduce new cases and deaths, the report proposes a three-tiered strategy.

First, prevention efforts should focus on expanding hepatitis B vaccination, promoting antiviral treatment for hepatitis B and C, and enhancing public awareness about the risks of unhealthy diets and alcohol.

Second, liver fibrosis screening should be integrated into health checks for high-risk groups such as people with diabetes or obesity, and there should be a broader adoption of non-invasive testing to improve accessibility.

Third, treatment systems should be strengthened by improving access to drugs, narrowing regional disparities, and incorporating palliative care at the start of treatment.

According to the report, liver cancer accounts for an estimated 870,000 new cancer cases and 760,000 deaths globally each year. If effective prevention measures are not taken, the global burden is projected to rise significantly, with new cases and deaths expected to reach 1.52 million and 1.37 million by 2050.

Modeling suggests that achieving an average annual reduction of at least 2 percent in age-standardized incidence rates is necessary to reverse this trend, potentially preventing 8.8 million new cases and 7.7 million deaths over the next 25 years.

Exemptions set another record

US childhood vaccination rates fall again

NEW YORK, Aug 2, (AP): US kindergarten vaccination rates inched down again last year and the share of children with exemptions rose to an all-time high, according to federal data posted Thursday.

The fraction of kids exempted from vaccine requirements rose to 4.1%, up from 3.7% the year before. It's the third record-breaking year in a row for the exemption rate, and the vast majority are parents withholding shots for nonmedical reasons.

Meanwhile, 92.5% of 2024-25 kindergartners got their required measles-mumps-rubella shots, down slightly from the previous year. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the vaccination rate was 95% - the level that makes it unlikely that a single infection will spark a disease cluster or outbreak.

The vaccination numbers were posted as the US experi-

ences its worst year for measles spread in more than three decades, with more than 1,300 cases so far.

"The concern, of course, is that with a further dip in the (vaccination) coverage, we're going to see even more measles in the coming months," said Dr. Sean O'Leary, of the American Academy of Pediatrics. It's possible that this year's outbreaks may spur more parents to get their children vaccinated before they go to school, said O'Leary, a University of Colorado pediatric infectious diseases specialist.

But Dr. Philip Huang isn't optimistic. Texas was particularly hard hits by measles this year, with more than half of the cases reported nationally. Despite that, the state passed a law making it easier for parents to get school vaccine exemptions for their kids.

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Fritz advances at National Bank Open

Two-time defending champ Pegula upset by Sevastova in third round

MONTREAL, Aug 2, (AP): Two-time defending champion Jessica Pegula was eliminated in the third round of the National Bank Open, falling 3-6, 6-4, 6-1 to Anastasija Sevastova.

Sevastova, a 35-year-old from Latvia who was ranked 11th in 2018 but has fallen to 386th, broke the third-seeded Pegula six times on 10 chances.

In the night session, Wimbledon champion Iga Swiatek of Poland routed Eva Lys of Germany 6-2, 6-2. The second-seeded Swiatek advanced to face 16th-seeded Clara Tauson of Denmark, a 6-3, 6-0 winner over Ukraine's Yuliia Starodubtseva.

Sevastova has played 24 WTA Tour-level matches in four years. She got a spot in the main draw with a protected ranking because of a knee injury. In March 2024, in her fourth tournament back from maternity leave, she tore her ACL at the ATP Open.

Sevastova is the lowest-ranked player to beat a top-10 player since Angelique Kerber edged Jelena Ostapenko last year at Indian Wells.

The loss continued a poor run for the fourth-ranked Pegula, who won her opener in Montreal over Maria Sakkari of Greece, but exited Wimbledon and the D.C. Open after one match in July.

Sevastova will take on Naomi Osaka, who moved to the fourth round with a 6-2, 6-4 victory over Jelena Ostapenko of Latvia.

Osaka, a former No. 1-ranked player from Japan, is playing her first tournament with coach Tomasz Wiktorowski. She had five aces and converted 6 of 9 break-point opportunities to win the match in 1 hour, 12 minutes.

"She broke me a couple times, but she's a really good returner, so I can't take that personally," Osaka said. "I went in there knowing she's a great player, and if I give her a chance she's going to hit a winner on me, so I just tried to keep my pace and stay as solid as I could."

Fifth-seeded Amanda Anisimova of the United States routed Emma Raducanu of England 6-2, 6-1 at night. Anisimova will play 10th-seeded Elina Svitolina of the Ukraine, a 6-1, 6-1 winner over Anna Kalinskaya of Russia in the late match.

Sixth-seeded Madison Keys beat fellow American Caty McNally 2-6, 6-3, 6-3.

Second-seeded Taylor Fritz of the United States beat 6-foot-8 Canadian Gabriel Diallo 6-4, 6-2 in the third round of the National Bank Open.

"I thought the crowd was (very) nice for me playing the last player in the tournament from Canada," Fritz said. "I thought it was going to be a little bit more hostile. But I guess everyone is just so nice. I've dealt with a lot worse."

Fritz set up a fourth-round match in the hard-court event with 19th-seeded Jiri Lehecka of Czechia. Lehecka beat 15th-seeded Arthur Fils of France 3-6, 6-3, 6-4.

The 27-year-old Fritz is No. 4 in the world. He has 10 career ATP Tour titles, winning this year on grass at Eastbourne and Stuttgart.

In the late match, fourth-seeded Ben Shelton outlasted fellow American Brandon Nakashima 6-7 (8), 6-2, 7-6 (5). Shelton will face 13th-seeded Flavio Cobolli of Italy.

In the afternoon, sixth-seeded Andrey Rublev of Russia beat Lorenzo Sonego of Italy 5-7, 6-4, 6-3.

Seventh-seeded Frances Tiafoe of the United States edged Aleksandar Vukic of Australia 6-3, 4-6, 6-3 to set up a match with Washington winner Alex de Minaur of Australia. De Minaur advanced when countryman Christopher O'Connell withdrew.



Andrey Rublev, of Russia, hits a forehand return to Lorenzo Sonego, of Italy, during the National Bank Open men's tennis tournament in Toronto. (AP)

Fever stays hot without Clark

'One of the toughest decisions'

Son to leave Spurs after 10 yrs



Indiana Fever guard Aari McDonald, left, and Dallas Wings guard Paige Bueckers compete for possession during the second half of a WNBA basketball game in Dallas. (AP)

Sparks hold off Storm in double overtime

DALLAS, Aug 2, (AP): Kelsey Mitchell had 23 points, Aliyah Boston and Natasha Howard had double-doubles, and the Indiana Fever beat the Dallas Wings 88-78 for their season-high fourth-straight win despite playing without Caitlin Clark for the sixth straight game.

The game was moved to the American Airlines Center in anticipation of a Clark-Paige Bueckers showdown, but Clark missed her 15th game overall, and the Fever improved to 8-7 without her. Bueckers did not disappoint the crowd of 17,857 — second-highest in Dallas history — with 22 points, her 12th 20-point game as she increased her WNBA record for double-figure games to start a career to 23 games.

Boston had 12 points and 11 rebounds, Howard had 11 points and a career-high tying 16 rebounds, and both had five assists for the Fever (16-12), who are 3-0 against the Wings. Aari McDonald also had 12 points.

Bueckers was the only player in double figures for the Wings (8-21). Arike Ogunbowale had eight points and did not play in the fourth quarter.

Indiana, which tied a season high with 19 turnovers, had 12 3-pointers while Dallas didn't hit one until the fourth quarter and finished 2 for 15. The Wings went 24 for 25 from the free throw line for a 14-point advantage, but the Fever were a plus-14 on the boards and a plus-10 on the offensive end.

Sparks 108, Storm 106 2 OTs

In Seattle, Dearica Hamby's layup with 4.3 seconds left gave the Los Angeles Sparks a 108-106 win over the Seattle Storm in the first double-overtime game in the WNBA this



Indiana Fever guard Kelsey Mitchell, right, drives against Dallas Wings center Li Yueru during the first half of a WNBA basketball game in Dallas. (AP)

season.

Hamby put up a contested shot, but Skylar Diggins' similar shot on the other end fell off the rim as time expired.

Rickey Jackson had 27 points to lead the Sparks (12-15), who have won six of seven. Kelsey Plum added 22 points and seven assists, while Hamby and Azura Stevens both had 21. Hamby also had 13 rebounds.

Cameron Brink had seven points, four rebounds, three blocks, two steals, and five fouls in 12 minutes in her second game back after ACL surgery last season.

Valkyries 73, Sky 66

In Chicago, Veronica Burton had 18 points, Janelle Salaun had 16 points, and the Golden State Valkyries beat the short-handed Chicago Sky for their third straight victory.

Iliana Rupert added 14 points, including four 3-pointers, and Carla Leite scored 11 for Golden State (14-13). The Valkyries were 10 of 30 from 3-point range and 15 of 16 at the free-throw line.

Elizabeth Williams had 15 points and eight rebounds to lead Chicago (7-20). Kamilla Cardoso had 14 points and 11 rebounds, and Rachel Banham also scored 14. Kia Nurse added 10 points.

Chicago was without Angel Reese (back), Ariel Atkins (leg), and Hailley Van Lith (ankle).

Burton sank a 3-pointer with 0.4 seconds left in the third quarter to pull Golden State within 54-52. Then the Valkyries started the fourth on a 12-2 run for a 64-56 lead.

Chicago cut its deficit to 67-66 with 2:23 remaining, but did not score again. Burton sealed it by making four straight free throws in the final 35 seconds.

Dream 96, Mercury 96-72

In College Park, Allisha Gray scored 26 points, including a career-high seven 3-pointers, and Naz Hillmon had 18 points and nine rebounds in her first start of the season as the Atlanta Dream beat the Phoenix Mercury.

Atlanta scored 34 points in the first quarter after making 62% of its shots, including 8 for 11 from 3-point range. Gray had 14 points

in the quarter - a career-high for any quarter — and Maya Caldwell added 11 to outscore Phoenix's 23 points. The Dream's eight 3-pointers tied a franchise record for any quarter.

The Dream extended their lead to 58-42 at halftime behind 16 points and four 3-pointers by Gray. A 9-0 run to begin the third quarter made it 67-42 before Phoenix made its first basket of the half with 6:30 left.

Atlanta had 84 points and 12 3-pointers entering the fourth.

Sun 78, Liberty 62

In Uncasville, Marina Mabrey scored 18 points and Tina Charles added 15 to help the Connecticut Sun beat the short-handed New York Liberty.

It was the fourth consecutive loss for the Liberty (17-10), who were missing Breanna Stewart. The star forward is recovering from a bone bruise in her right knee. New York also was without Nyara Sabally (knee) and Kennedy Burke (right calf strain) and only had eight healthy players.

The team is in the midst of its longest losing streak since 2022 when the franchise had five-game and seven-game skids.

Emma Meeseman joined the squad on Friday and the 2019 WNBA Finals MVP suited up, but didn't play as she was still getting acclimated to the squad. Coach Sandy Brondello expects her to be in the lineup on Sunday when the teams play again in Connecticut.

For the Sun (5-21), it was a big victory for a young team looking to establish its identity. Reserves Olivia Nelson-Ododa and Leila Lacan each had 16.

Connecticut trailed 20-15 after the first quarter before getting hot in the second. The Sun took a 44-37 lead at the break when Charles hit a jumper just before the halftime buzzer. The Sun shot 50% from the field in the opening 20 minutes.

SEOUL, South Korea, Aug 2, (AP): After 10 years with Tottenham Hotspur, captain Son Heung-min announced on Saturday that he plans to leave the English Premier League club.

At a media conference in Seoul, Son, appearing at times to be holding back tears, said his decision to leave the Spurs was "the most difficult" of his career and said the club was supporting him as he looks to move on to another team.

Spurs will face Newcastle United in a preseason friendly on Sunday in Seoul in what could be the final match of Son's time at Spurs.

"Before we start the press conference, I just want to share the information that I have decided to leave this club in this summer," Son said. "Respectfully, this club is helping me to my decisions. So I just wanted to share this information before we start the conference."

"I came to North London as a kid, 23 years old, very young age, a young boy came to London who even didn't speak English and leaving this club as a grown man is a very, very proud moment."

He continued his tribute by thanking Tottenham fans.

"So I just want to say thank you to all of the Spurs fans that gave me so much love and felt like it was my home," he said. "It was one of the toughest decisions I ever made. So I hope the goodbye is always also in a good timing you know. But I think it's the right time to make this decision." Son was asked in Korean on his future playing plans, and he replied: "I don't think I have an answer yet."

He also confirmed in Korean that he would play for South Korea at the World Cup next year in North America.

In May, Son finally won his first title in Europe as Tottenham defeated Manchester United in the Europa League final.

"I felt the pressure. I wanted it so badly," Son said after that match. "The last seven days, I was dreaming about this game every single day. It finally happened, and I can sleep easy now."

The 33-year-old Son has been one of the biggest stars of the Premier League, scoring 173 goals in 454 competitive appearances for Tottenham. He was made captain in 2023 by former head coach Ange Postecoglou and helped the club lift its Europa League title, a first trophy since 2008.

Son added that the team's recent success was a factor: "Winning the Europa League made me feel I had achieved everything I could here. I need a new environment for a fresh challenge."

Son has been heavily linked with a move to the United States and there is reported interest from Saudi Arabian clubs.

Thomas Frank succeeded Postecoglou in June and the Danish coach paid tribute to Son on Saturday.

"He is truly a Spurs legend in every aspect," Frank said. "One of the best players to ever play in the Premier League, in my opinion, as a winger. I think it is probably the perfect timing, going out on a high."

Later in the media conference, Son reiterated that he has not decided on where he will play next. But he said next year's World Cup was his No. 1 priority for his home country.

"I don't think I have an answer yet," he said of his future playing choices. "I think I can share more about my future after tomorrow's game once things become more certain."

"My most important priority right now is the World Cup. It's likely to be my last World Cup and I want to give everything I have in that environment . . . I want to be able to play football happily, which I think will play the biggest role in my future decision-making. I am still trying to organize my thoughts around that."



Tottenham Hotspur's Son Heung-min reacts during a press conference ahead of a preseason soccer match between Tottenham Hotspur and Newcastle United in Seoul, South Korea. (AP)

Best of the Rest

David Luiz leaves Fortaleza: Veteran defender David Luiz has parted ways with Fortaleza after less than seven months with the Brazilian Serie A club.

The 38-year-old former Brazil international center-back bid farewell to teammates and Fortaleza staff on Friday after his contract was terminated by mutual consent, according to widespread media reports.

Globo Esporte reported that he has agreed in principle to a three-year deal with Pafos FC in Cyprus' top flight.

Luiz made just 16 appearances across all competitions for Fortaleza following his arrival on a free transfer in January. He had been contracted to the club until December 2026 with an option of a 12-month extension. (Xinhua)

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Paixao leaves Feyenoord for Marseille: Brazilian winger Igor Paixao has completed a move from Dutch club Feyenoord to French side Olympique de Marseille, both clubs announced.

While the transfer fee remains undisclosed, Dutch and French media reported that it exceeds 30 million euros (34.8 million U.S. dollars). The 25-year-old has signed a five-year contract with the French club until 2030.

Paixao joined Feyenoord from Brazilian club Coritiba in 2022 and became a key figure in the squad. He played a pivotal role in Feyenoord's Eredivisie title win in 2023 and helped the team secure both the Dutch Super Cup and the Dutch Cup in the 2023-24 season. (Xinhua)

Inspired by the iconic Khaleeji Zain 26 logo that captivated fans across the region

Dawri Zain’s refreshed brand identity unveiled



Sheikh Ahmad Al-Yousef during the ceremony.



From the new season’s draw event.

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 2: Zain Kuwait, the strategic partner of the Kuwait Football Association (KFA), unveiled the refreshed visual identity of the Zain Premier League (Dawri Zain) during the official draw ceremony for the 2025–2026 season. The event was held in the presence of KFA President Sheikh Ahmad Al-Yousef Al-Sabah, Corporate Relations Department Manager at Zain Kuwait Hamad Al-Musaibeeh, as well as representatives from the KFA, football clubs, and the local sports media.

The ceremony featured the official reveal of the new league logo, which Zain redesigned to reflect the spirit of Kuwait and its cultural heritage. The logo draws inspiration from the iconic visual identity of the Khaleeji Zain

26 tournament, which Kuwait hosted to great success under Zain’s sponsorship at the end of last year.

The design incorporates symbolic elements from Kuwait’s environment and culture, including desert dunes, the Kuwaiti boom (sailing ship), the camel, the Arabic letter “Alif” to represent the Arabic language, and the traditional “iqal” headband, all creatively combined into the shape of the league’s emblem. The blue color palette was chosen to reflect the ‘Kuwait Blue’, enhancing the lo-



The refreshed visual identity of Dawri Zain.

cal and national identity of the league.

Zain affirmed that this brand refresh is part of its extended strategic partnership with the Kuwait Football Association for the 2022–2026 seasons. The agreement includes official sponsorship of the Zain Premier League (Dawri Zain), First Division League, HH the Amir’s Cup, and HH the Crown Prince’s Cup.

Recently, Zain also celebrated the crowning of Kuwait SC as champions of Dawri Zain for the 20th time in its

history. The season witnessed intense competition and remarkable performances by players and clubs, drawing large crowds of enthusiastic fans.

In addition, the company recently honored the top players of the 2024–2025 season at its annual Excellence Awards ceremony, which gathered prominent figures from Kuwait’s sports scene, media, and athletics community.

Zain believes in the importance of enriching the local sports landscape and sees its support for the league and national tournaments as a key pillar of its corporate sustainability strategy, which focuses on empowering young Kuwaitis and encouraging them to excel, especially in the field of sports.

Kuwait eyes French Super Cup

Sousa takes over as Kuwait coach on two-year contract

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 2: The Kuwait Football Association (KFA) has appointed Portuguese coach H lio Sousa as the new head coach of the national team on a two-year contract.

KFA President Sheikh Ahmad Al-Yousef confirmed that Sousa will begin his duties by visiting overseas training camps where many national team players are currently preparing for the season. His tour aims to assess player performance and help finalize the squad for upcoming matches.

The national team is scheduled to hold an external training camp at the end of August as part of preparations for a friendly against Indonesia in early September.

Speaking during the Zain Premier League draw held, Al-Yousef added that Sousa will also take on a broader role overseeing all of Kuwait’s national teams, expressing optimism about the coach’s future with the program.

Al-Yousef also revealed that Kuwait is close to securing the hosting rights for the upcoming French Super Cup, with discussions progressing positively to bring the prestigious match to the country.

Sheikh Ahmad Al-Yousef also announced that player Shabib Al-Khaldi is expected to return to action soon following the lifting of a doping-related suspension. The KFA is awaiting official confirmation in the coming days.

Shabib had been suspended for two years starting February 2024. Reports suggest he will rejoin his club, Kazma, by the end of August.

The draw for the 2024–25



The new head coach H lio Sousa.

Zain Premier League placed defending champions Kuwait SC against Al-Tadamon in the opening round. Other notable matchups include:

Al-Salmiya vs Kazma

Al-Arabi vs Al-Shabab

Al-Qadisiya vs Al-Nasr

Al-Jahra vs Al-Fahaheel

Key clashes to watch for include:

Round 3: Kuwait Club vs Al-Arabi

Round 4: Kuwait Club vs Al-Qadisiya

Round 9: The highly anticipated derby between Al-Arabi and Al-Qadisiya

The league format remains unchanged for the new season. Ten teams will compete in a home-and-away format. After the regular season:

The top six teams will enter a championship round.

The bottom four will battle to avoid relegation.

All clubs will carry over the points accumulated during both stages of the league.

Kuwait U-23 tops Kazma in pre-qualifier tune-up



The Olympic team celebrates after beating Kazma.

By Hassan Mosa
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 2: Kuwait’s Olympic football team earned a 3-1 victory over Kazma in a friendly match at the sub-stadium of Al-Sadaqua and Al-Salam.

Abdulrahman Al-Rashidi opened the scoring for the Olympic side, while Khaled Al-Khurqawi netted twice to secure the win.

The Olympic team is scheduled to play a second friendly against Fahaheel this Thursday before departing next week to Thailand for a training camp, part of their final preparations for the upcoming AFC U-23 Asian Cup qualifiers.

Kuwait will compete in Group B alongside Japan, Afghanistan, and host nation Myanmar. The qualifiers will be held from September 1 to 9, with the finals set to take place in Saudi Arabia in January.

On the other side, Kazma continues its buildup for the new Zain Premier League season, kicking off on September 12 with a match against Al-Salmiya.

Meanwhile, Kazma welcomed the arrival of their Algerian import Idris Shaibi, who joined team training on Sunday afternoon following his arrival in Kuwait.

Al-Arabi falls to Hatta in friendly ahead of Asian Challenge League



Players battling for the ball during a friendly match.

By Hassan Mosa
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

ABU DHABI, Aug 2: Al-Arabi suffered a 1-2 defeat to UAE side Hatta in their opening friendly match during its training camp in Abu Dhabi.

The team is currently preparing in the UAE ahead of its Asian Challenge League playoff match against Maldivian club Mazia Spor, scheduled for August 12 in the Maldives.

Al-Arabi will play two more friendlies against UAE clubs Bani Yas and Al Wahda on the upcoming Wednesday and Thursday, before traveling to the Maldives on Friday.

Following the loss, Portuguese coach Marco Alves reaffirmed the club’s goal to qualify for the group stage of the Asian Challenge League.

He stressed the importance of the friendly matches for preparation but emphasized that the main focus remains on securing a positive result against Mazia Spor.

The team’s training continues in Abu Dhabi with most players present, including the full roster of foreign signings: Belgian-Congolese Julian Ngoyi, French-Guinean Hassimi Fadiga, Ugandan Kenneth Semakula, and Nigerian players Ayano Ewuala and Christopher John.

Coach Alves intends to rotate the squad extensively in the upcoming friendlies to evaluate player readiness, especially since the matches will take place on consecutive days. He also aims to acclimate the team to humid conditions to better prepare for the weather in the Maldives.

FIFA can be sued in member states, not just Switzerland

BRUSSELS, Aug 2, (AP): The European Union’s top court ruled that some decisions by international governing bodies, such as FIFA and the International Olympic Committee, can be challenged outside Switzerland, opening up a system that currently binds athletes, officials and clubs to accept verdicts there.

A statement from the European Court of Justice said that tribunals in the 27 EU member states “must be able to carry out an in-depth review of those awards for consistency with the fundamental rules of EU law.”

The ECJ ruling in Luxembourg means that EU national courts should be able to review verdicts from the Swiss-based Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS). Switzerland is not a member of the European Union.

“The awards made by the CAS must be amenable to effective judicial review,” the statement said. It said that “national courts or tribunals must be empowered to carry out ... an in-depth judicial review” to ensure that CAS rulings “are consistent with EU public policy.”

CAS director general Matthieu Reeb said the court’s decision limited the review of CAS rulings by EU courts to matters of EU public policy.

“In service to the international sports community, CAS will continue to provide timely and expert dispute resolution worldwide,” he said in a statement.

There was no immediate comment from world soccer governing body FIFA and the IOC.

The decision came after a decade-long legal fight by Belgian soccer club RFC Seraing and Maltese investment fund Doyen Sports, which led to the ruling Friday. They opposed FIFA rules prohibiting third-party ownership of a player’s registration and transfer rights, and in 2015 asked a commercial court in Brussels to review if those rules breached EU law. The ECJ did not specifically rule on third-party ownership as such, only the scope of CAS decisions.

Seraing’s lawyer, Jean-Louis Dupont, said the club should be compensated after FIFA imposed sanctions including transfer bans and a fine. He added that the ruling has wide implications, challenging the legality of all “forced arbitrations” by mandated international sports federations.

“In summary, the (court) has definitively ended the procedural deception used by international sports federations to evade the proper application of EU law through the imposition of compulsory arbitration outside the EU,” said Dupont, who also helped win the landmark Bosman case on the contractual freedom of players 30 years ago.

Wallabies deny Lions sweep

Pietsch, Jorgensen and McDermott shine in wild third test

SYDNEY, Aug 2, (AP): The Wallabies prevented a British and Irish Lions clean sweep of its Australian tour with a rousing 22-12 win in the third rugby test on a night of wild weather Saturday at Sydney’s Olympic Stadium.

Tries to wingers Dylan Pietsch, Max Jorgensen and scrumhalf Tate McDermott highlighted one

of the finest performances by the Wallabies in recent years and came amid a wild storm that led to a near-hour pause in the game due to nearby lightning.

Having secured the three-match test series with victory in the first tests at Brisbane and a contentious, last-gasp 29-26 win last week in Melbourne, the tourists were seeking to be the first Lions squad to record an unbeaten tour since 1974.

But despite strong support among the capacity near 90,000 crowd,

the Lions were never really in this one as the Wallabies won the early physical exchanges and moved the ball better throughout despite consistent rain squalls that swept across the ground regularly on a bitter cold and windy night.

Jac Morgan scored a try with 20 minutes to go to briefly give the Lions a glimpse of another stirring comeback like it did in Melbourne, but McDermott’s sniping try with just 10 minutes left sealed the hosts win.

A try on the siren by Will Stuart

narrowed the final margin.

Despite the cold and wet conditions, emotions boiled over on several occasions in a feisty match as the Wallabies delivered a strong response after a week of reckoning that included questions from some of Australia’s place in the rotation for quadrennial Lions tours that also includes World Cup champion South Africa and New Zealand.

The aggression featured firebrand Australia scrumhalf Nic White, playing his last match for the Wallabies, who on several occasions was nose-to-nose with Lions forwards.

The tactic appeared to help the Wallabies and certainly engaged the raucous capacity crowd as the hosts enjoyed the greater share of possession and territory throughout.

From a 5-meter scrum the Wallabies took a series of one-out runs near the posts before spinning the ball wide and Pietsch found just enough room to dive over in the corner to give Australia a fast start.

Tensions bubbled over as Wallabies scrumhalf White and Lions hooker Dan Sheehan engaged in some push and shove, before Will Skelton forcefully joined the fray and the Wallabies were penalized.

Tom Lynagh extended the lead in the 34th minute taking a penalty as another rain squall pelted Olympic stadium.

It was Lynagh’s last involvement as he was replaced by Ben Donaldson for a head injury assessment - which the 22-year-old flyhalf failed - after a high ruck clear-out by Sheehan that was missed by the match officials.



Maro Itoje of the British & Irish Lions holds the trophy after his team won the series 2-1 following the third and final rugby union test between the Lions and the Wallabies in Sydney, Australia. (AP)

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Australia's Nic White clears as Ollie Chessum of the British & Irish Lions tries to charge down during the third and final rugby union test between the Lions and the Wallabies in Sydney, Australia. Wallabies won 22-12 to deny Lions a tour clean sweep in wild third test. (AP) - See Page 15

Sports

Future bright despite setbacks for Kuwait basketball team in Bahrain



Qatari players defend as a Kuwaiti attempts to score.

By Hassan Mosa
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

MANAMA, Aug 2: Kuwait's basketball team faced its fifth defeat in the 26th Arab Basketball Championship, falling 69-72 to Qatar in its during the sixth and penultimate round of the tournament, which concluded late last night in Bahrain.

The sixth round also featured Algeria's narrow 70-69 victory over Bahrain and the UAE's 86-82 win against Egypt.

Kuwait's team has struggled throughout the tournament, losing all previous matches against the UAE, Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria, and most recently Qatar. The team currently sits at the bottom of the standings with 5 points ahead of its final game against Bahrain.

Led by Serbian coach Oliver Kostić and assistant Khaled Al-Qallaf, the squad is largely composed of young players competing in this level of competition for the first time, providing them valuable experience and exposure.

Coach Kostić and Al-Qallaf selected a roster of 12 promising young talents, supplemented by experienced players Ahmed Al-Balushi, Abdulaziz Al-Humaidi, and Abdulrahman Al-Sahu. This blend aims to build their skills and prepare the team for future tournaments.

However, several key players, including Hamad Adnan, Turki Hammoud, Alexander Al-Ghaith, and Imran Jawhar, were absent from the squad during this championship.

Al-Hardan engages with FIFA on development plans for Kuwait



Al-Hardan with Al-Suhaibani and Hassan.

ABU DHABI, Aug 2: Kuwait Football Association board member Hanan Al-Hardan met in Dubai with Issam Al-Suhaibani, Executive Director of FIFA's Regional Office, and Hassan Hassan, FIFA's Regional Project Development Manager. The meeting focused on reviewing FIFA's development program initiatives.

Al-Suhaibani commended the efforts of the Kuwait Football Association and welcomed Al-Hardan's active role within FIFA's development projects com-

mittee. He emphasized the importance of continued collaboration to implement and enhance these initiatives.

He also expressed appreciation for the KFA's ongoing work to advance football in Kuwait.

During her visit, Al-Hardan toured the UAE Football Association's facilities and thanked all those who contributed to organizing the meeting. She expressed hope that this engagement would support the broader development of football in Kuwait.

Qadisiya to begin Turkish camp friendlies against Al-Okhdood



Players intensify training

By Hassan Mosa
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 2: Qadisiya will kick off a series of three friendly matches during its pre-season training camp in Izmit, Turkey, which runs until August 29. The first match is scheduled for this Saturday against Saudi side Al-Okhdood, followed by a clash with Saudi club Al-Faisaly on August 12, and a final encounter against UAE's Al-Emarat on August 19.

The training camp officially began two days ago as part of Qadisiya's preparations for the 2025-2026 season. The team is gearing up for its Zain Premier League opener against Al-Nasr, set for September 12.

Head coach Nabil Maâloul has called up a 31-player squad for the

camp, even though only 25 players are permitted for league registration. The roster includes:

Ahmed Al-Yahya, Muath Al-Dhafiri, Rashid Al-Dosari, Faisal Al-Shatti, Khaled Sabah, Abdullah Matawa, Mubarak Al-Fanini, Eid Al-Rashidi, Talal Fadel, Abdulaziz Wadi, Abdullah Al-Awadhi, Bader Al-Mutawa, Athbi Shehab, Ali Jarrah, Abdulaziz Abdeen, Rakan Al-Saeed, Mohammed Al-Shuraifi, Hameed Al-Qallaf, Khaled Ibrahim, Abdulrahman Al-Dhafiri, Moroccan Ismail Khafi, Libyan Mohamed Soula, Moroccan Mehdi Barahma, Algerian Sofiane Bouchar, Mohamed Al-Omran, Jassem Al-Matar, Ahmed Boudi, Salem Al-Rais, Fadel Al-Sarraf, Turki Al-Yousef, and Saud Al-Qassem.



Gold medalists team United States pose after the mixed 4x100-meter freestyle final at the World Aquatics Championships in Singapore. (AP)



Maxime Grousset of France celebrates after winning gold medal in the men's 100-meter butterfly final at the World Aquatics Championships in Singapore. (AP)

Ledecky outduels McIntosh as US sets world mark

McKeown of Australia wins again; Grousset picks up second gold

SINGAPORE, Aug 2, (AP): The Americans set a world relay record and piled up three gold medals Saturday in what's been an otherwise frustrating swimming world championships for them.

And at the heart of the turnaround on the next-to-last day of the worlds in Singapore was none other than 28-year-old Katie Ledecky, the most decorated female swimmer in history.

Despite the world record in the mixed freestyle 4x100 relay - 3 minutes, 18.48 seconds - the story was Ledecky remaining unbeaten in the 800 freestyle.

She first won that race in the 2012 Olympics and has never lost since in a major competition.

Perhaps for the first time in her career, Ledecky was given only a 50-50 shot by many to beat the 18-year-old Canadian

Summer McIntosh, the star of these worlds with Frenchman Leon Marchand.

McIntosh's best time this season was 8:05.07 - just behind Ledecky's world mark of 8:04.12 set earlier this year.

After 700 meters, McIntosh of Canada was ahead by 0.14 seconds, but she faded and Ledecky won in 8:05.62 with Lani Pallister of Australia taking silver (8:05.98). McIntosh (8:07.29) settled for bronze.

McIntosh has won three individual gold medals in Singapore and was trying for five. She will come up short, though she will be the favorite in Sunday's 400 individual medley.

Ledecky said she was unaware she was trailing and, when asked about it, glanced down at a race-results sheet to confirm it.

"I didn't know," she said. "I just knew it was close the whole way. There were times where I thought I was just going to break away. I was just happy I was up there."

"You just never know when you dive in what everyone's tactics are going to be - or what's going to happen," she add-

ed. "It was fun to just to be in that kind of a race. Just try to make small moves just here and there."

Ledecky has won won 23 gold medals at world championships and 30 overall. Add to that nine Olympic gold medals and 14 Olympics medals overall. If you're counting, that 44 Olympic and world medals.

McIntosh, who won three gold medals in the Paris Olympics, hates losing and she showed it afterward with her comments. They were short and right to the point.

"Obviously, that's not even close to what I wanted; time-wise, place-wise, how I executed the race. Nothing," she said.

Gretchen Walsh of the United States won the 50 butterfly in 24.83 seconds for her second individual gold of the worlds. Earlier in the worlds she won the 100 fly. Alexandria Perkins of Australia claimed silver (25.31) with bronze for Roos Vanotterdijk of Belgium (25.43).

"It feels great to be like myself again in the water after kind of a rocky week," said Walsh, referring to the "acute

gastroenteritis" that the Americans have battled in Singapore following a training camp in Thailand.

"Two-time world champion. Can't complain with that," Walsh added.

Paris Olympic 50-free gold medalist Cameron McEvoy of Australia repeated his title in the worlds, winning in a quick 21.14. Ben Proud of Britain was the silver medalist (21.26) and American Jack Alexy took bronze (21.46).

Defending champion and world-record holder Kaylee McKeown of Australia won gold again, taking the 200-meter backstroke in 2:03.33. American Regan Smith took her fourth silver medal in Singapore (2:04.29) with bronze for American Claire Curzan (2:06.04).

Maxime Grousset of France picked up his second gold, taking the 100 butterfly in 49.62, just off the world record of 49.45 by American Caeleb Dressel. Noe Ponti of Switzerland took silver (49.83) with bronze for Canadian Ilya Kharun (50.07). Grousset also won the 50 fly.

Ferrari's Leclerc takes pole for Hungarian Grand Prix

BUDAPEST, Hungary, Aug 2, (AP): Charles Leclerc snatched a surprise first pole position of the year for Ferrari at the Hungarian Grand Prix on Saturday, beating both McLarens.

Leclerc punched the air in delight as he climbed out of the car after beating Oscar Piastri by 0.026 of a second and the other McLaren of Lando Norris by .041.

Leclerc had consistently been the best of the rest behind the McLarens in practice but remained well off Piastri and Norris' pace.

That changed in qualifying, with the help of conditions which gradually got gloomier and windier, working against the McLarens. Norris and Piastri were each about half a second slower per lap in the final part of qualifying, compared to the second segment.

Still, pole came as a shock at a cir-



Leclerc

he'd qualified first.

"Honestly, I have no words. It's probably one of the best pole positions I've ever had because it's the most unexpected," Leclerc added later.

Pole position is usually a big advantage in Hungary, where overtaking is

quit which Leclerc had called "by far the worst track of the season for me" on Thursday.

"What?"

Leclerc exclaimed over the radio when he was told

difficult, but Norris noted the chance that rain could spring some surprises for Sunday's race.

"I have no idea how it will go, but one thing for sure is that I will do absolutely everything in order to keep that first place," said Leclerc, who's on pole for the 27th time in F1 but doesn't have the best record converting those starts into wins. He'll be seeking his ninth F1 victory Sunday.

It was a stark contrast with yet another frustrating day for Lewis Hamilton in the other Ferrari.

Hamilton has won the Hungarian Grand Prix a record eight times but qualified 12th as the seven-time champion's troubles in his first season with Ferrari continued.

"Every time, every time," Hamilton told the team over the radio after

he qualified outside the top 10 for the second straight race.

That came after Ferrari's executive chairman John Elkann called it "a rough season" in comments Saturday on the F1 website, and defended Ferrari's trust in team principal Fred Vasseur, whose contract extension was announced Thursday.

Ferrari hasn't won a Grand Prix since Carlos Sainz, Jr.'s victory in Mexico in October, when the Spanish driver - now at Williams - also had the Italian team's last pole.

Defending champion Max Verstappen was only eighth after struggling with the balance of his Red Bull, and his teammate Yuki Tsunoda was 16th. That piles more pressure on the Japanese driver, who hasn't scored a point in six races.

Best of the Rest

Pavlovic fractures eye socket: Bayern Munich midfielder Aleksandar Pavlovic's bad luck with injuries and illness seems to have struck again.

The German champion said Saturday that Pavlovic has undergone surgery after fracturing his eye socket in a team training session Friday.

Bayern didn't say exactly how the injury happened or how long Pavlovic would be out, just that he "is facing a spell on the sidelines."

The 21-year-old Pavlovic is considered one of world soccer's best young defensive midfielders but has already racked up a list of absences for sometimes-unusual injuries and illness. (AP)

□ □ □

Real Salt Lake secures Cruz on loan: Brazilian forward Rwan Cruz has joined Real Salt Lake on loan from Botafogo, the MLS club said on Friday.

The 18-month agreement includes the option of a permanent transfer for a fixed fee, which can be exercised at any time during the loan period.

"I am excited to arrive in Utah and I look forward to integrating," Cruz told Real Salt Lake's official website.

"I have received good references for this club and that motivated me to be here today. Everything happens for a reason and I believe I've come at the right time." (Xinhua)