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## FAMILY FIRST ... AND FOURTH AS KUWAIT WIDENS WELCOME MAT

# Kuwait expands family visit visa to 3 months with extension path to 1 year

- University degree rule scrapped as visa policy eases
- Visit visa pricing heads to Cabinet for final say
- Visa access no longer tied to national carrier
- The State is not a marketer for airlines
- Gov't eyes return of airlines that withdrew from market
- Tourism and trade drive Kuwait Visa platform overhaul



Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah, First Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister

### Multiple-entry feature added

**By Ahmed Al-Jarallah**  
Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

**KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4: First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah confirmed in a telephone call with Editor-in-Chief of the Arab Times and Al-Seyassah newspapers Ahmed Al-Jarallah that the directives he gave to those in charge of the 'Kuwait Visa' platform to address negative aspects will be implemented as of Tuesday.**

This is part of a vital move towards opening up to the world and making Kuwait a tourist and commercial destination, as well as a swift response to the comments of citizens and expatriates regarding the 'Kuwait Visa' platform, part of which was published by the newspaper on Monday.

During the telephone call, the First Deputy

Prime Minister revealed a package of measures – some of which took effect on Monday, while others are still being finalized. These measures include the abolition of the local carrier requirement and the introduction of a three-month visit visa; instead of a single, multiple-entry visa.

The visa can be extended for six months or one year. Visitors simply pay the required fees and choose their preferred option, especially since violations in this regard are few. Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef asserted "we are building a huge airport and we want to bring back all airlines that have left the local market. Our objective is to market Kuwait as a whole."

He explained the cancellation of the local carrier requirement by indicating that the State is not a marketer for airlines, they must market themselves.

Regarding kinship, the First Deputy Prime Minister disclosed "we have made room for it to be up to the fourth degree, which did not exist previously. Starting Tuesday, the university degree requirement is cancelled."

He added that "those with security restrictions will be immediately notified and they must defend themselves."

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HH the PM seen off at the airport by state officials.

PM Diwan photo

### PM heads to Saudi on official visit

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and his accompanying delegation departed to Saudi Arabia Monday on an official visit.

His Highness was seen off by First Deputy

Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah, Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Shereeda Al-Mushereji, Minister of Defence Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Sabah and other state officials. (KUNA)

### Fake firm, real crime

## High-tech hustle hits hard stop in Kuwait

**KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4:** The Anti-Financial Crimes Unit in the Criminal Investigation General Department under the Criminal Security Sector in the Interior Ministry has arrested an Asian gang stealing money from citizens and expatriates using a new and unique criminal tactic -- exploiting the 'cardless withdrawal' feature of ATMs.

In a press statement on Monday, the Public Relations and Security Media Department at the ministry revealed that intensive search and investigation efforts led to the identification of the main suspect in less than 24 hours.

The suspect, identified as M. B., is a Bangladeshi national working in a general trading and contracting company. He was identified after matching photos of the person who was making withdrawals with the biometric fingerprint database of the Criminal Evidence General Department. This enabled detectives to locate and arrest him in Jeeb Al-Shuyoukh.

He was found in possession of about KD5,000 in cash, SIM cards, bank cards, and receipts from money exchange offices through which he intended to transfer funds abroad.

The ministry added that, upon completion of investigations, the existence of a cross-border gang targeting the State of Kuwait was revealed.

It was found that the arrested suspect was cooperating with two Pakistanis working in a ready-made garments company.

The company was used as a front for an 'alternative remittance' business, concealing the proceeds of the crime outside official financial channels.

**Continued on Page 5**



Nora Al-Fassam



Dr. Sabeeh Al-Mukhaizeem

## Al-Fassam out, Al-Mukhaizeem in as Acting Minister of Finance

**KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4, (KUNA):** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah accepted Monday the resignation of Minister of Finance and Minister of State for Economic and Investment Affairs Nora Al-Fassam.

His Highness the Amir assigned Minister of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy Dr. Sabeeh Al-

Mukhaizeem as Acting Minister of Finance and Minister of State for Investment Affairs after accepting the resignation of Minister Al-Fassam.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah is assigned with implementing the decrees, which take effect upon their publication in the official gazette.

## Kuwait's fight against polio gets WHO seal of approval

**KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4, (KUNA):** Kuwait's national polio laboratory has passed with full 100 percent marks the World Health Organization's Global Polio Laboratory Network's proficiency testing program (WHO GPLN), the

Health Ministry said on Monday. The global health body's GPLN test is a major indicator of efficiency and accuracy when it comes to the detection

**Continued on Page 5**

## Kuwait's Gaza relief drive gathers momentum, nears KD2 mln mark

**By Fares Ghaleb**

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4:** The urgent relief campaign for Gaza has so far collected a total of KD1,796,608 as donation. Official spokesperson of the Ministry of Social Affairs Yousef Saif Al-Mutairi said, "The 'Faz'a for Gaza' campaign, launched by

the ministry under Amiri directives, embodies the unwavering commitment of Kuwait to support humanitarian causes and the depth of public and official solidarity with our brothers and sisters in the Gaza Strip in light of the tragic circumstances they are experiencing."

**Continued on Page 5**



Palestinians struggle to get donated food at a community kitchen in Gaza City, northern Gaza Strip, Monday, Aug. 4, 2025. (AP)



**NBK-Egypt reports 10 EGP 4.1 billion net profit in 1H 2025**

### Day by Day

IN a measure unique to Kuwait, a citizen can be banned from traveling because of a debt.

Travel bans typically apply to those who have committed felonies, while bans related to civil cases are not enforced in most countries.

So why do state agencies in Kuwait act like debt collection agents for creditors, when the proper responsibility lies with the creditors themselves to perform due diligence in assessing the debtor's financial solvency, regardless of the debt's size?

Dear Minister of Justice and the government, do not act as debt collectors under the guise of "preserving rights."

... Yet tomorrow is another day.

**Zahed Matar**

## President Joseph Aoun's speech on Army Day – a roadmap for Lebanon's return to security, stability

### Arab Times Special

**KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4:** Lebanese President Joseph Aoun delivered a speech, which was described as "sincere and frank", on the recent Lebanese Army Day, highlighting Lebanon's urgent need to emerge from the dark tunnel it is currently in.

President Aoun highlighted a number of pressing issues that require immediate solutions to restore the country's security and stability.

Political analysts, both local and international, called this speech one of his most important ones since taking office, as it tackled the full spectrum of Lebanon's challenges.

President Aoun affirmed his commitment to fully exercising his powers as Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces.

He revealed the memorandum and clarified the President's role within it.

President Aoun called for a responsible approach toward political parties, accountability of party leadership, and ensuring the state remains their reference.

He stressed the need to respect the Constitution, which grants the President the right to negotiate in agreement with the Prime Minister and present the memorandum to the Council of Ministers.

President Aoun underscored the importance of collecting all weapons under the army's authority and destroying those that are unusable, while prioritizing consistent support for the military and security forces.

He further proposed allocating USD 1 billion annually for ten years, affirming his commitment to constitutional principles and his inaugural address, noting that although he negotiated quietly, he always upheld the Consti-



In this photo released by the Lebanese Presidency press office, Lebanese President Joseph Aoun speaks during a ceremony marking Army Day at the Lebanese Defense Ministry in Yarzeh, near Beirut, Lebanon, Thursday, July 31, 2025. (AP)

tution.

Furthermore, President Aoun stressed the need for full commitment to a ceasefire and a complete Israeli withdrawal, calling for an end to senseless wars and reckless adventurism.

He asserted that any comprehensive solution must also address the issue of displaced persons and include the demarcation of Lebanon's land and maritime borders with Syria, under the supervision of the United States, France, and Saudi Arabia, ensuring the elimination of any fears of territorial encroachment.

President Aoun held political and religious parties responsible for any provocation, urging them to engage responsibly with Hezbollah's influence, acknowledge its concerns, and ensure

its role is balanced and equal to that of other groups.

He stressed that such an approach is essential to prevent Israel from using Lebanon's internal ambiguity as a pretext to launch an attack against the state.

President Aoun called for the restoration of international and Arab confidence in supporting Lebanon, while also emphasizing the need to regain the trust of the popular and political forces that backed him following his inaugural address.

He reaffirmed his unwavering commitment to his two constitutional oaths, declaring he would never back down from them.

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Prayer Timings			
Fajr .....	03:41	Asr .....	15:30
Sunrise ..	05:10	Maghrib ..	18:38
Zohr .....	11:54	Isha .....	20:03

# Local

Weather			
Expected weather for next 24 hrs:			
By Day: Very hot with light to moderate freshening at times northwesterly wind, with speeds of 12-42 km/h causing rising dust over open areas.			
By Night: Hot to rather hot and relatively humid over coast-			
al areas with light to moderate northwesterly wind changing to moderate freshening at times southeasterly wind, with speeds of 12-35 km/h.			
Station	Max Exp	Min Rec	
Kuwait City	49	38	
Kuwait Airport	49	37	

Abdaly	49	31
Jahra	50	36
Salmiyah	45	36
Ahmadi	45	35
Nuwaisib	48	32
Wafra	49	32
Salmi	46	31
Managish	50	33

## Other Voices

### Royal parties ... glitterati

By Ahmad alsarraf

ALGERIAN poet and novelist Ahlam Mosteghanemi once wrote an article expressing her dismay at the lackluster reception she received upon arriving at Beirut airport, claiming it was not as warm as the welcome given to an "artist."

At the time, I responded that this reaction was entirely understandable. Artists, particularly actors, singers, and performers, tend to hold a unique place in the hearts of the public, regardless of civilization or culture. Their popularity often far exceeds that of leading scientists, brilliant doctors, or distinguished writers, whose recognition tends to remain confined to their professional circles.

That is why we often see the majority of guests invited to parties at the White House, royal palaces, or billionaire gatherings are not intellectuals, but entertainers like actors, singers, and musicians.



alsarraf

A few days ago, the renowned artist Ziad Rahbani passed away, and I wrote an elegy in his memory.

However, it seems that not everyone appreciated it, including my friend Professor Saad bin Tefla, who described Ziad as "a hollow, troubled man full of psychological complexes."

He further accused him of holding harsh views and a condescending attitude toward the Gulf states, claiming this reflects the mindset of many Arab leftists, intellectuals, and prominent writers, and in turn a deeper internal crisis.

Professor Saad described it as part of the crisis within the Arab world, manifested in a sense of cultural superiority held by those who see themselves as heirs to ancient civilizations, looking down on the so-called "Arabs of the desert."

What they fail to recognize is that these very Gulf countries have advanced and developed rapidly, often surpassing the so-called cradle of civilizations, whose current standard of living bears little resemblance to their historic past.

I don't think the issue is that simple, even if it reflects the truth. Those who try to obscure it do so out of ignorance.

That said, the discussion about attitudes toward the Gulf and its people applies to various circles, but it is unfair to paint all artists and creatives with the same brush.

Ziad Rahbani, despite the many wise, humorous, emotional, and sometimes biased or absurd quotes attributed to him, was not a thinker, writer, or lecturer, nor was he known for being deeply educated or culturally intelligent.

He was, above all, an artist who breathed music as naturally as he breathed air.

For over forty years, he enriched the lives of millions with works that remain timeless. That is what he should be remembered for, not his political stances or leftist leanings.

After all, Laila Murad was Jewish, yet her voice captured the hearts of generations. The brothers Saleh and Daoud Al-Kuwaiti, who later immigrated to Israel, were

also Jewish.

Their different origins or religions never stood in the way of enjoying their timeless artistic heritage.

The negative attitudes of some intellectuals, thinkers, and cultural figures toward the peoples of the Gulf are not isolated incidents. We should not dwell on them too long or hold every intellectual, writer, novelist, or philosopher accountable for their views. Doing so would mean depriving ourselves of a large part of the global intellectual and cultural heritage.

The inferior or misguided perceptions about the people of the Gulf, and the negative attitudes toward them, are natural behavior, whether expressed by thinkers, singers, or politicians.

This is part of human nature. After the two world wars, Americans faced similar condescension from Europeans, who saw them as representatives of cowboy culture, the Wild West, dollar greed, anti-civilization, anti-culture and descendants of society's dregs who immigrated to the New World.

But this American "cowboy", within just two or three decades, attained the highest levels of knowledge and progress in all fields, and had the biggest influence in Europe in security and finance, as well as became most successful in winning countless awards in all fields of creativity, setting an example for oppressed peoples worldwide, before circumstances changed.

We must admit that the Gulf suffers from cultural scarcity, a lack of creativity, and cultural poverty.

However, we are better today than we were yesterday, and we will be far better tomorrow.

Combating or responding to the ideologies represented by figures like Zaydan, Adonis, Al-Aswany, and others doesn't mean boycotting their works or attacking them. It means striving to become pioneers in literature, leaders in art, and guardians of culture.

This goal cannot be achieved without providing an atmosphere that is rich in freedom.

For years, Kuwait and Lebanon stood out as the most creative hubs in the region due to well-known reasons.

But how can we truly support literature, culture, and thought when censors scrutinize every breath of creative persons, when the publication of Al-Arabi, which was Kuwait's cultural flagship for over half a century, is suspended, and when the printing of Alam Al-Maarifa and similar publications is banned?

We have succeeded in buying almost everything with our wealth, but culture and intellectual creativity cannot be purchased. They must be nurtured, cultivated, and allowed to grow; only then can we reap their fruits.

What will remain in the memory of history, dear Saad, are not Ziad's stances on the Gulf states, his views on Nasrallah, or his support for Assad, but rather his timeless artistic contributions such as "Give my regards to him," "How are you?", "On the roar of the bus," "I'm writing your name, my love," "Miss the gazelle," "Joy has come," "Since he is," and many more.

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KUNA photo  
Ambassador of Kuwait to New Zealand Sheikh Sabah Nasser Al-Malek Al-Sabah and officials representing the Cook Island's King.

## Kuwait keen to bolster ties with Cook Islands

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4, (KUNA): The Ambassador of Kuwait to New Zealand Sheikh Sabah Nasser Al-Malek Al-Sabah presented his credentials as non-resident Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the Cook

Islands' King's Representative Tom Marsters.

The Kuwaiti diplomat conveyed greetings of His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Mishaal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to Marsters. During the ceremony, Ambassador Sheikh

Sabah expressed keenness to further bolster ties with Cook Islands at all possible levels.

For his part, Marsters welcomed the Kuwaiti diplomat, wishing him success in his diplomatic mission.

# Kuwait, Canada ties bloomed in trade and security: envoy

I will miss my 'second home': Ambassador Mawani

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4: Canadian Ambassador to Kuwait Aliya Mawani affirmed the strength of the strategic partnership between Canada and Kuwait, praising the vital role of Kuwait in regional humanitarian and security efforts -- particularly during the evacuation operations following the fall of Kabul.**

Speaking to reporters at her residence, Mawani recalled how Kuwait enabled Canada to relocate around 4,000 Afghans and Canadian citizens to safety; underscoring the importance of Kuwait's logistical and diplomatic support.

Reflecting on her three-and-a-half-year tenure, which began in November 2021; she described her time in Kuwait as "an exceptional opportunity to build real partnerships," and credited the timing -- shortly after the easing of global COVID-19 restrictions -- as ideal for fostering meaningful diplomatic engagement. "Everyone was rediscovering human interaction, and this provided an ideal environment for warm and active relations," she added.

Mawani also talked about her experience as a female ambassador, calling it "extremely



Aliya Mawani

positive." She emphasized that she never felt discriminated against and was granted full access to all events and meetings. She expressed admiration for the leading role of Kuwaiti women, particularly in education and academia.

She highlighted growing educational cooperation, indicating that about 450 Kuwaiti students pursue medical studies in Canada each year, with increasing interest from female students. She affirmed ongoing efforts to deepen university-level collaboration, especially the shared values between the two countries, including respect for pluralism and commitment to international norms. In the healthcare sector, she confirmed the

partnership between the Kuwaiti Ministry of Health and the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, which conducts the Canadian Board exam annually in Kuwait. She also pointed out the rising demand from local institutions for Canadian healthcare accreditation.

She said bilateral cooperation has expanded as well in trade, investment, security, defense, artificial intelligence and international development. She cited the signing of memoranda of understanding for strategic consultations and humanitarian development as milestones in this progress.

She stated that the Canadian visa application process is now fully electronic, with fingerprinting and passport submission handled through the VFS office in Kuwait City. "Visas are generally issued based on passport validity, streamlining procedures for travelers," she disclosed.

She added she will return to Canada to take on a new role at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where she will focus on advancing Canada's Arctic foreign policy -- a top government priority. She also expressed a personal wish to spend more time with her family.

Her successor, Ambassador Tara Scheurwater, previously served in Japan and India, and will continue building on the strong foundation established during Mawani's tenure.

Mawani described Kuwait as a "special country" and said she would miss the friendships and collaborative opportunities she encountered. "Kuwait felt like a second home," she said, expressing her hope that the relationship between the two nations will continue to grow and flourish in the years to come.

## No housing misuse : PAHW

By Mohammad Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4: The Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) has summoned 424 citizens currently allocated rented government housing in Sulaibiya and Taima, instructing them to report to the authority within 15 days.

The PAHW stressed the importance of complying with the specified deadline.

According to sources, this is part of a routine data verification process aimed at updating beneficiary information to maintain the integrity and efficiency of housing services.

The data update process includes verifying continued residence in the allocated housing unit; and reviewing personal, social and employment information of beneficiaries. This step is intended to enhance transparency and accuracy in the delivery of housing care, ensuring that support reaches those who truly qualify.



Farwaniya Governorate photo  
The Complaints and Petitions Committee at the Farwaniya Governorate Council held its inaugural meeting on Monday.

## Farwaniya new committee discusses residents' needs

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4: The Complaints and Petitions Committee at the Farwaniya Governorate Council held its inaugural meeting on Monday.

Farwaniya Governor and acting Capital Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah affirmed full support for the committee.

Present at the meeting were the following council members: Assistant Undersecretary for Public Health Affairs Dr. Munther Wael Al-Hasawi who represents the Ministry of Health, Saad Abdullah Al-Hadba, Lieutenant General Eng. Ali Abdulhadi Al-Shanfa, Deputy Director General for Farwaniya and Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governorates Eng. Nawaf Abdullah Al-Kandari who represents the Kuwait Municipality, and Director of the Farwaniya Traffic Department Colonel Raed Al-Sulaiman who represents the Ministry of Interior.

During the session, Dr. Munther

Al-Hasawi was unanimously elected Chairman of the committee, while Saad Abdullah Al-Hadba was elected Vice Chairman.

The committee discussed its mandate, reviewed its proposed work plan, and explored mechanisms for collaboration among representatives from various government entities. It focused on ways to address the needs of those residing in the governorate by dealing with their complaints and suggestions, and ensuring timely resolution of issues raised. All challenges to the committee's operations were addressed as well in order to pave the way for efficient service delivery.

Towards the end of the meeting, Al-Hasawi and Al-Hadba expressed their gratitude to fellow council members for their confidence and support. They also commended their colleagues' cooperation and dedication in utilizing their collective expertise in the service of the Farwaniya Governorate community.

## Decree amends housing law

### 'Set up companies to build, manage modern cities'

By Mohammad Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4: Decree-Law No. 89/2025 has been officially issued to amend certain provisions of Law No. 118/2023 concerning the establishment of companies to develop and economically manage cities or residential areas.

Article 2 stipulates that the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW), under this law, is required to establish companies with varying structures and capital based on the nature of each project and in accordance with economic feasibility studies to develop an integrated residential city or multiple residential areas on lands allocated to PAHW.

Article 4 states that, based on the economic feasibility study, PAHW may cover part of the costs for constructing and completing infrastructure, public buildings, and residential care units. Any amendments to the financial obligations borne by PAHW, whether increases or decreases, after the contract award are deemed absolutely null and void.

Article 5 clarifies that PAHW may offer residential or non-residential cities and areas, and determine investment patterns based on the results of economic feasibility studies, ensuring the removal of any obstacles preventing the private sector from contributing to the implementation of its projects.

Article 11 stipulates that companies constructing cities or residential areas, after coordination with PAHW, shall display residential unit products in each completed residential area in a way that ensures a variety of options for those entitled to housing care, in accordance with the priority system organized by Law No. 47/1993.

The available options shall include:

1. Residential plots
2. Prefabricated houses
3. Prefabricated residential apartments
4. Various residential products such as attached villas, residential complexes with multiple uses, closed compound complexes, and duplexes

The article continues, "The company's board of directors shall determine how to allocate these

options within the residential area to be developed, after PAHW's final concept is approved, based on the feasibility study and the nature of the project. Implementation must adhere to the technical specifications agreed upon with PAHW, using a number of models specified in the contract, and offering different unit sizes."

Article 29, Clause 1, specifies the amount of bank and insurance guarantees required from the company, proportional to the cost of the projects assigned to it, to protect the rights of beneficiaries and shareholders. It also replaces the phrase "establishing cities or residential areas" with "establishing cities."

The decree mandates PAHW to establish controls, standards, and technical specifications for buildings, suburbs, areas, and neighborhoods, encompassing all project components including residential, investment, industrial, craft, service, commercial, or similar.

Article 32-bis states that PAHW may apply the provisions of this law to all cities and residential or non-residential areas, or to parts of cities developed by PAHW, or to specific lands designated by its board of directors.



# diwaniya



A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

## Storm brews in a region embroiled in upheavals

"If we talk about homeland, we are talking about a heart beating within us. A homeland without its people is like a heart without a body. Have you ever seen a body that's empty, just an outer shell?" Kuwaiti journalist **Hassan Ali Karam** wrote for *Al-Seyassah* daily.

"Now imagine yourself, God forbid, as a refugee in a distant land, a place you know nothing about, where no one knows you. How do you see yourself? Perhaps they see you as nothing, as less than human. Maybe they see you as a thief, a madman, or some other being not even worthy of humanity.

"In that place, they strip you of your humanity. The cruelty of alienation is like the pain of a wound that refuses to heal, without a single person by your side to ask what is wrong, and what hurts. Are you hungry, wounded, or suffering deep inside? What would you say to a stranger you don't know, but whose heart aches for you and your seemingly hopeless state?

"You flee your homeland in a rubber boat, not knowing if the end of your life, and the announcement of your death will be the blue waters and the crushing waves slapping against the sides of the boat, across an unforgiving ocean that doesn't care whether you are a human being with a soul, heart, and mind, or just a fish tossed by the waves, struggling for one more life, whether it's a better life, a more miserable one, or a life washed away by your tears, not the tears of your new master.

"In the past few years, and especially over the last two decades, we, inhabitants of the troubled Middle East, have been struck by countless crises for reasons unknown and unclear to us. Crises are happening in Syria, Yemen, Iraq, Iran, and Afghanistan. Why us and not others? And why were we deceived by an imaginary epidemic they called "COVID-19", claiming it was the end of the world? What a great lie!

"The end of the world, only for them to later say, "Don't believe the coronavirus... it is a lie we made up." So tell me, are there humans who are demons, or demons who control humans?

"Despite their courage, humans remain fearful of death, often cowardly enough to flee if there is any chance of escape. Saddam Hussein's hiding place was no display of courage, nor was his refuge an act of heroism. It revealed his cowardice, stupidity, and ignorance of his enemies. He believed that if his pursuers "caught" him, they would show mercy and treat him as the brave leader he thought he was. These were nothing but the delusions of an ignorant and arrogant man. And so he remained, trapped like any other criminal, murderer, thief, or drug dealer, locked away in his cage.

"Saddam's story holds many lessons for every refugee and fugitive fleeing not only their homeland but, in a sense, life itself. All humans endure the suffering of animals, believing themselves to be honorable citizens deserving of respect, when in reality, they are animals in human form.

"Yet, when faced with their homeland, they become something else entirely, humans who see dying for their country as nothing more than a necessary duty.

"Here in Kuwait, we faced a harsh ordeal, but we faced it with the courage of heroes, shedding blood for a homeland that is not just land to us, but life itself and a means of survival.

"Amid the turmoil and to make sense of it all, we must remember that today, amid the waves of war sweeping across the region, we cannot comfort ourselves with the illusion of peace. There is no peace amid humanity's madness and the hollow heroism celebrated by the enemy.

"I say again - Kuwait will not be safe in this frenzied atmosphere. Let us read the ground carefully and understand what the devils are planning.

"Kuwait is facing a test we must pass successfully. A homeland is not a restaurant where we come to eat and then leave, nor a bank where we simply inflate our balances. Those who possess billions in assets will not shed tears over a lost homeland. Perhaps we should recall the immortal words of Imam Ali (PBUH) - "Wealth is a homeland, and poverty is a foreign land."

Also:

"Kuwaiti society was built on openness and tolerance, but in recent years, perspectives on social relationships have noticeably shifted. The widespread and intense introduction of technology has, in fact, transformed society as a whole," columnist Sheikh Eng. **Fahad Dawoud Al-Sabah** wrote for *Al-Seyassah* daily.

"In this context, there are several studies on the concept of happiness in its simplest form. One of the most notable is a study conducted by Harvard University psychiatry professor Dr. Robert Waldinger, published in 2012. It is considered the longest-running study of its kind, spanning 75 years. It began in 1938, involved the efforts of many experts, and tracked the lives of 268 students.

"In this study, Waldinger outlined the path to individual and social happiness by tracking 724 men from two different socioeconomic backgrounds - the wealthy and the poor.

"The most important finding was that true happiness lies in human relationships with family and friends, and not in money, wealth, good health, or career success.

"This was identified as a fundamental factor in living a long, fulfilling life. For example, the study found that loneliness is a major contributor to depression, while simply having many relationships does not guarantee happiness.

"Instead, the quality of relationships that are strong, supportive, and free of conflict is what truly matters. One core takeaway from the study is the importance of taking initiative in serving others and being generous.

"The lessons drawn from this study show that people who have strong, meaningful relationships tend to enjoy better health. Even when they experience illness or pain, they maintain a more positive mood compared to those who live in loneliness or unhappy relationships, where physical discomfort often amplifies emotional distress.

"Psychology firmly establishes that a person's self-perception greatly influences their behavior. A positive self-image leads to optimism, confidence, and success, while a negative self-view often results in emotional distress and dissatisfaction.

"Another benefit is that good relationships help preserve memory and protect cognitive function. The study also identified several factors linked to long-term happiness such as having a clear sense of purpose, thinking positively, striving for self-improvement, giving back to others, and engaging in acts of kindness.

"People who embody these qualities tend to lead more fulfilling lives. Freedom also plays a role, specifically, the freedom to make personal choices.

"What we can conclude is that happiness is not merely a personal matter, but a common experience rooted in social integration and solidarity, which is the basis for a positive outlook on the world.

"In Kuwait, these factors were once strong, but they have shifted in recent years, influenced by a narrative shaped by negative sentiments that emerged in the post-liberation period following the Iraqi occupation.

"This stemmed from social anxiety that civil society failed to adequately address, missing the opportunity to frame the crisis as an opportunity for personal and collective growth, and to transform frustration into a forward-looking vision.

"There is no doubt that inner peace is the cornerstone of a fulfilling life. It is the foundation of social harmony and reconciliation, both with oneself and with society.

"Today, after the recent anniversary of the ominous invasion, we must reflect deeply on all these factors to build a society better equipped to face challenges.

"It is the person who lives with inner peace, remains calm in all circumstances, and rises above trivial concerns who truly contributes to building a productive and progressive society."

□ □ □

"I will not delve into the changes and customs that have occurred in Kuwaiti society after the COVID-19 pandemic, but I will summarize them based on the constant observations during condolence visits, both before and after the pandemic," Kuwaiti writer **Sheikh Ali Jaber Ahmad** wrote for *Al-Seyassah* daily.

"After the arrival of mourners (may Allah reward them) for performing the condolence duty, some of them need to sit and rest, especially after parking their cars far from the condolence venue, not to mention the intense heat and humidity on such days.



Sheikh Ali

"However, some wait for more than half an hour or longer, watching the mourners and greeting everyone they know, and even those they don't, as if the occasion were a social gathering or a dinner party. They forget or pretend to forget that there are those who have the right to rest.

"Therefore, we hope that those seeking increased reward after offering condolences will realize the importance of not sitting for more than five minutes, allowing those in greater need, such as the elderly, the overweight, and others with health issues, to take their place. May Allah heal them all and protect you from all evil.

"The second observation is of mourners rushing in their cars to the cemetery immediately after finishing the prayer at the mosque.

"This scene clashes with the atmosphere of faith that should prevail at such moments, as they should remember that the end of their race will lead them to the very same place, God forbid, after a long life."

— Compiled by **Mohammad Wangengi/ Simi K. Kutty**



KUNA photo  
Commander of the Kuwaiti Air Defense Force, Major General Khaled Al-Shuraian, receives Major General Rashid Al-Qashouti, Commander of the Qatari Amiri Air Defense Forces.

## Kuwait, Qatar Air Forces to upgrade bilateral relations

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4, (KUNA): Commander of the Kuwaiti Air Defense Force, Major General Khaled Al-Shuraian, met with Major General Rashid Al-Qashouti, Commander of the Qatari Amiri Air Defense Forces, to discuss issues of mutual interest and explore ways to enhance bilateral cooperation.

According to a statement from the Kuwaiti Ministry of Defense, the meeting took

place during an official visit by Maj. Gen. Al-Shuraian and his accompanying delegation to Qatar. The discussions focused on strengthening military collaboration and further developing joint defense capabilities.

As part of the visit, the Kuwaiti delegation toured various facilities and received briefings on Qatar's latest air defense systems and technologies.

## Nod to clear debts of batch 2 citizens

767 owed minor amounts

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4: Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Chairman of the Debtors Committee Dr. Khaled Al-Ajmi has announced the approval to settle the debts of the second batch of citizens, whose debts range between KD5,000 and KD10,000.**

In a press statement Monday, Al-Ajmi stated that the total number of indebted citizens reached 767; stressing they met the conditions and criteria approved for the third national campaign. He said the Supreme Committee, in coordination with the participating entities, submitted the names of the beneficiaries to the Enforcement General Department at the Ministry of Justice, in preparation for completing the settlement procedures according to the legal and administrative procedures.

He asserted that this is an advanced stage of the campaign, which is based on a humanitarian vision on alleviating the financial burdens of struggling groups.

He confirmed that the technical and legal committees emanating from the Supreme Committee; which includes representatives from the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of

Justice (Civil Execution Department), Ministry of Islamic Affairs, Zakat House, Secretariat General of Awqaf, and Ministry of Social Affairs; conducted a thorough review of the applicants' files and verified that they met the basic conditions.

These conditions include that the beneficiary be a Kuwaiti citizen, that they have not benefited from previous campaigns in 2023 and 2024, that the debt is due for enforcement, and that they have an existing enforcement file with the Ministry of Justice.

Al-Ajmi disclosed that the committee has started reviewing the files of the third batch of debtors -- whose debts do not exceed KD 15,000 -- in preparation for moving to new phases that cover all eligible cases according to available resources.

He added that the total number of beneficiaries from the first and second batches reached 1,178 -- a manifestation of the extent of the work accomplished and the institutional commitment to deliver aid to those who deserve it, in a manner that achieves social justice.

He said the committee has been keen to facilitate communication with beneficiaries through the 'Sahel' application, which allows inquiries and monitoring of the status of applications with complete transparency.

He explained that debtors whose debts have been approved for repayment will receive an official notification via the application indicating the completion of repayment.

He asserted that the third national campaign to pay debts embodies the State of Kuwait's commitment to the values of compassion, responsibility and solidarity.



A car catches fire on a road in Salwa area.

## Poor maintenance of vehicles leads to fires

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4: Vehicle fires often occur during high temperatures, yet a vehicle caught fire in Salwa -- on Al-Aqsa Street -- late at night, reports *Al-Anba* daily.

In another incident, flames engulfed a vehicle in Jahra Stables, causing extensive damage.

The daily contacted a source from a fire station about the causes of vehicle fires and their relationship to low or high temperatures. The source explained "vehicle fires are not related to timing, but rather to lack of maintenance or an electrical short circuit."

He cited regular maintenance and ensuring the radiator is full and free of leaks as ways to prevent vehicle fires.

## Fraud expat arrested for not returning rented car

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4: A breach of trust case in relation to a rented vehicle revealed the whereabouts of an expatriate wanted by law for fraud, reports *Al-Anba* daily.

A security source disclosed that an expatriate, born in 1976 and manages a car rental office, filed a report at Hawally Police Station; indicating the company was subjected to breach of trust by an expatriate born in 1986. The source said the accused rented a 2024 Japanese model vehicle from March 17, 2025 and has not returned it since then.

After a case was registered, the file was referred to the Criminal Investigations Department, which located the residence of the accused, arrested him and seized the rented vehicle.

During initial investigation, he confessed to the breach of trust. Further investigation revealed that the accused is wanted by law in a fraud case involving KD6,500; so he was referred to the relevant authorities.

3 held for overstaying

## 18 arrested in Ahmadi drive to arrest illegals

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4: The Ahmadi Governorate Security Directorate recently carried out an extensive security campaign that resulted in the arrest of 18 individuals on various charges, including residency violations, absconding and expired visas, reports *Al-Rai* daily.

Security sources told the daily that the campaign was conducted in coordination with the Kuwait Municipality and under the direct supervision of Assistant Undersecretary for Public Security Affairs at the Interior Ministry Major General Hamad Al-Munifi and Director General of the Ahmadi Governorate Security Directorate Brigadier General Hussein Dashti.

The campaign led to the following arrests: six individuals for violating the Labor and Residency laws, four with expired residency permits, five for absconding, three with expired visit visas, 12 without valid identification and one wanted by law for not serving a four-year prison sentence.

It also led to the seizure of a vehicle involved in a betrayal of trust case, impounding of a motorcycle, removal of eight caravans and 11 abandoned vehicles, and issuance of 200 traffic violation citations by 10 mobile patrol units in various areas in the governorate.

Security sources affirmed that similar campaigns will continue throughout the governorate to apprehend violators, deter reckless driving, and ensure full enforcement of the law.



Kuwait Ministry of Health building.

## No casualties in Jahra Hospital e-room blaze

By Munif Naif and Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4: The Ministry of Health confirmed that a minor fire, which broke out in the early hours of Monday morning in the electrical room of a building affiliated with Jahra Hospital, had been brought under control, with no injuries or human losses recorded.

In a press statement, the ministry explained that the safety system contributed to the automatic activation of sprinklers. It added that the approved emergency plan was activated and a number of patients in neighboring locations were evacuated as a precautionary measure.

The ministry affirmed that Minister of Information and acting Minister of Health Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi and Health Ministry Undersecretary Dr. Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi were on site to closely monitor the situation.

The ministry commended the quick response of Kuwait Fire Force (KFF), Ministry of Interior, health personnel and all agencies that contributed to the immediate and professional response to the incident, in accordance with approved safety protocols and plans.

Meanwhile, KFF stated that the firefighting teams from Jahra and Jahra Industrial Area fire stations extinguished a minor fire at Jahra Hospital.

The teams controlled the fire and evacuate patients. No injuries were reported.

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# PAAET and CSC introduce performance framework

Authority boosts Tender Law skills

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

**KUWAIT CITY, AUG 4: The Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET), through its Administrative Affairs Department, organized an introductory workshop on the mechanism for implementing the Employee Achievement Record system, in cooperation with the Civil Service Commission (CSC).**

Present at the workshop were the deputy directors general and several senior officials from the Authority.

Nada Al-Duwaisan, Head of the Government Service Development Department at CSC, conducted the

workshop, focusing on the objectives of the new system that is scheduled for implementation in all government agencies starting Jan 1, 2026.

The system aims to enhance employee performance and reinforce the principles of transparency, accountability and governance in the public sector.

During the session, Director of the Administrative Affairs Department at PAAET Ruqayya Abdulsalam underscored the importance of the workshop in raising awareness and clarifying employees' roles and responsibilities under the new evaluation framework.

She explained that the quarterly performance evaluation will be based on a points-based system, distributed as follows: 50 points for task completion, 20 points for professional conduct, and 30 points for administrative discipline.

Abdulsalam affirmed that the authority is fully prepared to adopt any system that contributes to the development of work processes and the en-

hancement of employee performance. She added that guided by its strategic vision, PAAET is committed to keep pace with developments that support the achievement of government goals and aspirations.

Meanwhile, The Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET), in cooperation with the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT), organized a specialized workshop titled, "Procurement Procedures in Accordance with Tender Law No. 49/2016 and its Amendments and Executive Regulations."

A number of PAAET employees in procurement, supply and contracting fields attended the workshop; which is in line with the ongoing efforts of authority to develop the administrative and technical competencies of its staff, particularly in relation to compliance with tender laws and regulatory practices, ensuring transparency and efficiency in public procurement.

# PAAET broadens course offerings to meet national workforce needs

Over 60 programs available

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

**KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4:** Director General of the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) Dr. Hassan Al-Fajjam has confirmed the launching of the annual awareness campaign of the authority to inform high school graduates about the available courses.

This campaign is being conducted in cooperation with various entities, especially the Avenues Mall management, which is hosting the event.

In a statement to reporters on the sidelines of the campaign at the Avenues Mall, Al-Fajjam disclosed that this year; the authority is offering around 60 to 65 courses in five colleges and eight institutes. He said five of these institutes accept high school graduates and offer 15 to 18 courses, in addition to minor courses.

He pointed out that all academic programs are being developed in coordination with the Civil Service Commission (CSC) and the labor market entities to ensure they align with actual manpower needs.

He affirmed the introduction of several new courses, particularly Fire Engineering, in cooperation with Kuwait Fire Force (KFF). He said "this four-year course, from which students will graduate with the rank of 'Fire Engineer Lieutenant', is necessary. This is in addition to the Technical Classification Inspector course affiliated with the Ministry of Defense; and the Marine Guide course, which will begin with preliminary admission in September. Admission will be granted in the second semester for those who will pass the interview and obtain the required grade."

He stated that the authority is keen on linking the offered specializations with financial cadres accredited by the CSC, so that graduates are aware of their future job requirements.

He also explained that some courses, particularly the health-related ones such as Nursing, are subject to additional admission requirements -- like medical examination -- due to the



PAAET director general with stakeholders during the public awareness drive.



PAAET debuts new courses, promotes student awareness at Avenues Mall.

# 36th Kuwait relief flight lands in Sudan

**PORT SUDAN, Aug 4, (KUNA):** Kuwait Red Crescent Society's (KRCS) 36th aircraft in Kuwait's humanitarian air bridge arrived on Monday at Port Sudan International Airport, carrying approximately 10 tons of food and shelter supplies in addition to land transport vehicles, to alleviate the suffering of civilians amid the humanitarian crisis.

Kuwait's Ambassador to Sudan, Dr. Fahad Al-Dhafiri affirmed that the KRCS continues to carry out its humanitarian and relief campaigns in Sudan despite the complexity of regional conditions.

Speaking to KUNA, Ambassador Al-Dhafiri said that these aid efforts reflect Kuwait's humanitarian approach, which serves as an extension of its diplomatic outreach to address and respond to crises across the globe.



KUNA photo  
Dr. Fahad Al-Dhafiri, Kuwait's Ambassador to Sudan

He noted that these efforts are carried out under the directives of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

Ambassador Al-Dhafiri explained that this shipment continues a series of relief initiatives directed by the Kuwaiti leadership, including essential materials to meet urgent needs in the most affected areas.

He also noted that three large cargo ships carrying thousands of tons of food, medical supplies, and medicines for chronic and critical illnesses have reached Sudan in recent months.

Ambassador Al-Dhafiri praised the active role of Sudanese authorities in facilitating the receipt and distribution of aid, as well as the efforts of volunteers from both sides to ensure assistance reaches those most in need.

nature of work and students' direct contact with patients during practical training.

He confirmed that the authority has made significant progress in the automation project, in cooperation with Microsoft, through the introduction of new technical programs that support governance and contribute to raising the efficiency of institutional work.

Regarding the admission plan for the current year, he revealed that admission for the first semester will be limited to Kuwaiti students; while the vacancy plan for the second semester will be announced later based on developments. He said the authority accepts around 18,000 to 21,000 students every year. He expects the number of accepted students in the basic plan for the current year to be between 16,000 and 18,000. He added the authority is

one of the largest educational institutions in the country, currently enrolling about 59,000 students.

He added that several government agencies, such as the Ministry of Health, KFF and Kuwait Airways, have started recruiting the graduates of PAAET; strengthening its role in supporting the need of the country for trained technical personnel.

Regarding the administrative situation at the authority, Al-Fajjam confirmed that a new organizational structure will be adopted, including the creation of leadership positions. He said a Director General will be appointed with the rank of Undersecretary, along with two deputies with the rank of Assistant Undersecretary. He added a Director General position will be created, with subordinate departments.

## Decree appoints five to the KIA board

**KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4:** Decree No. 140/2025 was published in the supplement to the official gazette "Kuwait Al-Youm" regarding the appointment of five individuals as members of the Board of Directors of the Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA), reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The decree states that the following individuals shall serve as mem-

bers of the Board of Directors of KIA for a term of four years, starting August 5, 2025:

1. Dr. Mishaal Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah
2. Saud Salem Abdulaziz Al-Sabah
3. Mahmoud Dawood Marzouq Al-Marzouq
4. Dana Anwar Abdullah Al-Mulla
5. Salah Ahmed Mishari Al-Fawzan

## 3,164 lampposts upgraded

# South Abdullah Al-Mubarak streets go green with solar-powered lights

**KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4:** Director of the Street Lighting Department at the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy Eng. Ayman Al-Omani revealed that about 20 percent of the lampposts on the main internal streets in South Abdullah Al-Mubarak are now solar-powered; indicating the total number of lampposts in the area reached 3,164, reports Al-Jarida daily.

In a special statement to the daily, Al-Omani disclosed that the solar-powered lampposts also operate on electrical power; thereby, ensuring continuous lighting and uninterrupted operation in the event of technical failure. He pointed out that the adoption advanced systems contributes to reducing load on the electrical grid and g carbon dioxide emissions, which has had a positive impact on the State budget.

He said the project was implemented in



Al-Omani

coordination with the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) and in cooperation with a Kuwaiti factory. He affirmed that the abovementioned lampposts are monitored through the smart control systems, enabling easy monitoring and maintenance.

He added that the design and color of the lampposts were coordinated with the ministry -- a manifestation of the commitment of the government to maintain the cultural character of the country.

He pointed out that the ministry is keen on adopting modern systems in future lighting projects in residential, commercial or investment areas. He said around 400 lampposts on Bubiyan Island, on the road leading to Mubarak Port, will be illuminated as the first phase of the road development project using a stand-alone solar system, without any electrical wiring.

He revealed the project was implemented by the Ministry of Public Works, in cooperation with the Ministry of Electricity, reflecting the cooperation of government agencies to achieve sustainable development and enhance energy efficiency.

## Legislation establishes committees

# New decree law sets framework for disposal of outdated military assets

**KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4:** Decree Law No. 86/2025 was issued to regulate the disposal of military-nature materials outside the scope of military use, reports Al-Rai daily.

The explanatory memorandum for the decree stated that the legislation in force lacks regulation on the disposal of military-nature materials outside the scope of military use. It is of paramount importance to implement such a regulation; so the space occupied by these materials could be utilized for profitable purposes, reduce the direct and indirect costs of maintaining them, and achieve the highest profit return for the benefit of the State treasury. It also states the need to direct these materials toward optimal use.

Article Two of the decree stipulates that the executive regulations shall be issued as per the proposal of the Minister of Defense -- within three months.

The law consists of 34 articles as follows:

Article One includes definitions of the law and military-nature materials.

Articles Two and Three specify the cases in which military materials are outside the scope of use and the methods for disposing them.

Article Four lists the entities benefiting

from the application of the provisions of the law.

Articles Five to Eight specify the mechanism for forming the specialized committee for disposing military-related materials that are no longer in use, its meetings, its affiliated agencies, and the powers of those agencies.

Articles 10 and 11 stipulate the method for determining the estimated value of military materials and the mechanism for conducting a special evaluation of any such materials.

Articles 12 to 17 are on public bidding and matters related to awarding the contract.

Articles 18 and 19 are on limited bidding, contracting and directing bids.

Articles 20 to 25 specify the methods for disposing military materials that are no longer in use; including how to exchange them, dispose them without compensation, and destroy them when necessary.

Articles 26 to 32 stipulate the general provisions of the law, including the penalties that the competent committee may impose on bidders who violate the provisions of Article 33, and the mechanism for reviewing grievances against decisions issued by that committee as per Article 34.



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‘Weaving Cup Coasters’ workshop offers a chance to learn traditional craft

Threads of identity: NCCAL and Sadu spark cultural creativity

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4, (KUNA): Participants in the “Weaving Cup Coasters” workshop learned the basics of simple textile weaving, and used their newly attained skills to create beautiful and practical cup coasters.

The workshop is part of the “My Cultural Summer 17” festival, organized by the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL).

Workshop instructor and member of the Al-Sadu Handicraft Association, trainer Hayat Al-Baloushi, told the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) on Sunday that the event, which was hosted by the House of Sadu and organized in collaboration with NCCAL and the Al-Sadu Handicraft Association, drew great interest from both handicraft enthusiasts and beginners in weaving.

Al-Baloushi highlighted that participants used colored wool threads to create circular cup coasters that add an elegant touch to the table, noting that the workshop provided all the necessary materials and tools.

She praised the efforts of NCCAL in organizing this enriching and positive workshop, along with many others, during the summer break.

Al-Baloushi affirmed that such initiatives help youth and young



adults make meaningful use of their free time, enhance their skills and creative abilities in various fields,



'Weaving Cup Coasters' workshop held as part of 'My Cultural Summer 17' Festival activities.

KUNA photos

and strengthen their connection to cultural and national identity.

Al-Baloushi explained that the art of Sadu is one of the oldest traditional crafts in Kuwait and the Arabian Gulf, representing a vital part of the region’s heritage and culture. It involves weaving wool using a simple, handmade loom, and decorating

textiles with geometric patterns that carry symbolic meanings rooted in the desert environment and local traditions.

Historically, Kuwaitis used Sadu to create Bedouin tents (black tents), camel coverings, rugs, and various household decorative items.

Kuwait has placed special emphasis on preserving this cultural heritage through the establishment of the House of Sadu in 1979, which is a cultural and craft center dedicated to documenting and teaching the art of Sadu to new generations. The center supports local craftswomen and regularly organizes educational workshops and exhibitions that showcase the beauty of Sadu and highlight its role in expressing Kuwaiti national identity.

In March 2025, the World Crafts Council officially designated Kuwait City as a World Craft City for Sadu weaving, in recognition of its efforts to preserve this traditional art. This prestigious designation reflects Kuwait’s leading role in the field of handicrafts, particularly Sadu weaving, which stands as a powerful symbol of Kuwaiti cultural identity and a testament to the commitment of national cultural institutions to protecting intangible heritage and passing it on to future generations.

Ministry activates power supply to Mutlaa Residential City N3 suburb

By Mohammed Ghanem  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4: The Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy announced the activation of power supply to Mutlaa Residential City (N3 suburb),

including parts of Blocks 2 and 3.

The supply was launched in coordination with the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW). The ministry will begin receiving applications for electricity connection to 757 plots.

Reduce flood risks over time

Public Works orders study for deep tunnel drainage system

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4: In a bid to address perennial issues related to wastewater drainage and flood risks, the Ministry of Public Works has asked the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) to issue a public tender for the preliminary study and design of a deep tunnel drainage system in the country; as per Article 17 of Tender Law No. 49/2016, reports Al-Anba daily.

During its most recent meeting, the Board of Directors of CAPT decided to return the proposal to the ministry in order to update the technical and administrative documentation, in preparation for re-tendering the project.

Sources informed the daily that this move is part of a comprehensive environmental and engineering strategy aimed at preventing emergency discharges into Kuwait Bay. They said the envisioned system will integrate emergency lines connecting all wastewater pumping and purification stations with rainwater outlets, forming a unified network.

Sources added the project also aims to tackle the environmental damage

caused by discharging untreated sewage into the sea during emergencies – a practice that has resulted in marine pollution and harm to aquatic life.

Sources stated that the proposed tunnel system is expected to remarkably reduce the risk of flooding – particularly during the rainy season – in residential areas and along major roads.

Sources clarified that the current phase pertains solely to a design agreement and preliminary study.

They said the main aspects of the study include the following:

- Developing initial designs for a nationwide deep tunnel network
- Disconnecting current links between sewage and rainwater drainage systems
- Creating an emergency drainage network that leads to a specialized treatment plant
- Evaluating the feasibility of re-using treated water generated by the system
- The timeline for completing the study and design phase has been set at 36 months

By Najeh Bilal  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4: The Petrochemical Industries Company (PIC) announced a net profit of KD58.5 million for fiscal 2024/2025 – an increase of KD19.5 million or 33.3 percent compared to the profit of KD39 million in the last fiscal year.

Oil sector sources pointed out that this strong financial performance was achieved despite the challenges posed by geopolitical instability; specifically the disruptions in global supply chains and widespread shift to long-haul shipping routes, which significantly increased logistics costs. Sources attributed the company’s robust performance to several factors as follows:

- Rising global demand for petrochemical products,
- Strict cost rationalization policy,
- Continuous development of operational processes,
- Strategic support and investment in local and international companies where PIC holds significant stakes.

Sources stated that these initiatives have not only bolstered PIC’s revenues but also positively impacted the overall profitability of Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) -- its parent company.

Strategic Acquisitions and International Expansion

Looking ahead, PIC is well-positioned for continuous profitability, driven by recent and upcoming acquisitions approved by KPC. Among the most significant is the April 2025 agreement with China’s Wanhua Chemical Group to acquire a 25 percent stake in a group of petrochemical plants in Yantai, China. The deal covers several high-value industrial units, including propylene oxide, tert-butyl alcohol, acrylic acid, butyl acrylate, and other specialty chemical products.

CAPT extends KOC tender deadlines

PIC is also evaluating new investment opportunities, both locally and internationally, over the next two years, with the aim of expanding its chemical production portfolio. Its current investment portfolio includes 80 percent stake in Kuwait Paraxylene Production Company (KPPC), 46 percent in Kuwait Stearin Company (KTSC), 24.5 percent in Equate Petrochemical Company (EQUATE), 42.5 percent in The Kuwait Olefins Company (TKOC), 33.3 percent in Gulf Petrochemical Industries Company (GPIC), 25 percent in SK Advance (South Korea) and 49 percent in SKPIC Global (South Korea)

The company reaffirmed its commitment to environmental stewardship, emphasizing ongoing initiatives to reduce industrial pollutants and support Kuwait’s national goal of carbon neutrality by 2050.

Furthermore, PIC’s strategic direction aligns with the 2040 strategy of KPC, aiming to strengthen Kuwait’s position as a leading

player in the global petrochemical industry.

Meanwhile, the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) has announced the extension of the deadline for submitting bids for the Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) tender to establish a new excess water injection network in Rawdatin in North Kuwait until Aug 19, instead of Aug 5.

It was also published in Kuwait Al-Youm that the tender for the construction and installation of the fourth water injection station in the South Kuwait, affiliated with KOC, was postponed until Aug 26, instead of Aug 5.

The tender for the construction and installation of separation center three and water injection station three in South Kuwait was postponed until Aug 19, instead of Aug 5.

Moreover, CAPT postponed the submission of bids for the KOC tender for the construction and installation of the oil separation center one and water injection station one in East Kuwait until Aug 26, instead of Aug 5.

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Continued from Page 1

Kuwait expands

It is not within the purview of the platform or its administrators to address this matter. This is practiced in all other countries around the world, especially the Gulf countries.”

He confirmed that he reviewed all the comments, along with the ministry’s staff and the platform administrators on Monday.

He stated “we accept the comments with open hearts, because our goal is to make Kuwait a leader. Therefore, everything raised will be developed from Tuesday. We will push toward facilitating procedures and adopting whatever serves Kuwait.”

On the fees, the Minister of Interior revealed “we will present the fees for visits to the Council of Ministers on Tuesday for approval, as well as the measures that will facilitate Kuwait’s openness to the world as soon as possible, so as to avoid any inconvenience or obstacles.”

Asked about those who do not add value to the country’s commercial activity or groups that accumulate without any purpose, he pointed out that “the logical conditions set in this regard prohibit them from visiting Kuwait unless they are able to support themselves or their sponsor has such ability. Otherwise, they should remain in their countries.”

Emphasizing that his intention for the ‘Kuwait Visa’ platform is to be an important reference – superior to its counterparts in the region; the Minister of Interior concluded his phone call with the editor-in-chief by saying, “I reiterate that the State is open to any comments. The objective is to develop the platform, and achieve everything that makes our country a tourist and commercial destination. As we said earlier, perfection belongs to Allah alone; thus, the platform will be developed whenever necessary.”

In view of the above and in accordance with the directives of the Kuwaiti immigration and civil aviation authorities, Middle East Airlines is now permitted to carry all passengers holding a family visit visa (that only Kuwaiti airlines were previously permitted to carry).

Kuwait’s fight

and diagnosis of poliovirus through the use of PCR amplification, the ministry’s public health department chief Fahad Al-Ghamlas said in a statement.

The WHO accreditation was a testament to the Kuwaiti polio laboratory’s commitment to “sustainable” quality in its efforts to detect and identify cases of polio virus, all of which comply with global laboratory practices and procedures, he underlined.

On the Kuwaiti polio laboratory’s WHO GPLN test passing, the ministry’s laboratory department head Dr. Sara Al-Qabandi attributed the success to the “competence” of health ministry staff, in addition to the use of modern and cutting-edge equipment, she said.

President Joseph

President Aoun announced the contents of the American memorandum, the date it would be submitted to the Council of Ministers, his signing of the decree on judicial appointments, and the upcoming vote on the judicial independence law.

He highlighted the importance of defending government policy, and praised ministers for their efforts while also holding them accountable for their work in silence.

President Aoun underscored the role of the judiciary, pointing to a significant transformation in its independence and its newfound ability to combat corruption and lift immunities impartially.

He stressed the urgent need for reforms, particularly in addressing the rights of depositors and implementing administrative restructuring, while prioritizing reconstruction and securing necessary funding.

President Aoun affirmed his full confidence in the Lebanese Army, its leadership, and the security forces in maintaining national security and standing firmly against terrorism.

The President also highlighted his role in strengthening Lebanon’s ties

with the international and Arab communities, including efforts to reopen embassies, appoint ambassadors, and encourage the return of tourists.

He stressed the importance of empowering municipalities, approving the proposed administrative decentralization law, holding parliamentary elections on time, and guaranteeing the voting rights of expatriates.

In conclusion, President Aoun underscored the vital role of the United States, France, and Saudi Arabia in supporting Lebanon’s recovery and helping it reclaim its place on the regional and international stage.

Kuwait’s Gaza

In an interview with Kuwait TV, Al-Mutairi affirmed that Minister of Social, Family and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah was closely monitoring the campaign. He disclosed that the campaign was launched in two phases; starting with in-kind donations last week, in partnership with Zakat House and several entities, especially the Kuwait Flour Mills Company. He added the aid was delivered to Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS), which will then transport it to Gaza via airlift in cooperation with Kuwait Air Force.

He stated that the second phase – financial donations – began on Aug 3 and will continue until Aug 5 through the electronic links approved by charities licensed by the ministry.

He confirmed “this is an honorable campaign, which reflects Kuwait’s humanitarian image. It came at a critical time, coinciding with the escalating tragedy in Gaza. Kuwait is a pioneer in such initiatives. Our humanitarian and religious duties require us to stand with our brothers in times of hardship, a fact exemplified by this blessed campaign.”

He explained that the campaign does not target a specific group in Gaza, as it rather intends to reach all affected people -- whether children, the wounded or besieged families.

He revealed that in-kind donations are being used to provide basic food supplies, which are currently the most

urgently needed, with the possibility of expanding it to include medical or educational assistance as needed and in coordination with the concerned authorities.

He pointed out that the State of Kuwait has a long and distinguished record of charitable and humanitarian work. He said “charity is part of this country’s history. The people of Kuwait are well-versed in helping the needy and supporting the oppressed. Kuwait’s rulers have historically been known for helping the poor, such as the third ruler of Kuwait, HH the late Amir Jaber Al-Aish, who earned this name for his generosity. This approach is deeply rooted in us as a people and a government. Thanks to this approach, the State of Kuwait has earned global recognition.”

He added the United Nations declared Kuwait as a Humanitarian Center, and His Highness the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad (may Allah have mercy on him) was honored with the title of ‘Humanitarian Leader.’ He indicated that this honor reflects a well-established truth, recognized worldwide, that Kuwait is a beacon of charitable work.

High-tech

Their previous company, which was engaged in currency exchange and through which the unlicensed alternative remittance business was conducted, was shut down by the competent authorities.

The ministry confirmed that the suspects were arrested in Khaitan and the tools used in the transfer were confiscated.

Legal action is being taken against the suspects identified as M.M. and D.S.

The international gang’s location in Pakistan has been identified, and coordination is underway with the relevant authorities in this regard.

The ministry affirmed its continuous efforts to utilize modern technologies, such as biometric fingerprinting, to uncover crimes and combat any criminal activity that threatens the security and safety of society.

547K bpd rise approved

Kuwait Oil Minister lauds OPEC+ flexibility to raise output in Sept

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Minister of Oil Tareq Al-Roumi praised Sunday the decision made by the eight countries ministerial meeting participating in the voluntary reduction agreement to implement an upward production adjustment of 547,000 barrels per day in September 2025, compared to the production level required in August 2025.

The minister made the statement following his participation in the ministerial meeting of the eight countries involved in the voluntary oil production reduction agreement within the framework



Al-Roumi

of the OPEC+ alliance, according to a Ministry of Oil release.

The meeting was held via video conference on Sunday, with the participation of an official delegation that included Kuwait’s Governor to OPEC Mohammad Al-Shatti and Kuwait’s National Representative to OPEC Sheikh Abdullah Sabah Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah.

The minister emphasized that the meeting reflects the continued coordination among participating countries to ensure the stability of the oil market.

He confirmed that the decision was based on a thorough analysis of market data regarding production, inventories, and future expectations, which highlight optimism about the robustness of market fundamentals and the importance of flexibility in production policies to enhance supply security in the market.

News in Brief

Kuwait Naval Forces to conduct live-fire exercises on Aug 5 & 6

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4: The Directorate of Moral Guidance and Public Relations of the Kuwaiti Army announced that the Naval Forces will conduct live-fire exercises on Tuesday and Wednesday, August 5 and 6, 2025, from 7:00 am to 6:00 pm, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The directorate revealed that the exercises will take place at the marine shooting range, located 16.5 nautical miles east of Ras Al-Julaia, extending to Qaruh Island, and 6 nautical miles east of Ras Al-Zour to Umm Al-Maradim Island.

It urged all citizens, residents, seafarers, and fishing enthusiasts to avoid the designated area during the exercise for everyone’s safety.

□ □ □

**3 women lose citizenship:** Two Cabinet decisions were published in the official gazette “Kuwait alyoum” on Monday to revoke the Kuwaiti citizenship of three women based on Articles 10 and 11 of Amiri Decree No. 15/1959, reports Al-Seyassah daily.





Texas House Democratic Caucus Chair Gene Wu along with other members of the Texas House are joined by Illinois Governor JB Pritzker as they speak about Texas Republican plans to redraw the House map office during a press conference at the Democratic Party of DuPage County office in Carol Stream, Illinois on Aug 3. (AP)

## Texas governor threatens to remove Democrats who left state over Trump-backed redistricting

WASHINGTON, Aug 4, (AP): Republican Texas Gov Greg Abbott says he will begin trying to remove Democratic lawmakers from office Monday if they don't return after dozens of them left the state in a last-resort attempt to block redrawn US House maps that President Donald Trump wants before the 2026 midterm elections.

The revolt by the state House Democrats, many of whom went to Illinois or New York on Sunday, and Abbott giving them less than 24 hours to come home ratcheted up a widening fight over congressional maps that began in Texas but has drawn in Democratic governors who have floated the possibility of rushing to redraw their own state's maps in retaliation. Their options, however, are limited.

At the center of the escalating impasse is Trump's pursuit of adding five more GOP-leaning congressional seats in Texas before next year that would bolster his party's chances of preserving its slim U.S. House majority.

The new congressional maps drawn by Texas Republicans would create five new Republican-leaning seats. Republicans currently hold 25 of the state's 38 seats.

A vote on the proposed maps had been set for Monday in the Texas House of Representatives, but it cannot proceed if the majority of Democratic members deny a quorum by not showing up. After one group of Democrats landed in Chicago on Sunday, they were welcomed by Illinois Gov. JB Pritzker, but declined to say how long they were prepared to stay out of Texas.

"We will do whatever it takes. What that looks like, we don't know," said state Rep. Gene Wu, the Texas House Democratic Caucus leader.

But legislative walkouts often only delay passage of a bill, including in 2021 when many of the same Texas House Democrats left the state for 38 days in protest of new voting restrictions. Once they returned, Republicans still wound up passing that measure.

Four years later, Abbott is taking a far more aggressive stance and swiftly warning Democrats that he will seek to remove them from office if they are not back when the House reconvenes Monday afternoon. He cited a non-binding 2021 legal opinion issued by Republican Attorney General Ken Paxton, which suggested a court could determine that a legislator had forfeited their office.

He also suggested the lawmakers may have committed felonies by raising money to help pay for fines they'd face.

"This truancy ends now," Abbott said.

In response, House Democrats issued a four-word statement: "Come and take it."

Lawmakers can't pass bills in the 150-member Texas House without at least two-thirds of them present. Democrats hold 62 of the seats in the majority-Republican chamber and at least 51 left the state, said Josh Rush Nisenon, spokesperson for the House Democratic Caucus.

### Unusually expansive outreach raises alarm among some officials

## US Justice Department seeks voter and election information from at least 15 states

NEW YORK, Aug 4, (AP): The requests have come in letters, emails and phone calls. The specifics vary, but the target is consistent: The US Department of Justice is ramping up an effort to get voter data and other election information from the states.

Over the past three months, the department's voting section has requested copies of voter registration lists from state election administrators in at least 15 states, according to an Associated Press tally. Of those, nine are Democrats, five are Republicans and one is a bipartisan commission.

In Colorado, the department demanded "all records" relating to the 2024 election and any records the state retained from the 2020 election.

Department lawyers have contacted officials in at least seven states to propose a meeting about forging an information-sharing agreement related to instances of voting or election fraud. The idea, they say in the emails, is for states to help the department enforce the law.

The unusually expansive outreach has raised alarm among some election officials because states have the constitutional authority to run elections and federal law protects the sharing of individual data with the government.

It also signals the transformation of the Justice Department's involvement in elections under President Donald Trump. The department historically has focused on protecting access to the ballot box. Today, it is taking steps to crack down on voter fraud and noncitizen voting, both of which are rare but have been the subject of years of false claims from Trump and his allies.

The department's actions come alongside a broader effort by the administration to investigate past elections and influence the 2026 midterms. The Republican president has called for a special prosecutor to investigate the 2020 election that he lost to Democrat Joe Biden and continues to falsely claim he won. Trump also has pushed Texas Republicans to redraw their congressional maps to create more House seats favorable to the GOP.

The Justice Department does not



Voters wait in a long line at a polling place at the Michelle and Barack Obama Sports Complex on Election Day on Nov 5, 2024, in Los Angeles. (AP)

typically "engage in fishing expeditions" to find laws that may potentially have been broken and has traditionally been independent from the president, said David Becker, a former department lawyer who leads the nonprofit Center for Election Innovation and Research.

"Now it seems to be operating differently," he said.

The department responded with an emailed "no comment" to a list of questions submitted by the AP seeking details about the communications with state officials.

Election offices in Alaska, Arizona, California, Florida, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Hampshire, New York, Utah, and Wisconsin confirmed to the AP that they received letters from the voting section requesting their statewide voter registration lists. At least one other, Oklahoma, received the request by phone.

Many requests included basic questions about the procedures states use to comply with federal voting laws, such as how states identify and remove duplicate voter registrations or deceased or otherwise ineligible voters.

Certain questions were more state-specific and referenced data points or perceived inconsistencies from a recent survey from the U.S. Election Assistance Commission, an AP review of several of the letters showed.

The Justice Department already has filed suit against the state election board in North Carolina alleging it failed to comply with a part of the federal Help America Vote Act that relates to voter registration records.

There are signs the department's outreach isn't done. It told the National Association of Secretaries of State that "all states would be contacted eventually," said Maria Benson, a NASS spokeswoman.

The organization has asked the department to join a virtual meeting of its elections committee to answer questions about the letters, Benson said. Some officials have raised concerns about how the voter data will be used and protected.

Election officials in at least four California counties - Los Angeles, Orange, San Diego and San Francisco - said the Justice Department sent them letters asking for voter roll records. The letters asked for the number of people removed from the rolls for being noncitizens and for their voting records, dates of birth and ID numbers.



Members of the public are turned away from Edinburgh Castle as the site is closed to visitors due to high winds, in Scotland on Aug 4, as weather warnings are coming into force with Storm Floris expected to cause severe travel disruption to road, air and ferry services, and close bridges. (AP)

### Trains canceled, events called off as a major storm hits Scotland

Authorities in Scotland canceled trains, closed parks and warned people to tie down backyard trampolines as a rare summer storm brought potentially destructive winds to northern Britain.

The UK's Meteorological Office on Monday issued an "amber" wind warning in Scotland for Storm Floris, meaning there is a potential risk to lives and property, especially from large waves in coastal areas. The agency said wind gusts could reach 85 mph (137 kph), accompanied by heavy rain.

The storm is hitting at the busiest time of year for tourism, with hundreds of thousands of people flocking to the Edinburgh Fringe and other arts festivals. The Edinburgh Military Tattoo, one of the city's biggest tourist draws, said it was cancelling Monday's scheduled outdoor performance by massed ranks of bagpipers

and drummers at Edinburgh Castle.

Train companies canceled services across much of Scotland and some ferry crossing also were scrapped. Floris, named by weather authorities, also could hit parts of Northern Ireland, Wales and northern England, the Met Office said.

Scottish government minister Angela Constance urged people to be careful if traveling and "consider this a winter journey as opposed to a summer journey."

"Please make sure you've got warm clothes, food, water, plenty of fuel and that your mobile phone is charged up," she said.

Train operator ScotRail urged "anyone with garden equipment, such as tents, trampolines or furniture, to secure items so that they don't blow onto the tracks and interfere with lineside equipment." (AP)

## Stakes rise in Russia-Ukraine war as Trump deadline for Kremlin approaches

MOSCOW, Aug 4, (Agencies): The coming week could bring an important moment in the war between Russia and Ukraine, as US President Donald Trump's deadline for the Kremlin to reach a peace deal approaches - or it could simply melt away.

US President Donald Trump's special envoy Steve Witkoff was expected in Moscow in the middle of this week, just before Trump's Friday deadline for the Kremlin to stop the killing or face potentially severe economic penalties from Washington.

Previous Trump promises, threats and cajoling have failed to yield results, and the stubborn diplomatic stalemate will be hard to clear away. Meanwhile, Ukraine is losing more territory on the front line, although there is no sign of a looming collapse of its defenses.

Witkoff was expected to land in the Russian capital on Wednesday or Thursday, according to Trump, following his trip to Israel and Gaza.

"They would like to see (Witkoff)," Trump said Sunday of the Russians. "They've asked that he meet so we'll see what happens."

Trump, exasperated that Russian President Vladimir Putin hasn't heeded his calls to stop bombing Ukrainian cities, a week ago moved up his ultimatum to impose additional sanctions on Russia as well as introduce secondary tariffs targeting countries that buy Russian oil, including China and India.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Monday that officials are happy to meet with Trump's envoy. "We are always glad to see Mr. Witkoff in Moscow," he said. "We consider (talks with Witkoff) important, substantive and very useful."

Trump said Sunday that Russia has



This photo taken from video by Artem Sheldr shows an aerial view of the eruption of the Krashennnikov volcano of the Eastern volcanic belt, about 200 km (125 miles) northeast of the regional center of Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky, Russia Far East on Aug 3. (AP)

proved to be "pretty good at avoiding sanctions."

"They're wily characters," he said of the Russians.

The Kremlin has insisted that international sanctions imposed since its February 2022 invasion of its neighbor have had a limited impact.

Ukraine insists the sanctions are taking their toll on Moscow's war machine and wants Western allies to ramp them up. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Monday urged the

United States, Europe and other nations to impose stronger secondary sanctions on Moscow's energy, trade and banking sectors.

Trump's comments appeared to signal he doesn't have much hope that sanctions will force Putin's hand.

The secondary sanctions also complicate Washington's relations with China and India, who stand accused of helping finance Russia's war effort by buying its oil.

**Also:**

**VLADIVOSTOK:** The simultaneous activity of six volcanoes on Russia's Kamchatka Peninsula is a highly unusual phenomenon, which scientists are calling a parade of eruptions, reported by TASS news agency.

"According to our data, the last time such widespread volcanic activity occurred in Kamchatka was in 1737, following a magnitude-9 earthquake," Alexey Ozerov, director of the Institute of Volcanology and Seismology of the Far Eastern Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences, was quoted by TASS news agency as saying.

Ozerov said the powerful seismic event on July 30 may have reawakened the region's "sleeping giants."

**Yury Demyanchuk**, head of the volcanology station in the village of Klyuchi, said he had not seen such widespread volcanic activity in his five decades of work in Kamchatka.

"On Krashennnikov Volcano, both summit and central eruptions have begun simultaneously, which may indicate intense internal seismic processes. As for Kambalny Volcano, I last worked on it in 1979. While it has been quiet for decades, it should not be considered extinct," Demyanchuk said.

## US nuke submarines deployed to 'where they have to be': Trump

WASHINGTON, Aug 4, (Xinhua): US President Donald Trump said Sunday that two nuclear submarines have arrived "where they have to be," two days after he ordered their deployment.

"I've already put out a statement, and the answer is, they are in the region ... where they have to be," Trump said.

Trump on Friday said on his Truth Social that he ordered two nuclear submarines "in the appropriate regions" following his spat with Dmitry Medvedev, former Russian president and deputy chair of the Security Council.

On July 28, Trump cut short the deadline for Moscow to end the conflict with Ukraine to "10 or 12 days" from the initial 50-day timeline, citing disappointment with "Moscow's lack of willingness to compromise."

Later that day, Medvedev said Trump is playing an "ultimatum game with Russia," calling his threat "a step towards war ... with his own country."



US President Donald Trump, (left), is greeted by Air Force Col. Christopher M. Robinson, Commander, 89th Airlift Wing, (right), after walking down the stairs of Air Force One, upon his arrival at Joint Base Andrews, Md on Aug 3. (AP)

VILNIUS, Aug 4, (Xinhua): Lithuanian Prime Minister Gintautas Paluckas stepped down from his post on Monday, triggering the automatic resignation of the entire cabinet.

Paluckas confirmed his decision during an emergency government meeting on Monday morning, the Baltic News Service reported.

"Having made the decision to resign as prime minister, I announce that the 19th Government of Lithuania is resigning," Paluckas said at the start of the meeting.

He added that he would formally submit his resignation to President Gitanas Nauseda later on Monday and expressed gratitude to his ministers for their cooperation.

Under Lithuanian law, the prime minister's resignation mandates that the president be informed the same day. Nauseda is now expected to accept the resignation via official decree and assign the



Lithuania's Social Democratic party member Gintautas Paluckas, nominated as the next Prime Minister, speaks during a parliament session in Vilnius, Lithuania on Nov 21, 2024. (AP)

outgoing government to serve in a caretaker role until a new administration is established. He should also appoint an interim prime minister.

Nauseda has up to 15 days to

nominate a new prime minister, who must then be approved by the parliament, known as the Seimas. The Social Democratic Party, which has the largest representation in the Seimas, is responsible for selecting a nominee. They are scheduled to discuss their candidate at a party presidium meeting on Wednesday.

Paluckas announced his intention to resign as the country's head of government and chairman of the Lithuanian Social Democratic Party last Thursday.

His departure from office comes amid investigations into his financial dealings and allegedly inappropriate involvement in business, ties to certain businesspeople and failure to pay damages owed to the Vilnius municipality.

Paluckas, however, denied any wrongdoing and called the criticism a "coordinated attack" by political opponents.



Lee’s approval rating falls to 71.6 percent

S.Korea begins removing propaganda speakers in conciliatory gesture toward North

SEOUL, South Korea, Aug 4, (Agencies): South Korea’s military said Monday it had begun removing loudspeakers along its border with rival North Korea in a move aimed at reducing tensions.

The speakers had previously been used to blast anti-North Korean propaganda across the border, but the South’s new liberal government halted the broadcasts in June in a conciliatory gesture as it looks to rebuild trust and revive dialogue with Pyongyang, which has largely cut off cooperation with the South in recent years.

South Korea’s Defense Ministry said the physical removal of the loudspeakers from the border was another “practical measure” aimed at easing tensions between the war-divided Koreans and that it does not affect the South’s military readiness.

Lee Kyung-ho, a spokesperson for the ministry, didn’t share specific details on how the removed loudspeakers will be stored or whether they could be quickly redeployed to the border if tensions flare again between the Koreans. There were no discussions between the two militaries ahead of the South’s decision to remove the speakers, Lee said during a briefing.

North Korea, which is extremely sensitive to any outside criticism of its authoritarian leadership and its third-generation ruler, Kim Jong Un, didn’t immediately comment on the South Korean step.

The South’s previous conservative government resumed the daily loudspeaker broadcasts in June last year following a yearslong pause in retaliation for North Korea flying trash-laden balloons toward the South in a psychological warfare campaign.

The speakers blasted propaganda messages and K-pop songs, a playlist clearly designed to strike a nerve in Pyongyang, where Kim’s government has been intensifying a campaign to eliminate the influence of South Korean pop culture and language among the population in a bid to strengthen his family’s dynastic rule.

The Cold War-style psychological warfare campaigns further heightened tensions already inflamed by North Korea’s advancing nuclear program and South Korean efforts to expand joint military exercises with the United States and their trilateral security cooperation with Japan.

South Korean President Lee Jae

Myung, a liberal who took office in June after winning an early election to replace ousted conservative Yoon Suk Yeol, has vowed to improve relations with Pyongyang, which reacted furiously to Yoon’s hard-line policies and shunned dialogue.

But Kim Yo Jong, the influential sister of the North Korean leader, rebuffed overtures by Lee’s government last week, saying that Seoul’s “blind trust” in the country’s alliance with the U.S. and hostility toward North Korea make it no different from its conservative predecessor. Her comments implied that North Korea - now preoccupied with its expanding cooperation with Russia over the war in Ukraine - feels no urgency to resume diplomacy with Seoul and Washington anytime soon.

Meanwhile, Lee’s approval rating fell 4.6 percentage points from a week earlier to 71.6 percent last week, a weekly poll showed Monday.

The negative assessment on Lee’s conduct of state affairs rose 4.5 percentage points to 26.1 percent, according to computer assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) by local pollster Flower Research.

The ruling liberal Democratic Party’s support decreased 4.0 percentage points to 55.3 percent, while the conservative opposition People Power Party’s approval score gained 2.2 percentage point to 22.7 percent.

Support rate for the minor left-leaning Rebuilding Korea Party and the minor rightist New Reform Party logged 3.3 percent and 2.8 percent each last week.

The pollster’s separate survey of automated response system (ARS) showed that Lee’s approval rating retreated 4.3 percentage points to 64.1 percent last week compared to the previous week.

The CATI and the ARS surveyed 1,009 and 1,006 voters each from Friday to Saturday. They had plus and minus 3.1 percentage points in margin of error with a 95-percent confidence level.



A North Korean military guard post, (left), and loudspeakers are seen from Paju, South Korea, near the border with North Korea, June 12. (AP)

Asia

Cambodian and Thai officials meet in Malaysia:

Thai and Cambodian officials met in Malaysia on Monday for the first round of cross-border committee talks since a tense ceasefire was brokered last week after five days of deadly armed border clashes that killed dozens and displaced over 260,000 people.

The four-day General Border Committee meetings were initially due to be hosted by Cambodia, but both sides later agreed to a neutral venue in Malaysia, the annual chair of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, which has mediated the halt in hostilities last month.

Malaysia’s prime minister is **Anwar Ibrahim**. (AP)



Anwar

Beijing issues highest rainstorm alert:

Authorities in Beijing upgraded the rainstorm alert on Monday after heavy downpours wreaked havoc in the Chinese capital over the past week.

At 1 pm, the city’s meteorological service issued a red alert for rainstorms, the highest level in China’s four-tier system, predicting heavy rain across the city from noon through Tuesday morning.

Most parts of the city are expected to receive over 100 mm of rain within six hours, with some areas forecast to see more than 200 mm.

Meanwhile, the Beijing water authority and meteorological service have jointly issued flood warnings, highlighting Miyun District as highly vulnerable, with Fangshan, Mentougou and Huairou also at risk.

Several Beijing districts, including Shijingshan, Fengtai, Huairou, Fangshan and Mentougou, have issued red alerts for rainstorms, as mountainous areas in these districts face heightened risks of flash floods, mudslides and landslides.

Residents are urged to seek shelter during thunderstorms, avoid driving on flooded roads, and stay clear of mountains and rivers.

The neighboring Tianjin Municipality issued a yellow alert at 10:40 a.m., forecasting downpours and gales from Monday evening to night.

Torrential rains battered several parts of China over the weekend, causing road collapses and forcing evacuations.

Last week’s intense rainstorms in Beijing claimed 44 lives, impacted over 300,000 residents, and damaged around 24,000 homes. (Xinhua)

Heavy rains leave 4 dead in Taiwan:

Continuous heavy rainfall over the past week has severely impacted several areas in central and southern Taiwan, leaving four dead, 74 injured, and three missing as of Sunday evening, according to the island’s fire department.

On Sunday, a total of 108 monitoring stations across Taiwan recorded a daily precipitation of over 200 millimeters. A site in Kaohsiung reported a weekly cumulative rainfall of 2,759 millimeters, surpassing the island’s annual average volume of 2,500 millimeters.

The island’s emergency operations center said on Sunday that 5,795 people have been evacuated so far, and a total of 140 instances of road and tunnel closures and 124 cases of falling rocks have been reported. Power outages have affected hundreds of households, while multiple regions have issued red alerts for landslides.

The meteorological department has forecast that heavy downpours may continue in the central and southern parts of the island on Monday. In response, work and classes have been suspended in multiple cities, including Kaohsiung, Tainan and Pingtung. (Xinhua)

Man charged with murder in Australia:

Australian police have charged a man with murder over a fatal stabbing in Sydney’s western suburbs.

A police statement on Monday said that emergency services were called to reports of a woman being located with stab wounds at a unit in Mount Pritchard, 28 km west of central Sydney, shortly after 5 p.m. on Sunday.

Ambulance paramedics arrived and treated the 62-year-old woman, but she died at the scene.

A 28-year-old man was arrested at the residence and taken to a nearby police station. According to police, the man and the victim were known to each other.

Detectives established a crime scene and, following inquiries with assistance from the homicide squad, charged the 28-year-old man with one count of murder as an act of domestic violence.

He was refused bail and would make an initial appearance at a Sydney court on Monday. (Xinhua)

‘High-profile military deployment’

India, Philippines stage joint naval drill

MANILA, Philippines, Aug 4, (AP): India and the Philippines staged joint sail and naval exercises in the disputed South China Sea for the first time, a high-profile military deployment that will likely antagonize China. Beijing has separate territorial disputes with the two Asian democracies and a long-running regional rivalry with New Delhi.

Armed Forces of the Philippines chief of staff Gen. Romeo Brawner said Monday that the two-day joint naval sail and exercises which began Sunday have been successful so far and expressed hopes that Filipino forces could engage India’s military in more joint maneuvers in the future.

Asked if Chinese forces carried out any action in response, Brawner said without elaborating that “we did not experience any untoward incident but we were still shadowed. We expected that already.”

In past joint patrols with other foreign navies, Chinese navy and coast guard ships have kept watch from a distance, according to the Philippine military.

China has a longstanding land border dispute with India in the Himalayas, which sparked a monthlong war in 1962 and a number of deadly firefights after.

Separately, Beijing’s expansive claims to virtually the entire South China Sea, a key global trade route, has led to tense confrontations with other claimant states, particularly the Philippines and Vietnam. Malaysia,



A crew disembarks the Indian navy ship guided-missile destroyer, INS Delhi, that is docked at Manila’s port, Philippines, on Aug 1. (AP)

Brunei and Taiwan also lay claims to parts of the contested waters.

The Philippines has staged naval patrols in the disputed waters with its treaty ally, the United States, and other strategic partners including Japan, Australia, New Zealand and France to promote freedom of navigation and overflight and strengthen deterrence against China.

It has allowed journalists to join territorial sea and aerial patrols to witness China’s increasingly aggressive actions, provoking angry Chinese reactions.

In response to a question last week

about Manila’s plans to build up military cooperation, China’s Ministry of National Defense called the Philippines a “troublemaker” that has aligned itself with foreign forces to stir up trouble in what China deems its own territorial waters. “China never wavers in its resolve and will to safeguard national territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests and will take resolute countermeasures against any provocations by the Philippine side,” Defense Ministry spokesperson Col. Zhang Xiaogang said in a news conference.



Supporters of National Citizen Party (NCP) listen to the party leader Nahid Islam during a political rally in Dhaka, Bangladesh on Aug 3. (AP)

A year after bloody uprising, many say Bangladesh far from political stability

DHAKA, Bangladesh, Aug 4, (AP): Abdur Rahman Tarif was talking to his sister Meherunnesa over the phone when the voice on the other end of the call suddenly fell silent.

In that moment, Tarif knew something bad had happened. He rushed home, dodging the exchange of fire between security forces and protesters on the streets of Dhaka. When he finally arrived, he discovered his parents tending to his bleeding sister.

A stray bullet had hit Meherunnesa’s chest while she was standing beside the window of her room, Tarif said. She was taken to a hospital where doctors declared her dead.

Meherunnesa, 23, was killed on Aug. 5 last year, the same day Bangladesh’s former prime minister Sheikh Hasina was forced to flee the country in a massive student-led uprising, which ended her 15-year rule. For much of Bangladesh, Hasina’s ouster was a moment of joy. Three days later, Nobel Peace Prize laureate Muhammad Yunus took over the country as head of an interim government, promising to restore order and hold a new election after necessary reforms.

A year on, Bangladesh is still reeling from that violence, and Hasina now faces trial for crimes against humanity in absentia, as she is in exile in India. But despite the bloodshed and lives lost, many say the prospect for a better Bangladesh with a liberal democracy, political tolerance and religious and communal



In this July 16, 2025 photo, activists carry symbolic coffins and torches during a procession to mark the day of a student-led protest one year ago, in Dhaka, Bangladesh. (AP)

harmony has remained a challenge.

“The hope of the thousands who braved lethal violence a year ago when they opposed Sheikh Hasina’s abusive rule to build a rights-respecting democracy remains unfulfilled,” said Meenakshi Ganguly, deputy Asia director at Human Rights Watch, a New York-based human rights group.

Bangladesh’s anti-government movement exacted a heavy price. Hundreds of people, mostly students, were killed in violent protests. Angry demonstrators torched police stations and government buildings. Political opponents

often clashed with each other, sometimes leading to gruesome killings.

Like many Bangladeshis, Tarif and his sister took part in the uprising, hoping for a broader political change, particularly after when one of their cousins was shot and killed by security forces.

“We could not stay home and wanted Sheikh Hasina to go,” 20-year-old Tarif said. “Ultimately we wanted a country without any discrimination and injustice.”

Today, his hopes lie shattered. “We wanted a change, but I am frustrated now,” he said.

After taking the reins, the Yunus-led administration formed 11 reform commissions, including a national consensus commission that is working with major political parties for future governments and the electoral process.

Bickering political parties have failed to reach a consensus on a timetable and process for elections. Mob violence, political attacks on rival parties and groups, and hostility to women’s rights and vulnerable minority groups by religious hardliners have all surged.

Some of the fear and repression that marked Hasina’s rule, and abuses such as widespread enforced disappearances, appear to have ended, rights groups say. However, they accuse the new government of using arbitrary detention to target perceived political opponents, especially Hasina’s supporters, many of whom have been forced to go into hiding.

AU mission confirms killing of more than 50 al-Shabab fighters in southern Somalia

MOGADISHU, Aug 4, (Xinhua): The African Union Support and Stabilization Mission in Somalia (AUSSOM) confirmed on Sunday that its troops, backed by Somali government forces, killed more than 50 al-Shabab militants during a fierce fighting in Bariire town in southern Somalia on Friday.

In a statement issued in Mogadishu, the capital of Somalia, AUSSOM also refuted media reports alleging heavy casualties among its soldiers in Bariire.

“AUSSOM wishes to clarify that its forces, in coordination with the Somali National Armed Forces (SNAF), initiated a major offensive to recapture Bariire town on Aug. 1,” the AU mission said, responding to claims made by al-Shabab regarding the destruction of AU-owned armored personnel carriers and the retreat of AUSSOM troops following intense fighting in Bariire.

“The joint military operation has resulted in substantial losses for the terrorist group, with over 50 al-Shabab militants killed and many others sustaining serious injuries,” AUSSOM said.

The agriculturally rich Bariire town, which lies about 60 km southwest of



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

Mogadishu, is one of the strategic areas located in the Lower Shabelle region along the Shabelle River.

Local residents said the fighting on Friday was the most intense in recent days between the militants and allied forces.

“AUSSOM and SNAF troops are

determined to recapture Bariire town and other territories still under al-Shabab control to ensure lasting peace and security for the people of Somalia,” said El Hadji Ibrahim Boly Diene, special representative of the AU Commission Chairperson for Somalia and head of AUSSOM.

Subcontinent

**India quarry accident kills 6 workers:** At least six workers died and 10 were injured in a quarry accident in India’s southern state of Andhra Pradesh, confirmed the local police on Monday.

The mishap occurred in the state’s Bapatla district. Four among the injured were said to be in a critical condition. Most of the victims hailed from the eastern state of Odisha.

According to an online report by India Today, the accident happened on Friday evening when a large section of rock gave way during quarrying operations, burying workers under tons of debris.

Around 16 workers were present at the quarry when the incident happened. Rescue teams were deployed to pull survivors from the debris. The injured were admitted to a local hospital. (Xinhua)

**Police discover arms in Afghanistan:** Police have discovered arms and ammunition, including a rocket-propelled grenade (RPG), in western Afghanistan’s Farah province, said a news release of the provincial police office on Monday.

The weaponry includes a piece of AK-47, one stock of RPG, four hand grenades, projectiles and other military equipment were found from a house in Khak-e-Safid district, the news release added.

Earlier in similar operations, police discovered arms and ammunition, including anti-aircraft guns, in the northern Samangan province some two weeks ago. (Xinhua)

Lat/Am

**Haitian police arrest former senator:** Police in Haiti have arrested a former senator charged with conspiring against the state and financing criminal organizations for allegedly supporting gang members.

Nenel Cassy was arrested Saturday at a restaurant in Petionville, a wealthy district of the capital, Port-au-Prince, Haiti’s National Police said in a post on Facebook. The police shared photos of the former senator in handcuffs next to heavily armed officers wearing ski masks.

Arrests of high level officials are rare in Haiti, where the government is also struggling to control neighborhoods and villages that have been taken over by gangs.

Cassy was designated as a corrupt actor by the US State Department in 2023. He was accused by Haiti’s police in February of backing gang members who launched deadly attacks on Kenscoff, a neighborhood 10 kilometers (6 miles) outside Port-au-Prince that is home to much of the nation’s elite. Kenscoff had been largely untouched by Haiti’s gang violence until February’s attacks in which dozens of people were killed. (AP)

**Prison riot in Mexico kills 7:** Authorities in the Mexican state of Veracruz on Sunday said they have restored order in a prison where seven inmates were killed and 11 were injured in a riot that broke out the previous night.

In a statement posted on X, the Department of Public Security of Veracruz said prisoners injured during the riot in Tuxpan prison are now receiving medical attention, and that fires started by some of the inmates have been extinguished. (AP)



## US dollar steady at KD 0.305

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4, (KUNA): The US dollar exchange rate against the Kuwaiti dinar held steady at KD 0.305 on Monday, while the euro was unchanged at KD 0.354 compared to the previous day.

According to the Central Bank of Kuwait’s daily bulletin, the British pound edged up by 0.06% to KD 0.406, while the Swiss franc declined 0.11% to KD 0.379. The Japanese yen remained stable at KD 0.002.

# Business

ESG commitment strengthened through governance and transparency

## Kamco Invest publishes its 2024 sustainability report titled: ‘Resilience. Responsibility. Results.’

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4: Kamco Invest, a regional non-banking financial powerhouse with one of the largest AUMs in the region, published its 2024 Sustainability Report. The report outlines the Company’s progress in embedding Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) values across its operations, while reaffirming its commitment to delivering sustainable impact across these dimensions. The theme of the 2024 report, “Resilience. Responsibility. Results.” reflects Kamco Invest’s belief that strategic focus, operational discipline, and purposeful engagement are key to achieving sustainable progress in a constantly evolving business landscape.

During 2024, Kamco Invest recorded solid growth across key financial indicators including net profits, shareholders’ equity, assets under management, and total revenue. These results demonstrate the alignment between sustainable practices and long-term business resilience. The Company closed the year with USD 15.9 billion in assets under management, marking a seven-percent year-on-year increase, while its investment-banking team executed eleven high-profile transactions across the region with a combined value of USD 4.9 billion, including major IPO and debt-market deals.

Throughout the year, Kamco Invest expanded its sustainable-investment platform to introduce investment solutions aligned with the Principles for Responsible Invest-



Nawal Mulla-Hussain

**Mulla-Hussain:** Our focus on sustainable growth is rooted in responsible actions, disciplined execution, and commitment to long-term value.



Kamco Invest Sustainability Report.

sulting in lower electricity consumption. The Company also introduced measures that reduced single-use plastics across operations, leading to a measurable decrease in greenhouse-gas emissions compared to 2023.

On the governance front, Kamco Invest maintained full compliance with regulatory standards and preserved its short-term credit rating of “A3” and long-term rating of “BBB,” with a stable outlook reaffirmed by Capital Intelligence. The publication of the Company’s fourth sustainability report demonstrates a sustained commitment to transparency, consistency, and accountability in ESG disclosures, reinforcing stakeholder confidence across all areas of operation.

We remain committed to elevating our service offering to enrich the overall client experience. During the year we launched

our all-new Kamco Invest App, in addition to our new web client portal, which offers clients seamless access to their accounts and portfolios. Both the app and web portal are equipped with advanced AI-powered features, further enhancing the user experience and enabling clients to manage their investments with ease and confidence.

Community engagement remained a cornerstone of Kamco Invest’s sustainability efforts in 2024. The Company launched the “Invest in Your Health” campaign during the Breast Cancer Awareness Month in collaboration with Kuwait Hospital, providing free mammograms to employees and their families. It also organized a blood-donation drive in partnership with Kuwait Projects Company (Holding) and its sister companies to further promote health and wellness within the community. We also played an active role in shaping industry dialogue by hosting several investment conferences and discussions, further contributing to knowledge-sharing within the financial sector.

In support of youth development and education, Kamco Invest welcomed 45 interns during the year, marking a 100% increase compared to 2023. Nearly half of the interns were females, and the majority were Kuwaiti nationals, reflecting the Company’s ongoing efforts to empower local talent and enhance inclusion. Kamco Invest also achieved considerable increases

in female representation at all levels across the organization, in line with its commitments under the United Nations Women’s Empowerment Principles and the Kuwait Women’s Economic Empowerment Platform. Kamco Invest also collaborated with local universities, providing students with exposure to financial markets through focused lectures and real-world engagement.

Internally, Kamco Invest continued to invest in employee wellbeing and professional development by advancing workplace initiatives that promote a positive, resilient, and inclusive corporate culture. These efforts reflect the Company’s recognition that long-term value creation is only possible when employees are empowered, supported, and engaged.

Nawal Mulla-Hussain, Managing Director of Support Operations, commented, “Our focus on sustainable growth is rooted in our responsible actions, disciplined execution, and deep commitment to delivering long-term value to our stakeholders. We believe that embedding sustainability into our business strategies is vital to driving long-term success and generating greater value and impact for the society.”

She added, “In 2024, we expanded our sustainable investment platform, strengthened our governance, deepened our community partnerships, and reinforced our people-first culture. Our results demonstrate that responsibility is not a constraint on performance, but a catalyst for it.”

## Kuwait’s real estate deals up 30% in July

Value hits KD 448.9 mln

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

**KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4: The number of real estate transactions in July reached 579 with an estimated total value of KD448.9 million -- 30 percent increase in number and 21 percent increase in value compared to 405 transactions worth KD353.6 million in June.**

This represents an annual increase of 22.6 percent in number and 20 percent in value compared to 448 transactions worth KD359.07 million in July 2024.

A study conducted by the newspaper based on official statistics from the Real Estate Registration and Documentation Departments at the Ministry of Justice revealed that private real estate transactions ranked first in the number of properties registered during the month, with 377 deals worth KD142.9 million.

This is an annual increase of

14.9 percent in number and 5.5 percent in value, compared to 321 deals worth KD135.02 million in July last year.

Investment real estate ranked second with 177 transactions worth KD189.23 million -- 40.6 percent year-on-year increase in number and 44 percent increase in value over July 2024, which had 105 transactions worth KD105.62 million.

Commercial real estate followed in third place with 18 transactions worth KD104.961 million -- 38.6 percent increase in number and 37 percent increase in value compared to last year’s 11 transactions worth KD65.97 million.

This is in addition to the registration of four craft real estate transactions worth KD5.177 million, two warehouse sector transactions worth KD5.6 million, and one coastal strip transaction worth KD1 million in July 2025.

The newspaper also obtained a copy of the weekly statistics for the final week of July -- from July 27 to 31, stating the registration of 167 real estate deals worth KD88.999 million, an increase of 18.6 percent in number compared to the previous week’s transactions, which reached 136 deals worth KD93.439 million.

All Share Index drops 0.51%

## Boursa Kuwait closes lower

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4, (KUNA): Boursa Kuwait ended Monday’s trading session with the All Share Index declining by 43.65 points, or 0.51%, closing at 8,550.74 points. A total of 366.11 million shares changed hands in 25,751 transactions, with a total trading value of KD 79.5 million (USD 242.4 million).

The Main Market Index dropped by 7.64 points, or 0.10%, reaching 7,648.20 points after trading 248.18 million shares across 17,363 transactions, valued at KD 36.5 million (USD 111.3 million).

Meanwhile, the Premier Market Index fell 54.79 points, or 0.59%, to end at 9,198.43 points, with 117.9 million shares traded through 8,388 transactions, totaling KD 42.9 million (USD 130.8 million).

The Main 50 Index also saw a loss, declining 44.05 points, or 0.58%, to 7,573.09 points after 178.5 million shares were traded in 7,919 transactions, amounting to KWD 22.7 million (about USD 69.2 million).

S&P GCC composite index up by 1.6% in July 2025

## Markaz: Kuwait stocks maintain positive momentum for third consecutive month



Markaz logo

Dubai in H1 2025. Emirates NBD (UAE) gained 12.1% during the month, despite reporting a 9% y/y decline in net profit in H1 2025. Qatar’s equity markets gained 4.8% for the month, supported by positive corporate earnings. Among Qatar’s blue-chip companies, Qatar Islamic Bank and Qatar National Bank gained 10.7% and 8.1% respectively. The banks’ net profit for H1 2025 has increased by 5.3% y/y and 3.0% y/y respectively.

Saudi Arabia’s GDP for Q2 2025 grew by 3.9% y/y, according to flash estimates from the country’s General Authority for Statistics. Non-oil activities grew by 4.7% y/y and oil activities grew by 3.8% y/y. The IMF has revised up its forecast of Saudi Arabia’s GDP growth in 2025 by 0.6 percentage points to 3.6% y/y on the back of sustained reforms and diversification efforts.

Global markets were positive during July 2025, supported by positive developments on the tariffs announced by the US administration and positive corporate earnings reports from major companies like JP Morgan, Alphabet, Microsoft etc. The MSCI World and S&P 500 indices rose by 1.2% and 2.2% respectively for the month. U.S signed trade deals with many trade partners such as EU, Japan and Indonesia. Nvidia hit USD 4 trillion market capitalization threshold on 9th July 2025, becoming the first stock ever to reach the milestone. The company’s stock has been rallying in recent months as it stands to benefit from the ongoing generative AI boom. MSCI EM index gained 1.7% during the month. Chinese equities rose by 3.7%, supported by better-than-expected Q2 2025 GDP growth of 5.2% y/y and optimism over U.S-China trade talks.

U.S inflation was at 2.7% y/y in June 2025, up from 2.4% y/y reading in May 2025. Inflation in the country had been largely trending lower in 2025, after registering a 3.0% y/y increase in January 2025. However, June 2025’s CPI uptick has raised concerns that inflation has begun to reflect the impact of tariff measures. The U.S labor market added 147,000 jobs in June, up from 144,000 jobs added in May. However, about half the job gains were from the government sector with the private sector registering the smallest increase in eight months. The IMF has revised up global growth forecast to 3.0% y/y in 2025 in July, an increase of 0.2% compared to its April outlook, due to stronger than expected purchases ahead of tariff

imposition. The fund has highlighted potential rebound in tariffs, geopolitical tensions and higher interest rates due to large fiscal deficits as persisting threats to global growth.

The yield on the 10-year US treasury notes rose 13bps during the month to 4.37%. The U.S Fed held rates steady at 4.25%-4.5% in July 2025, citing elevated inflation and stable labor market. The Fed Chair opined that the rates were at appropriately restrictive levels and stated that no decision has been made about the course of monetary policy in September 2025.

Oil (Brent) prices closed the month at USD72.5 per barrel, rising by 7.3% during the month. Iran’s suspension of cooperation with International Atomic Energy Agency, U.S’ pressure on Russia to end its war on Ukraine and U.S-EU trade deal supported prices during the month. However, prospect of increased supply due to continued acceleration in pace of unwinding of cuts by OPEC+, easing of U.S sanctions on Venezuela capped gains. OPEC+ plans to raise production by 548,000 barrels per day (bpd) in August 2025, up from 411,000 bpd monthly increase over May-July 2025. Gold prices closed at USD 3,290 per oz, down by 0.4% for the month. The commodity gained earlier in the month due to trade uncertainties but declined later in the month as trade tensions eased.

Progress in trade talks, imposition of new tariffs on few countries and their impact on inflation and upcoming corporate earnings reports are some key market movers that would be watched out for by the participants. While sustained and accelerated pace of unwinding of oil production cuts and steady non-oil economic growth are likely to favor the GCC region, impact of tariff developments on oil and corporate earnings would also be key determinants of market moves in the region.

**About Kuwait Financial Centre “Markaz”**

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

In line with its dedicated customer satisfaction strategy and expansive rewards program

## Burgan Bank offers free airport ride to ‘Elite’ customers

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4: As part of its ongoing efforts to enrich its banking experience, Burgan Bank has launched its latest summer campaign: a complimentary chauffeured airport ride for all Elite Visa Signature debit card holders. The “Free Airport Ride” campaign falls under Burgan Bank’s year-round loyalty program, specifically targeting Elite customers and designed to offer them premium services that cater to their lifestyles – from everyday banking benefits to rewarding add-on experiences.

Speaking about the promotion, Mr. Mohammed Al-Yaseen, Deputy General Manager – Retail Banking at Burgan Bank said: “Summer is a time for travel, family moments, and new experiences – and we’re here to make it all smoother from the very first step. With this offer,

our Elite customers can enjoy the comfort of a private from or to airport transfer, reflecting the personalized care and convenience that define their relationship with Burgan Bank.”

Mr. Al-Yaseen noted that exclusivity and convenience remain the hallmarks of the Elite banking experience. “We continue to tailor our services and rewards to the needs and expectations of our Elite segment – delivering not only premium financial solutions, but also the lifestyle benefits they value most.”

Available till August 31st, this exclusive offer covers a single ride either to or from Kuwait International Airport. Elite customers can contract the Elite Concierge Service at +965 22969960 to avail this offer.



Mohammed Al-Yaseen, Deputy General Manager – Retail Banking







شركة الاستثمارات الوطنية  
National Investments Company

# “National Investments Company (NIC)” Recorded KD 14 Million in Profits, with Earnings Per Share Reaching 17.3 Fils, Marking a 139% Growth in Profitability

## Other Comprehensive Income Reached KD 17.2 Million for H1 2025



**Khaled Waleed AlFalah**  
Chairman of the Board of Directors

- NIC continues to advance its growth and expansion strategy, aligned with its forward-looking vision and ambitious objectives for 2025.
- The company sustained its market leadership during the first half of the year, driven by a strategic asset portfolio, carefully curated investments, and robust risk management practices.

National Investments Company (NIC) announced its financial results for the first half of 2025, recording a net profit of KD 14 million and earnings per share of 17.3 fils. This reflects a significant increase compared to the KD 6 million net profit and 7.2 fils earnings per share reported during the same period in 2024, representing a 139% growth. NIC continues to be recognized as one of the leading investment institutions in Kuwait and the region, supported by a strong track record and consistent financial outperformance.

In this context, Mr. Khaled Waleed AlFalah, Chairman of the Board at NIC, stated that the first-half performance reflects the company’s strategic effectiveness and resilience amid prevailing economic challenges. He emphasized that NIC continues to advance along its growth trajectory, aligned with its forward-looking vision and ambitious 2025 plans, underpinned by prudent asset management and a flexible approach to navigating both local and global market dynamics.

This performance translated into strong financial indicators: total assets increased by 21% to KD 321 million at the end of H1 2025,

compared to KD 266 million for the same period in 2024. Shareholders’ equity attributable to the parent company rose by 15% to KD 211 million, up from KD 184 million in H1 2024. Other comprehensive income also improved, reaching KD 17.2 million compared to KD 16.6 million in the prior-year period. Additionally, total assets under management (AUM) grew by 14%, standing at KD 1.204 billion, up from KD 1.056 billion at the end of last year.

AlFalah affirmed that NIC continues to deliver sustainable positive results, driven by a diversified strategy in products and services and a consistent focus on reinforcing its presence both locally and regionally. This was reflected in the company’s ability to maintain its market leadership during the first half of the year, supported by high-quality assets, carefully selected investments, and effective risk management. These elements contributed to strong returns and notable performance indicators, underscoring the company’s disciplined strategic execution and its capacity to achieve goals with precision and efficiency. He also emphasized NIC’s continued commitment to upholding solid governance standards and cultivating a culture of innovation across the organization—enhancing future-readiness, operational performance, and outcome effectiveness, which in turn supports improved productivity and profitability.

AlFalah also announced the official launch of NIC’s five-year transformation strategy, developed in collaboration with a leading global management consulting firm. This initiative marks the commencement of the first phase in a comprehensive three-phase strategic roadmap, designed to drive sustainable growth, elevate operational excellence, and support regional expansion. He further highlighted NIC’s leadership in sustainability, evidenced by the release of its second Sustainability Report for 2024. The report underscores the company’s ongoing commitment to ESG principles and transparency, while showcasing tangible progress in the implementation of key sustainability initiatives.

As part of its new strategy, NIC unveiled a refreshed visual identity under the slogan: “A principal-led investment house committed to exceptional value creation.” This reflects a renewed strategic direction rooted in innovation and visionary leadership. The company remains dedicated to offering advanced financial solutions that align with client aspirations and adapt to evolving market dynamics. This transformation marks a pivotal milestone in NIC’s journey, underscoring a strategic focus on sustainable growth and innovation. The new identity embodies the company’s commitment to securing clients’ financial futures, fostering individual financial empowerment, and contributing to broader economic development, all in line with NIC’s long-term expansion plans and ambitions.

AlFalah added that the first half also featured key milestones, including the opening of a new office in Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC), which expands NIC’s regional footprint. This strategic move strengthens the company’s position as a leading provider of integrated investment services in the region, enhances its ability to enter new markets, and enables it to offer innovative financial solutions tailored to a diverse range of local and international clients—further reinforcing its leadership in regional investment management.

NIC’s leadership was further strengthened by winning prestigious awards from Euromoney, including “Best in Succession Planning – Kuwait 2025” and “Best Investment Bank in Equity Capital Markets – Kuwait 2025.”

In conclusion, Mr. Khaled Waleed AlFalah expressed his pride and gratitude for the unwavering support of the Board of Directors across the company’s divisions. He praised the executive management’s high level of professionalism and commended NIC’s dedicated employees, whose sincere efforts played a pivotal role in achieving these strong results and advancing the company’s future aspirations.

**Outstanding Achievements**  
For his part, Board Member and CEO Mr. Fahad Abdulrahman Al

Mukhaizim emphasized that the company concluded H1 2025 with sustainable growth, clearly reflected in its operational results. He highlighted NIC’s focus on adapting to evolving customer needs by delivering innovative investment services powered by advanced digital technologies, which strengthened its competitive market position. He added that the success of the strategic plans across sectors helped attract more investors to NIC’s quality-driven opportunities, both locally and internationally, through its managed investment portfolios for individuals and institutions.

On the Asset Management front, Al Mukhaizim confirmed the strong performance of local investment funds in H1 2025, supported by positive momentum in Boursa Kuwait during this period. This achievement came despite challenges from global trade tensions, financial market volatility, and regional geopolitical developments. The Wataniya Investment Fund delivered a return of 13.77% since the beginning of the year, while the Al Darij Investment Fund achieved a return of 14.75%.

As for Financial Instruments, the team delivered standout results during H1 2025. NIC added a new company to its Market Maker service, bringing the total to 15 listed companies. This move aligns with the company’s strategy to strengthen its role as a key market service provider in Boursa Kuwait by supporting liquidity, enhancing trading efficiency, and contributing to market stability. It reflects NIC’s ongoing commitment to developing market infrastructure and its position as a strategic partner in advancing Kuwait’s capital markets.

Al Mukhaizim also praised the exceptional performance of the Investment Banking Sector, which successfully closed several strategic deals during H1 2025. This included advisory services for three major capital market transactions, with an estimated total value of approximately USD 1.5 billion, expected to be finalized within the year. In light of the size and complexity of these transactions, and rising client demand, the division adopted a more selective

approach, prioritizing strategic deals with significant impact on both NIC and the broader market. Additionally, the Financial Advisory team recently provided valuation support for a regional real estate company listed on Boursa Kuwait and assisted a Kuwaiti joint-stock company in assessing the value of its Middle East real estate portfolio. NIC is also actively marketing select sale opportunities to a targeted group of clients.

As part of its strategic outlook, the division is preparing several new deals, supported by improving economic conditions in Kuwait, growing investor confidence, and ongoing regulatory reforms that are accelerating capital market development and corporate restructuring across the region. It maintains a solid pipeline of credit opportunities currently under advanced evaluation, with existing projects showing strong performance. Additionally, NIC is in the process of exiting two international real estate assets as part of its strategic realignment.

Looking forward, Al Mukhaizim emphasized the division’s commitment to building new strategic partnerships and sustaining a strong pipeline of investment opportunities in alternative investments and private equity, underpinned by favorable market conditions. NIC continues to apply strict selection criteria to identify high-potential opportunities in strong-performing markets offering attractive risk-adjusted returns. The company also remains focused on restructuring its portfolio by developing high-quality assets and divesting from underperforming ones.

Al Mukhaizim revealed that the Wealth Management Sector maintained strong performance in H1 2025, driven by the effective efforts of its team. These efforts resulted in a diverse range of innovative investment opportunities, underscoring the company’s commitment to creating value for its clients. Assets under management at NIC increased by approximately half a billion USD compared to year-end 2024, despite persistent geopolitical and regional challenges impacting the markets.



**Fahad Abdulrahman Al Mukhaizim**  
Board Member and Chief Executive Officer

- NIC remained committed to meeting evolving client needs by delivering innovative investment services and solutions, leveraging the latest digital technologies to strengthen its competitive edge.
- The company’s ongoing investment in digital infrastructure and operational efficiency supports the delivery of intelligent, data-driven investment solutions through a secure and adaptable platform.

On the digital transformation front, Al Mukhaizim noted that NIC signed an agreement with ZainTECH, the technology arm of Zain Group, during the first half of the year to migrate its data center infrastructure to the ZainTECH cloud platform. This initiative is part of a broader digital transformation strategy that leverages cutting-edge cloud computing and cybersecurity technologies. The collaboration supports Kuwait Vision 2035 and reinforces NIC’s commitment to enhancing its digital capabilities and operational efficiency, enabling the company to deliver smart investment solutions powered by advanced analytics and supported by a secure, scalable infrastructure.

In conclusion, Al Mukhaizim reaffirmed NIC’s strong commitment to achieving its strategic goals for 2025, with a clear focus on driving sustainable growth and accelerating digital transformation to meet the evolving expectations of clients and shareholders. He also emphasized NIC’s ongoing role in supporting the national economy through a diversified portfolio of investment solutions that reflect its solid market position and deep expertise across both local and regional markets.



شركة الاستثمارات الوطنية  
National Investments Company

# FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE FIRST HALF YEAR 2025

## TOTAL SHAREHOLDERS' EQUITY



## TOTAL ASSETS



## NET PROFIT



## ASSETS UNDER MANAGEMENT





Reflecting year-on-year growth of 30%

# NBK-Egypt reports EGP 4.1 billion net profit in 1H 2025

CAIRO, Aug 4: National Bank of Kuwait - Egypt (NBK-Egypt) has reported net profits of EGP 4.1 billion (Equivalent to KWD 25.65 million) for the first six months of 2025, a significant increase from the EGP 3.2 billion (Equivalent to KWD 24.9 million) reported in the corresponding period of 2024, showcasing an impressive growth rate of 30%.

Net Operating Income stood at EGP 7.7 billion in 1H 2025, recording a substantial increase of 28% from EGP 6.1 billion recorded in the corresponding period of 2024. In the meantime, Net Interest Income grew by 31%, reaching EGP 6.7 billion compared to EGP 5.2 billion in 1H 2024. Meanwhile, Net Operating Income (excluding interests) increased to EGP 199 million in 1H 2025, compared to EGP 147 million in 1H 2024, up by 35%, while Cost to Net Operating Income grew by 1% in 1H2024 to 24% in 1H 2025.

Total assets reached EGP 206 billion by the end of 1H 2025, up by 5% compared to EGP 196 billion by the end of 2024. Furthermore, total loans and credit facilities expanded to EGP 115 billion in 1H 2025, reflecting a growth rate of 10% compared to EGP 104 billion recorded at the end of 2024. Additionally, customer deposits increased to EGP 166 billion by the end of 1H 2025, up from EGP 160 billion at the end of 2024, representing a growth rate of 4%.

The ratio of operating income to total net income increased to 87% as of 1H2025, compared to 85% in the corresponding period of 2024.

Moreover, the Return on Average Assets (ROAA) improved to 4% in 1H2025, while the Return on Average Equity (ROAE) stood at 35%.

Commenting on the financial results announced by NBK-Egypt, Ms. Shaikha Al-Bahar, Deputy Group Chief Executive Officer, National Bank of Kuwait, and Chairman of NBK-Egypt, said: "The strong earnings growth achieved by NBK-Egypt in the first half of 2025 highlights the bank's solid financial standing and the enduring strength of its business model, which continues to generate sustainable profitability despite prevailing operational challenges. This performance stands as a testament to the Group's long-term strategic vision since its entry into the Egyptian market in 2007, reaffirming its confidence in the significant growth potential and strategic importance of one of the region's largest and most dynamic banking landscapes."

Al-Bahar affirmed that Egypt remains one of the Group's most prominent strategic markets, playing a role in driving growth, and is consistently regarded as its second home market. As the largest Kuwaiti investment in Egypt, NBK has established a clear and growing footprint within the Egyptian banking sector. The Bank ranks among the fastest-growing institutions in the market, a position reinforced by its robust financial indicators, which underscore its solid trajectory toward further expansion and enhanced market share. Furthermore, Al-Bahar emphasized that the Group views the Egyptian market as a long-term strategic investment and remains committed to expanding its presence. She noted that NBK's operations in Egypt continue to rank among the most profitable within the Group, consistently delivering high returns on equity and assets.

Al-Bahar explained that the easing of geopolitical tensions in the region would significantly support the Egyptian economy and unlock greater investment opportunities. She also noted that the country's future outlook, continues to gain momentum from the ongoing reform efforts and the exceptional measures undertaken by the Egyptian government and the Central Bank of Egypt.

Meanwhile, Vice Chairman, CEO, and Managing Director of National Bank of Kuwait-Egypt, Mr. Yasser El-Tayeb, said: "The Bank's solid financial indicators in the first half of the year underscore its ability to sustain growth and deliver strong business results, despite the exceptional



Shaikha Al-Bahar, Deputy Group Chief Executive Officer

**Al-Bahar:**

- NBK - Egypt delivered solid profit growth, underpinned by resilient operating performance amid challenging conditions
- The Bank continues to rank among the fastest-growing financial institutions in Egypt, with a clearly defined and expanding presence in the local market
- Our financial indicators underscore the strength of our trajectory and affirm that we remain wellpositioned to further reinforce our market share
- Egypt remains a core strategic market contributing to the Group's growth



Yasser El-Tayeb, Vice Chairman, CEO, and Managing Director of NBK-Egypt

**El-Tayeb:**

- NBK – Egypt continues to deliver strong performance, with solid growth across all key financial indicators
- The Bank remains focused on reinforcing its position in both the retail and corporate banking sectors
- We are fast-tracking digital transformation by expanding our digital services
- Sustainable finance stands as a core strategic priority in line with our commitment to supporting environmentally responsible projects

He added that the majority of NBK-Egypt's income is generated from credit operations, primarily through the corporate banking segment, while the retail banking sector has also witnessed notable growth in recent years. The Bank's credit portfolio spans a broad spectrum of clients, ranging from large corporations to medium and small enterprises, while its retail portfolio serves diverse customer segments. This breadth underscores the strength and diversification of NBK-Egypt's income sources.

El-Tayeb emphasized the bank's commitment to further strengthening its position in the retail banking sector by offering advanced services and products tailored to diverse customer segments, aiming to establish itself as a comprehensive bank that fulfills all their financial needs.

Furthermore, he also emphasized NBKE's firm belief in the pivotal role of technology and digital channels in shaping the future of the banking sector. Recognizing their importance in strengthening competitive advantage, NBK-Egypt has made substantial investments to upgrade its core banking systems and significantly expand its suite of digital services. These efforts are aimed at delivering a seamless and distinctive banking experience, enabling customers to carry out their transactions anytime, anywhere. In parallel, the Bank is committed to encouraging broader adoption of electronic payment methods, in alignment with the strategic direction of the Egyptian government and the Central Bank of Egypt.

El-Tayeb emphasized that NBK-Egypt is committed to supporting the global shift toward sustainable finance and the transition to a green economy. The Bank actively backs environmentally responsible projects that promote sustainability and greater reliance on renewable energy sources. It also continues to explore viable solutions to mitigate the adverse impacts of climate change and reduce carbon emissions. Finally, El-Tayeb noted that sustainable finance has become one of the most critical instruments for promoting and preserving long-term financial stability.

**About the Bank:**

NBK-Egypt has a vast network of 52 branches spread over premium locations in various Egyptian governorates and cities, including Cairo, Giza, Alexandria, Delta, Red Sea, Port Said, Upper Egypt, and the industrial zones in 6th of October 10th of Ramadan cities. The Bank is also privileged to be among the elite banks within the Egyptian market that offer Islamic banking services in addition to its conventional products throughout its Islamic branches. Moreover, NBK-Egypt has a vast network of ATMs nationwide to service the Bank's clients around the clock. Furthermore, the bank offers a wide range of digital and electronic services, providing its customers with a unique banking experience. These services enable customers to conveniently conduct their banking transactions anytime and anywhere, eliminating the need to visit the bank for every transaction.

National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) was incorporated in 1952 as the first local bank and the first shareholding company in Kuwait and the Gulf region. NBK continues to enjoy collectively one of the highest ratings among all banks in the Middle East from the three international rating agencies Moody's (A1), Standard and Poor's (A), and Fitch Ratings (A+). The Bank's ratings are supported by its strong financial indicators, asset quality, and high capitalization, in addition to its highly recognized and very stable management team, as well as strategic vision and stable funding base. NBK enjoys the most comprehensive banking presence with a local and international network with international presence in the world's leading financial centers including China, Geneva, London, Paris, New York, and Singapore, in addition to its regional presence in Egypt, Lebanon, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and the UAE.

## Affirming its commitment to the highest standards of banking and innovation

# KIB wins 2025 WUAB award for ‘Excellence in Digital Leadership and Customer-Centric Banking in Kuwait’

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) has been awarded by the World Union of Arab Bankers (WUAB) with the "Excellence in Digital Leadership and Customer-Centric Banking in Kuwait for the Year 2025" award. The accolade was presented during the 11th Arab Banks Awards and Commendations of Excellence 2025 ceremony, held in Beirut and organized by The Banking Executive Magazine, the Union's official publication.

The ceremony was attended by Mr. Musab Al-Shalan, Deputy General Manager of the Retail Banking Department, who accepted the award on behalf of the Bank, along with Ms. Marwa Marafie, KIB's Marketing & Corporate Communications Manager. This prestigious honor reaffirms KIB's remarkable achievements in digital infrastructure and strategic commitment to placing customer service at the forefront in all its innovative initiatives.

The selection process was based on multiple criteria, including a strong focus on digital customer experience, personalized, flexible, and user-friendly services relying on data analysis and a deep understanding of customer needs. In addition, by updating multiple features, the Bank enabled seamless e-payment services, namely KIBPay. This resulted in a significant increase in the volumes of digital transactions and high-performing indicators in customer satisfaction.

Commenting on the Bank's latest recognition, Musab Al-Shalan, Deputy General Manager of the Retail Banking Department at KIB, said: "We're honored by this recognition from the World Union

of Arab Bankers, which reflects the work we've been doing to continuously evolve KIB into a state-of-the-art digital-first and customer-centric institution. Our product development capabilities have grown significantly, with innovation embedded throughout each phase of our offerings. We continue to invest in building next-generation digital platforms that meet evolving market needs and foster deeper customer engagement."

Al-Shalan emphasized that KIB's participation in this ceremony reaffirms the Bank's keenness to strengthening its regional presence and activate communication channels with Arab and international banking institutions. It also reflects its commitment to strengthening its relationship with the Union of Arab Banks and other banking institutions, along with the relevant official and media personalities. This participation also falls within KIB's broader commitment to supporting events that contribute to the development and unity of the Arab banking sector, while also highlighting Beirut's role as a pivotal center embracing initiatives aimed at advancing the banking profession at the regional and international levels. The Bank extends its wishes for Lebanon's continued prosperity and stability.

He also stated that during 2024, the bank released a series of digital enhancements and distinctive services to its mobile app. These included the launch of the Interactive Teller Machine (ITM), along with the launch of distinctive digital card, the KIB Multicurrency Prepaid Card loaded with 12 different currencies. These services and updates contributed

to notable results, including an increase of 71% in the number of transactions conducted via the bank's mobile app and digital channels, a 31.25% rise in registered app users, and a 72% growth in the number of customers engaging with the KIB Rewards Program.

Al-Shalan reaffirmed: "KIB has sharpened its focus on the customer experience, an area which remains a key driver for sustainable growth. Understanding our customers' needs and delivering that with precision guides everything we do. We are increasingly leveraging data intelligence to deliver personalized, value-driven services to both individual and business customers."

It is worth noting that the World Union of Arab Bankers, headquartered in the Lebanese capital Beirut, comprises more than 500 members from the Arab banking sector. The organization publishes The Banking Executive Magazine, which launched the Arab Banks Awards and Commendations of Excellence in 2015. Since then, the event has become one of the most prominent events in the Arab banking industry, annually honoring more than 50 banks across the region.

KIB's recognition highlights its role as an active contributor in developing cutting-edge digital solutions. The Bank continues to align its strategy with innovation, operational excellence, and customer empowerment. It constantly strives to bring a seamless, modern, and secure banking experience to all segments of society, stemming from its core promise, 'Bank for Life'.



Ali Bu Hamad emphasizes consumer protection on Kuwait TV.

# ABK supports Diraya campaign by partaking in podcast on Kuwait TV

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4: As part of its continued support for the Diraya banking awareness campaign, in collaboration with the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) and Kuwait Banking Association (KBA), Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) participated in a podcast show on Kuwait TV to raise public awareness about banking best practices.

Ali Bu Hamad, Head of Complaints and Customer Protection at ABK, was featured as a guest on the program, where he highlighted the importance of the first-of-its-kind national campaign to promote financial and banking inclusion across all segments of Kuwaiti society.

The podcast introduced the core themes of the Diraya campaign, offering guidance to customers on how to protect their personal and banking information. It emphasized the importance of not sharing personal data with third parties and warned viewers about evolving fraud tactics and effective ways to detect and avoid them.

The discussion also addressed the conditions for obtaining personal loans, underlining the importance of understanding all lending terms and reviewing one's financial situation thoroughly prior to applying. In line with CBK regulations, ABK grants customers a minimum of two business days to review loan agreements before signing.

Additionally, in light of the travel season, the podcast further provided related advice, including tips for safeguarding banking details while abroad.



Recommendations included paying in the local currency, using official ATMs in public areas, avoiding suspicious links, verifying the authenticity of OTP and online payment messages, and relying exclusively on official platforms for bookings and transactions.

Ali Bu Hamad also advised to notify their bank before travelling and avoid using unsecured Wi-Fi networks alongside other critical reminders that support the overarching goal of the Diraya campaign to enhance financial awareness and consumer protection.

This initiative reflects ABK's ongoing commitment to delivering high-impact educational content tailored to the needs of all customers in the Kuwaiti market. The Bank continues to work closely with CBK and KBA to underscore the integral role of the banking sector in supporting national development and financial security.



KIB earns 'Excellence in Digital Leadership' award.



## The card can be issued via KFHOnline app

# KFH offers eco-friendly virtual rewards prepaid card

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) new Virtual Rewards Prepaid Card from, which can be instantly issued 24/7 through KFHOnline app to all customers, has garnered positive customer response and engagement. This is reflected in the high demand to issue the new card and benefit from its various features.

The card also offers faster and a more flexible digital banking experience, enabling customers to manage their

online purchases with ease. Customers can issue the card through the mobile app and add it directly to their digital wallets. Accordingly, they will have control and security for both local and international online and point-of-sale shopping. The card is fully digital, consisting of 16 digits similar to regular cards, along with a CVV security code and an expiration date.

The recently launched product accommodates customers' evolving needs and lifestyle, offering them a

distinguished and seamless payment experience that is both easy and secure.

In addition to the flexible payment options customized according to customers' needs, whether for online shopping, bill payments, or in-store purchases, the card has broader environmental and social impacts. These include reducing plastic waste and eliminating paper usage. It also contributes to lower carbon emissions by reducing in-person card delivery.



KFH card offers convenience and security with innovative payment experience.



## ‘First Steps’ marks the last major blockbuster of the summer

### ‘The Fantastic Four’ holds its lead atop the box office

LOS ANGELES, Aug 4, (AP): Marvel’s first family stumbled in theaters in its second weekend, but still held on to the top spot at the box office.

“The Fantastic Four: First Steps” earned \$40 million from 4,125 North American theaters, a 66% drop from a healthy \$117.6 million debut. The film was accompanied by comedies “The Bad Guys 2” and “The Naked Gun” in the top three box office rankings.

The superhero movie dipped significantly more than Marvel’s previous film, “Thunderbolts,” which took a 55% dive in its second weekend.

“First Steps” is the last major blockbuster of the summer. It added nearly \$40 million internationally in its second weekend, bringing the film’s global total to \$369 million. The movie’s box office drop off was surprising given its strong reviews, said Paul Dergarabedian, senior media analyst for the data firm Comscore.

Though the movie’s debut weekend may have given box office results a strong push toward the \$4 billion summer benchmark, August is off to a slow start, he said.

“It’s a tough lift, but we might be able to get there. It really means that all the films are gonna have to stand on their own,” Dergarabedian said.

“It’s gonna be about getting great reviews, having that staying power, that longevity in the marketplace.”

Newcomer comedy “The Bad Guys 2” earned second place at the box office this weekend, with \$22 million from 3,852 North American theaters. That was on par with projections and also in line with the first movie in the series, which brought in \$23 million in 2022. Paramount’s slapstick comedy, “The Naked Gun,” also in its debut weekend, snagged the third box office spot, earning \$17 million from 3,344 locations.

#### Debut

Jim Orr, president of domestic distribution for Universal Pictures, said the solid debut for “The Bad Guys 2,” coupled with strong audience reaction scores, “should point to a very long, very successful run through not only the rest of the summer, but really, I think into the fall.”

James Gunn’s “Superman,” which opened four weekends ago and already crossed \$550 million globally, earned \$13.8 million domestically this weekend, taking the fourth spot. “Jurassic World Rebirth” followed with \$8.7 million.

The horror movie “Together” had a strong debut weekend, coming in at sixth place and earning

\$6.8 million domestically, proof that August is a month for edgier and off-beat films, Dergarabedian said.

“That’s what this month is about. It’s not just about box office,” Dergarabedian said. “It’s also about providing really interesting, rewarding movie-going experiences for audiences.”

Dergarabedian said he expects highly-anticipated movies hitting theaters in the next few weeks - including “Freakier Friday,” and Zach Cregger’s horror movie “Weapons” - to give August a needed boost.

The box office is currently up 9.5% from last year.

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

1. “The Fantastic Four: First Steps,” \$40 million;
2. “The Bad Guys 2,” \$22.2 million;
3. “The Naked Gun,” \$17 million;
4. “Superman,” \$13.8 million;
5. “Jurassic World Rebirth,” \$8.7 million;
6. “Together,” \$6.8 million;
7. “F1: The Movie,” \$4.1 million;
8. “I Know What You Did Last Summer,” \$2.7 million;
9. “Smurfs,” \$1.8 million and
10. “How to Train Your Dragon,” \$1.4 million.



This image released by 20th Century Studios/Marvel Studios shows, from left, Ebon Moss-Bachrach as Ben Grimm/The Thing, Vanessa Kirby as Sue Storm/Invisible Woman, Pedro Pascal as Reed Richards/Mister Fantastic and Joseph Quinn as Johnny Storm/Human Torch, in a scene from ‘The Fantastic Four: First Steps.’ (AP)

#### Variety

**LOS ANGELES:** Soulja Boy was arrested early Sunday following a traffic stop on suspicion of being a convicted felon in possession of a firearm.

Soulja Boy, 35, whose real name is **DeAndre Cortez Way**, was a passenger during a traffic stop at 2:35 a.m., police said, and was arrested. Way was booked into jail in the Los Angeles Police Department’s Wilshire Division a little after 6 a.m., according to the sheriff department’s inmate database.

Additional information on what prompted the stop and who else was in the vehicle was not immediately available, police said.

A representative for Way did not immediately respond to The Associated Press’ request for comment.

The Chicago hip-hop artist is best known for his 2007 single “Crank That (Soulja Boy),” which went to No. 1 on the Billboard Hot 100 and brought him a Grammy nomination for best rap song. (AP)

**LONDON:** Oasis said Sunday that its members are “shocked and saddened” after a man fell to his death during a concert by the band at London’s Wembley Stadium.

The Metropolitan Police force said officers and paramedics responded to reports of an injured person just before 10:30 (2130GMT) on Saturday night.

It said a man in his 40s was found “with injuries consistent with a fall.” He was pronounced dead at the scene.

The force urged anyone who saw what happened or caught it on phone video to contact police.

“We are shocked and saddened to hear of the tragic death of a fan at the show last night,” Oasis said in a statement, offering “sincere condolences to the family and friends of the person involved.”

The Britpop icons’ first tour in 16 years kicked off July 4 in Cardiff, Wales. Saturday’s concert was the fourth of seven planned shows at Wembley.

Stadium management said Sunday’s gig would go ahead as planned. (AP)

**BEIJING:** “Dead To Rights,” a film about the Nanjing Massacre, has maintained its dominance at China’s summer box office, grossing over 1.5 billion yuan (about 210 million US dollars) within just 10 days of its July 25 debut.

Driven largely by the film’s success, the nation’s single-day box office revenue during the ongoing summer movie period from June through August hit a record 380 million yuan on Sunday, signaling a strong surge in market momentum, per data from ticketing platforms Maoyan and Beacon.

As of Sunday, China’s summer box office has reached 7 billion yuan in total earnings. Leading the pack is “Dead To Rights,” followed by local comedy “The Lychee Road” with 623 million yuan and Universal’s “Jurassic World Rebirth” at 555 million yuan. (Xinhua)

#### Film



This image released by Neon shows Alison Brie in a scene from ‘Together.’ (AP)

Love, codependency, and horror collide in a twisted tale

## Real-life couple Brie and Dave lead ‘Together’

LOS ANGELES, Aug 4, (AP): The perils of the dating scene are vast, but there are horrors in long-term relationships too. With intimacy and commitment, there can also come codependency and even convergence. Once individuals, some couples start to dress alike, act alike and even, terrifyingly, look alike.

On the comedic end, there’s the smug marrieds table of “Bridget Jones.” And then there’s the scary end in “Together,” in which convergence is rendered more literally and where the Spice Girls anthem “2 Become 1” takes on a whole new, horrifying meaning.

“Together,” written and directed by Australian filmmaker Michael Shanks in his feature debut, stars Alison Brie and Dave Franco as the converging couple Millie and Tim. Brie and Franco bring some authenticity to the roles - in real life, they’ve been together for nearly 15 years and married for eight. When they’re calling one another “babe” on-screen or reacting to the other’s light flirting with someone else, the lived-in comfort and easy rapport is evident. That’s not to say this film doesn’t require them to stretch or act, but the base credibility established by that off-screen fact goes a long way in selling the wild things that transpire down the line.

When we meet them, at a farewell party with friends in New York, they don’t seem particularly happy together as they prepare to embark on a big life step: moving to the country for Mil-

lie’s teaching job. Tim is embarrassed when he’s made aware of the fact that they’re dressed similarly and immediately changes. The mood overall is a little less than joyous - both seem hesitant and their friends aren’t exactly supportive either. We learn early that their physical relationship has been lacking for some time. But it’s already set in motion and Tim and Millie seem destined, or perhaps doomed, to stay together whether they like it or not.

There are a lot of strange things happening in the country before the body horror enters the picture. Tim is haunted by the memory of discovering his parents dead - a frightening image that we’re faced with several times. And he’s having a visceral reaction to some of the smells in the old home. A warning: Food does not pair well with “Together.”

#### Downhill

But things start to go really downhill when the city couple goes for a little hike in the woods and ends up spending the night in a cavernous hole they’ve fallen into. In the morning, they discover their legs are stuck together by a gooey film. It’s immensely painful for them to separate. This is among the most minor of the disturbing images to come, so brace yourself. It might not be Cronenberg, but it’s effective.

We moviegoers can take the art of body horror for granted, but the makeup, prosthetics and effects teams deserve a lot of

credit for making this work. Shanks has a command of the tone and pacing, which isn’t without moments of humor and lightness along with the trauma and gore. Tim, in this transformation, is suddenly very hot for Millie, which results in one particularly intense encounter that is at turns awkward, comedic, heartbreaking and utterly disgusting. It’s an impressive combination.

I’ll respectfully stay out of the debate about whether “Together” is the best or worst date-night movie ever (depends on the relationship, I’d say), but it could make for a fun double feature with its Sundance companion “Oh, Hi!”

There are times when “Together” does start to feel a bit redundant in the wait for the crescendo and conclusion. And like many horror movies, there might be a little too much explanation given for why these things are occurring. Perhaps the alternative would be equally frustrating.

Still, it’s an impressive work of independent cinema that stays shockingly grounded thanks to its two leads and their fearless performances. If Shanks can do “Together” with a limited budget, it’s exciting to think what he might dream up with a bigger canvas.

“Together,” a Neon released in theaters, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association for “language, graphic nudity, brief drug content, sexual content, violent and disturbing content.” Running time: 102 minutes. Three stars out of four.



Buddy Guy poses for a portrait at Buddy Guy’s Legends in Chicago on Thursday, July 24, 2025. (AP)

## In ‘Sinners’ and his music, Guy keeps the blues alive

NEW YORK, Aug 4, (AP): For Buddy Guy - a stalwart and staunch defender of the blues - there’s nothing more important than keeping his chosen genre at the forefront of conversation. It comes naturally: Guy is one of America’s greatest guitar players, a singular artist with a thick roster of A-list super fans - Eric Clapton, Jimmy Page and Gary Clark Jr. among them.

The list also includes innovative writer and director Ryan Coogler, who tapped Guy for his critically acclaimed film “Sinners” earlier this year, and artists like Peter Frampton and the Eagles’ Joe Walsh, who feature on his new album “Ain’t Done with the Blues.” It releases Wednesday, on Guy’s 89th birthday.

For the eight-time Grammy Award-winning musician, those recognitions aren’t priority. The longevity of the music that made his life is his primary concern. “Like I promised B.B. King, Muddy Waters and all of them,” he tells The Associated Press over the phone, “I do the best I can to keep the blues alive.”

He’s concerned that radio stations no longer play the

blues, and that the genre might miss out on connecting with younger listeners. It’s one of the reasons “Ain’t Done with the Blues” is a strong collection of classics that run the risk of being forgotten - like on the album closer “Talk to Your Daughter,” a rendition of the J.B. Lenoir tune.

“Blues is based on everyday life,” he says. “A good time or a bad time.”

#### Gumbo

Or, another way Guy explains it: “Music is like a bowl of real good gumbo. They got all kinds of meat in there. You got chicken in there, you got sausage in there. You got a seafood in it. ... When we play music, we put everything in there.”

It’s resonating. In its 2025 midyear report, Luminate, an industry data and analytics company, found that U.S. on-demand audio streams of blues music has climbed this year due to the success of “Sinners.”

Jaime Marconette, Luminate’s vice president of music insights and industry relations, describes the current moment

as a “resurgence of the blues,” following “Sinners.”

“Several artists featured on the film’s soundtrack, which includes works from real-life blues, folk and country musicians, saw spikes the week of the film’s theatrical release,” he explains. “And they’re all enjoying a sustained rise in listenership even two-plus months following release.”

Guy has noticed the shift, too. “I walk in the grocery store or the drugstore and people recognize me. ‘Man, you know, I heard that ‘Sinners’ music, man. Man, it sounds good,’” he says. “They ain’t never gonna come in and say, ‘I heard it on the radio.’”

That’s part of the reason why Guy decided to participate in the movie in the first place. “I hope this will give the blues a boost, because my worry right now is, like I said, a young person don’t know how good a gumbo is - you’ve got to taste it.”

For now, he’s excited to see how people respond to his new album, “Ain’t Done with the Blues” - but he’s not listening to it.

“I listen to everything but Buddy Guy,” he says. “I already know Buddy Guy. I can’t learn anything from that.”



Legendary actor defined TV receptionist role

Loni Anderson, popular star of 1980s series ‘WKRP,’ has died

LOS ANGELES, Aug 4, (AP): Loni Anderson, who played a struggling radio station’s empowered receptionist on the hit TV comedy “WKRP in Cincinnati,” died Sunday, just days before her 80th birthday.

Anderson died at a Los Angeles hospital following a prolonged illness, said her longtime publicist, Cheryl J. Kagan.

“We are heartbroken to announce the passing of our dear wife, mother and grandmother,” Anderson’s family said in a statement.

“WKRP in Cincinnati” aired from 1978 to 1982 and was set in a flagging Ohio radio station trying to reinvent itself with rock music. The cast included Gary Sandy, Tim Reid, Howard Hesseman, Frank Bonner and Jan Smithers, alongside Anderson as Jennifer Marlowe, whose good looks were matched by her intelligence.

As the station’s receptionist, the blonde and high-heeled Jennifer routinely deflected unwanted business calls for her boss, Mr. Carlson. Her efficiency often kept the station running in the face of others’ incompetence.a



Loni Anderson arrives at the 22nd Annual Race To Erase MS Event held at the Hyatt Regency Century Plaza Hotel, April 24, 2015, in Los Angeles. (AP)

The role earned Anderson two Emmy Award nominations and three Golden Globe nominations. Anderson starred on the big screen alongside Burt Reynolds in the 1983 comedy “Stroker Ace,” and the two later married and became tabloid fixtures before their messy breakup in 1994.

Their son, Quinton Reynolds, was “the best decision that we ever made in our entire relationship,” she said during the unveiling of a bronze bust at Reynolds’ Hollywood grave site in 2021.

“I think back to the beginning of our relationship, it was so, oh, gosh, tabloidy. We were just a spectacle all the time. And it was hard to have a relationship in that atmosphere. And somehow, we did it through many ups and downs,” Anderson told The Associated Press.

Anderson detailed their tumultuous marriage in the 1995 autobiography, “My Life in High Heels,” which she said was about “the growth of a woman, a woman who survives.”

“I think if you’re going to write about yourself, you have to do it warts and all,” Anderson told the AP while promoting the book. “You may not even tell the nicest things about yourself, because you’re telling the truth.”

She married four times, most recently to Bob Flick in 2008.

Anderson was born Aug. 5, 1945, in St. Paul, Minnesota. Her father was an environmental chemist, and her mother was a model.

Her first role as an actress was a small part in the 1966 film “Nevada Smith,” starring Steve McQueen. Most of her career was spent on the small screen with early guest parts in the 1970s on “S.W.A.T.” and “Police Woman.” After “WKRP,” Anderson starred in the short-lived comedy series “Easy Street” and appeared in made-for-TV movies including “A Letter to Three Wives” and “White Hot: The Mysterious Murder of Thelma Todd.”

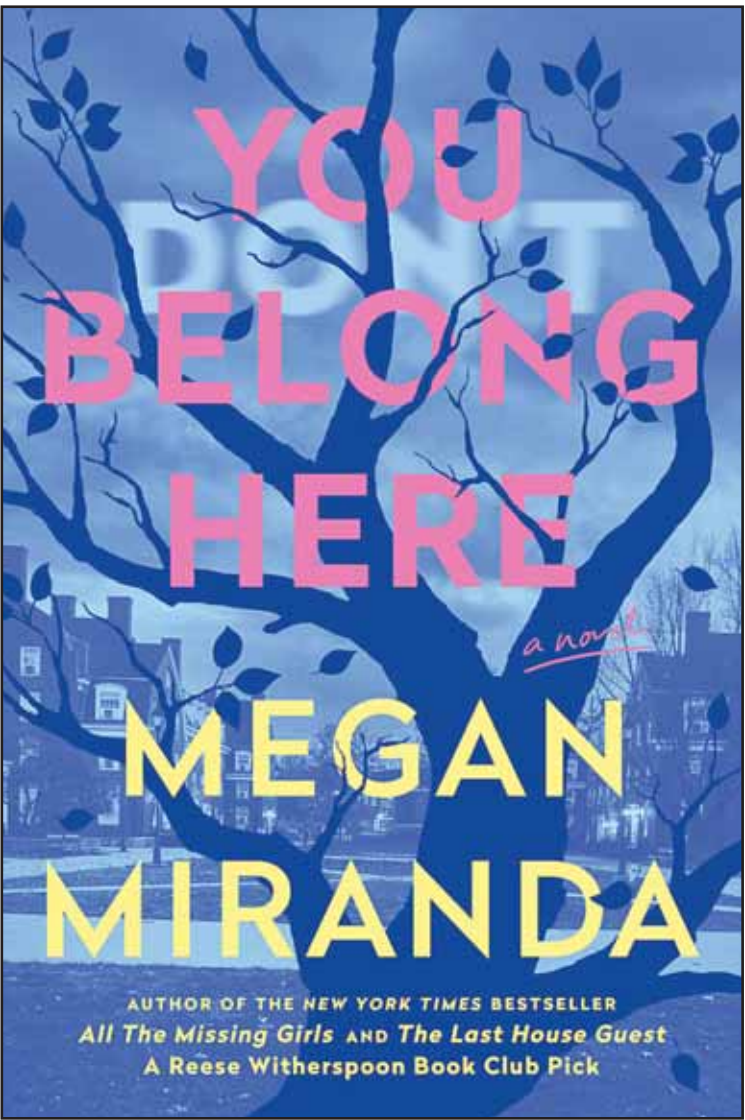
In 2023 she co-starred in Lifetime’s “Ladies Of The 80s: A Divas Christmas” with Linda Gray, Donna Mills, Morgan Fairchild and Nicollette Sheridan.

“I am heartbroken to hear of the passing of the wonderful Loni Anderson!” Fairchild wrote on X. “The sweetest, most gracious lady! I’m just devastated to hear this.”

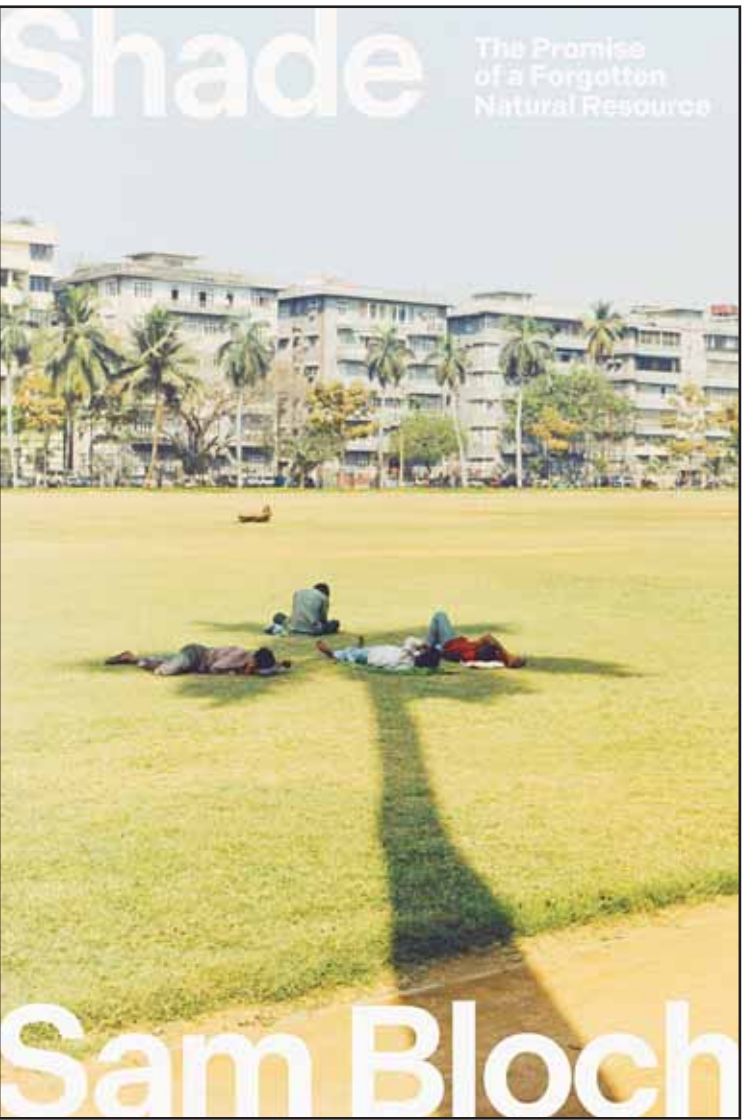
Anderson is survived by Flick, her daughter Deidra and son-in law Charlie Hoffman, son Quinton Anderson Reynolds, grandchildren McKenzie and Megan Hoffman, stepson Adam Flick and wife Helene, and step-grandchildren Felix and Maximilian.

A private family service is planned at the Hollywood Forever Cemetery, Kagan said.

Books



This book cover image shows ‘You Belong Here’ by Megan Miranda. (AP)



This book cover image released by Random House shows ‘Shade: The Promise of a Forgotten Natural Resource’ by Sam Bloch. (AP)

‘Shade’ calls for better protection of natural resource

Old wounds reopen in ‘You Belong Here’

NEW YORK, Aug 4, (AP): **Megan Miranda** treads overly familiar territory in “**You Belong Here**,” the story of a woman forced to return to the town that once suspected her of involvement in a terrible crime - a plot that echoes too closely the themes of her previous novels.

Twenty years ago, Beckett Bowery’s college roommate lit a fire that killed two young men during a hazing ritual, and then seemingly vanished. Adalyn Vale’s whereabouts remain a mystery in Wyatt Valley; a town divided between those connected to the elite college and the locals who know little about life behind its gates. Beckett embodied that divide - her parents were professors at the school, but she grew up as a local until deciding to enroll herself. After the fire, she was suspected of being an accomplice and forced to leave her home. Now, two decades later, her daughter, Delilah, enrolls at the school, drawing Beckett back into Wyatt Valley’s web.

Miranda is an author who always writes to her strengths, but in this book, she is sticking too close to them. Her 2016 adult debut, “All the Missing Girls,” was a rewardingly twisty take on the genre that pulled off the story being told in reverse and provided a genuinely shocking conclusion. It also introduced Miranda’s signature plot device: a woman haunted by tragedy, reluctantly returning to the scene of the crime, still the subject of small-town whispers and accusations. This book feels like a recycle of that plot, and one that fails to grasp the electric undercurrent of intense female friendship Miranda usually has a knack for.

The reader never feels the magnetism of Adalyn or the emotional weight of Beckett’s relationship with her, to the point where Beckett is still haunted by Adalyn’s absence two decades later. More time spent in the past with their friendship and its effect on Beckett’s identity might explain why Adalyn’s hold remains so strong.

Miranda’s description of the sinister-sounding hazing tradition called “the howling,” where co-eds are chased through the woods by their peers, adds a sense of creeping danger to both timelines of the

book. However, Miranda fails to make the consequences of being caught explicit, leaving some confusion as to why Adalyn took such drastic action. If the implication is meant to be sexual violence, the story would be more powerful in addressing that and giving Adalyn’s act a purpose.

Miranda’s ability to establish the settings of her novels as characters is present here and remains effective. Her portrayal of icy tensions in close-knit mountain towns is comparable to Shirley Jackson’s grip on the eeriness of rigid New England villages. The novel also hits a peak when exploring Beckett’s anxiety over her daughter’s safety in Wyatt Valley, and her fear of Delilah being harmed in retribution for her own suspected guilt.

The revelations in the last third of the book are rushed, hollow attempts at twists and lessen the impact of an ending that struck a genuinely poignant, tragic note.

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The cities of ancient Mesopotamia were oases for travelers trying to escape the sun’s heat.

Urban shade was created by the buildings themselves with homes constructed close together and next to alleyways less than 5 feet wide. Communities were built on diagonal grids offering equal amounts of sun and shade throughout the day for both buildings and street surfaces. Buildings were taller than the streets were wide, allowing surfaces to rest longer in the shade.

In his new book, “**Shade: The Promise of a Forgotten Natural Resource**,” environmental journalist **Sam Bloch** encourages us to look to the past for solutions to our ever-warming urban areas as climate change creates heat waves that are more frequent, hotter and longer lasting.

Bloch’s call for more shade in urban areas, with more trees in parks and residential areas and new ways to design public areas and buildings, comes as policy makers grapple with a growing crisis in heat-related illness and death.

He notes that better shade and access to water is

critical for people working outside, such as California farm workers and the laborers who died by the thousands in the hot, arid country of Qatar while building facilities for the 2022 World Cup.

Bloch says people in ancient times understood this far better than we do. Shade was once considered an important resource in cities where people went about their daily business outside in the summer heat. In the medina of Fez, Morocco, some buildings are 10 times taller than streets are wide, allowing the bottoms of the street canyons to remain shaded all day. Bologna, Italy, enjoys 38 miles of covered sidewalks with covered porticoes that have shielded pedestrians for 1,000 years.

Even in modern times, some Spanish cities have used huge curtains called “toldos” to hang over streets to protect pedestrians from the fierce summer rays.

In the United States, awnings were once popular in some cities, but urban planners moved away from shade because of widespread beliefs that dark spaces could be unhealthy and spread disease. Streets were made wider, then wider still to accommodate automobiles. Zoning laws required buildings to be more open to sunshine.

Without significant shade elements, new buildings depended more on central air conditioning, which releases hot air that adds to the urban heat island effect in many larger cities.

Bloch’s book has good ideas that architects and policy leaders can embrace to better use shade to protect people from the world’s increasingly hot weather. For instance, he describes passive homes that are designed to stay cool without the use of energy. He points to heat-conscious countries like Singapore, where trees are contemplated in overall designs before construction projects begin.

Bloch wants everyone to pitch in to combat global warming, but says collective planning, management and action is needed to get results. Simple, low-tech solutions like improved building designs and increasing the number of trees planted in our communities can make a difference, he insists.

Music

Album for the soul

Ocean gets on tropical vibe for ‘Babylon Club’

MEXICO CITY, Aug 4, (AP): Danny Ocean wants to take his fans to a tropical paradise where they can relax and feel good about the music of his album “Babylon Club.”

The album is a way to expand the world of Babylon beyond just the name or his fan club and his “Babylon Girl” battle cry, which began when his hit “Me Rehúso” launched the Venezuelan urban artist to global fame.

“We’re called Babylon Club, and I think it’s very much in honor of them,” he said of his fans in an interview ahead of the release of his album. “And it’s also like this utopian place on the beach where you arrive, that space in your life where you realize that not everything is work and that life is beautiful too, that you have to live it and that life is one.”

The inspiration of the beach, tropics and Caribbean comes from taking time to heal the soul, to be with your loved ones and leave obligations for a while.

The cover with Ocean in front of a palm leaf and blue water suits him very well with the song “Crayola,” in which he creates a tropical vibe by diving fully into salsa.

“I’m from the Caribbean too. In the end I love merengue, I love Afro, I love everything that is tropi sounds,” he said.

Creating the sounds of “Babylon Club” meant international teamwork and a trip to Ocean’s song vault.

For “Priti,” the album’s first single, he traveled to Panama to work with Sech in his native country.

Collaborating

“He received me with all the love in the world. We went out to get to know his country, we had a good time,” he said. “Then we became very close friends, which is the nice thing about collaborating, that sometimes you go out meeting a colleague and leave as a friend of this person.”

Louis BPM, his guest on “Sunshine,” is a fresh voice of urban music in Venezuela, originally from the Pinto Salinas neighborhood of Caracas.

“I had been listening to him for a while, and I liked it a lot. I really liked his voice, I really liked how he writes his reality,” said Ocean.

He said he feels the need to share more urban music created in Venezuela.

“It is very difficult to come from a place where there is no industry and where there is no education. It’s difficult to go out and compete abroad, but that’s where we are,” he said. “We are all set to push our culture outside and make ourselves known.”

Mexico City was where Ocean and Kenia Os collaborated on “AyMami,” a song he previously recorded but never released.

“I did ‘AyMami’ about eight years ago and suddenly last year I stumbled upon the demo again. I heard it, I said wow!” he said. “She has a very good vibe... She works a lot and is doing something all the time, and that is a great plus in this industry.”

The beach inspired other songs, including the flamenco-ish “Corazón,” which was born while Ocean was sitting with friends in Miami playing a guitar he likes. “Arena,” about a crush at first sight on a Venezuelan beach, features Puerto Rican star Arcángel while “Anoche”, with the Spanish singer Aitana, also transport listeners to the shore.

The album is accompanied by a short film, created with videos of five of his songs, which begins with “Priti.” It features performances by Venezuelan María Gabriela de Faria and her husband Christian McGaffney and portrays people years after they have emigrated, when they are working hard.

“I’m like her little angel who appears in various circumstances and tells her to escape, she’s going to the beach ... a beach that in the end is Babylon Club,” he said. “I’m not saying stop working or anything like that, but get away, give yourself some time for yourself, you deserve it and remember that life is beautiful too.”



This album cover image released by Warner Music Latina shows ‘Babylon Club’ by Danny Ocean. (AP)



Charlie looks towards the camera while riding a wave to the shore during the World Dog Surfing Championships at Linda Mar Beach in Pacifica, Calif. on Saturday, Aug. 2. (AP)

Top dog surfing showdown: Who’s king of the waves?

SAN FRANCISCO, Aug 4, (AP): Charlie the 10-year-old yellow lab likes surfing so much, he will grab his surfboard and run toward the water. His humans sometimes have to hide his board if they want to chat with friends on the beach.

Charlie joined about 15 to 20 other canine wave riders in Pacifica, 14 miles (22 kilometers) south of San Francisco, on Saturday at the World Dog Surfing Championships, an annual contest that draws thousands of spectators to Pacifica State Beach.

Pooches competed against similarly sized peers for a chance to appear in the finals. Additional heats featured multiple dogs surfing tandem or riding with people.

Labs, terriers and spaniels in monogrammed life vests dog-paddled out into the Pacific. Once out on the waves, their owners helped them hop on colorful boards and hang ten as the crowd cheered from the beach.

Judges scrutinized how long the dogs remained on their boards, how long they held their balance and whether they performed any tricks, like turning around while riding.

Iza, a 5-year-old French bulldog, won the single surfer heat for medium-size dogs for the first time this year, her owner David Fasoli said.

Fasoli found “pure joy” during the pandemic when he brought home a surfboard from his job at Costco and taught Iza to balance in the swimming pool. The two soon started swimming in the ocean and learning to ride waves as passersby at the beach watched in awe. Now, their competitions are all about defying expectations.

“I have a disability - I only have one hand - so a nonsporting human combined with a nonsporting dog breed, we are kind of phenomenal, defying the odds of what people think we’re capable of doing,” Fasoli

said after Saturday’s competition.

Charlie, who has his own Instagram page, entered the extra-large single surfer heat. He also rode tandem with two other dogs in what their humans called “The Dream Team.”

“He loves the crowd,” owner Maria Nieboer said.

Charlie and Nieboer’s husband, Jeff Nieboer, prepare for waves together. When Jeff spots a good one, he turns the board around and tells Charlie to “get ready.”

He pushes the board forward, and Charlie scrunches down and rides the wave as long as he can. Charlie can even steer the board by leaning and surfs toward an awaiting Maria on shore.

He doesn’t have to be rewarded with treats for any of it.

“Charlie does what Charlie wants to do once we’re in the water,” Jeff said. Contest winners received medals and bragging rights.



The hidden risks of mislabeling penicillin allergies

Penicillin allergy: Why you might not be allergic after all

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

□ □ □

By Elizabeth W. Covington  
Auburn University

Imagine this: You're at your doctor's office with a sore throat. The nurse asks, "Any allergies?" And without hesitation you reply, "Penicillin." It's something you've said for years - maybe since childhood, maybe because a parent told you so. The nurse nods, makes a note and moves on.

But here's the kicker: There's a good chance you're not actually allergic to penicillin. About 10% to 20% of Americans report that they have a penicillin allergy, yet fewer than 1% actually do.

I'm a clinical associate professor of pharmacy specializing in infectious disease. I study antibiotics and drug allergies, including ways to determine whether people have penicillin allergies.

I know from my research that incorrectly being labeled as allergic to penicillin can prevent you from getting the most appropriate, safest treatment for an infection. It can also put you at an increased risk of antimicrobial resistance, which is when an antibiotic no longer works against bacteria.

The good news? It's gotten a lot easier in recent years to

pin down the truth of the matter. More and more clinicians now recognize that many penicillin allergy labels are incorrect - and there are safe, simple ways to find out your actual allergy status.

Penicillin, the first antibiotic drug, was discovered in 1928 when a physician named Alexander Fleming extracted it from a type of mold called penicillium. It became widely used to treat infections in the 1940s. Penicillin and closely related antibiotics such as amoxicillin and amoxicillin/clavulanate, which goes by the brand name Augmentin, are frequently prescribed to treat common infections such as ear infections, strep throat, urinary tract infections, pneumonia and dental infections.

Penicillin antibiotics are a class of narrow-spectrum antibiotics, which means they target specific types of bacteria. People who report having a penicillin allergy are more likely to receive broad-spectrum antibiotics. Broad-spectrum antibiotics kill many types of bacteria, including helpful ones, making it easier for resistant bacteria to survive and spread. This overuse speeds up the development of antibiotic resistance. Broad-spectrum antibiotics can also be less effective and are often costlier.

People often get labeled as allergic to antibiotics as children when they have a reaction such as a rash after taking one. But skin rashes frequently occur alongside infections in childhood, with many viruses and infections actually causing rashes. If a child is taking an antibiotic at the time, they

may be labeled as allergic even though the rash may have been caused by the illness itself.

Some side effects such as nausea, diarrhea or headaches can happen with antibiotics, but they don't always mean you are allergic. These common reactions usually go away on their own or can be managed. A doctor or pharmacist can talk to you about ways to reduce these side effects.

People also often assume penicillin allergies run in families, but having a relative with an allergy doesn't mean you're allergic - it's not hereditary.

Finally, about 80% of patients with a true penicillin allergy will lose the allergy after about 10 years. That means even if you used to be allergic to this antibiotic, you might not be anymore, depending on the timing of your reaction.

Believing you're allergic to penicillin when you're not can negatively affect your health. For one thing, you are more likely to receive stronger, broad-spectrum antibiotics that aren't always the best fit and can have more side effects. You may also be more likely to get an infection after surgery and to spend longer in the hospital when hospitalized for an infection. What's more, your medical bills could end up higher due to using more expensive drugs.

Penicillin and its close cousins are often the best tools doctors have to treat many infections. If you're not truly allergic, figuring that out can open the door to safer, more effective and more affordable treatment options.

Start by talking to a health care professional such as a

doctor or pharmacist. Allergy symptoms can range from a mild, self-limiting rash to severe facial swelling and trouble breathing. A health care professional may ask you several questions about your allergies, such as what happened, how soon after starting the antibiotic did the reaction occur, whether treatment was needed, and whether you've taken similar medications since then.

These questions can help distinguish between a true allergy and a nonallergic reaction. In many cases, this interview is enough to determine you aren't allergic. But sometimes, further testing may be recommended.

One way to find out whether you're really allergic to penicillin is through penicillin skin testing, which includes tiny skin pricks and small injections under the skin. These tests use components related to penicillin to safely check for a true allergy. If skin testing doesn't cause a reaction, the next step is usually to take a small dose of amoxicillin while being monitored at your doctor's office, just to be sure it's safe.

A study published in 2023 showed that in many cases, skipping the skin test and going straight to the small test dose can also be a safe way to check for a true allergy. In this method, patients take a low dose of amoxicillin and are observed for about 30 minutes to see whether any reaction occurs.

With the right questions, testing and expertise, many people can safely reclaim penicillin as an option for treating common infections. (AP)

A wake-up call for action

Quarter of sub-Antarctic glaciers lost to warming

SYDNEY, Aug 4, (Xinhua): Nearly a quarter of the glaciers on Australia's remote Heard Island have vanished since 1947 as a result of climate change, new research revealed on Monday.

The study finds that Heard Island, a sub-Antarctic territory located 4,100 km southwest of Perth in Western Australia, has lost around 64 square km, or 23 percent, of its glacier coverage since 1947, according to a statement released Monday by Monash University in Australia's Melbourne.

Researchers from Monash University-led Australian Research Council research center's Securing Antarctica's Environmental Future (SAEF) program used topographical maps from 1947 and satellite imagery from historical and current Earth observation platforms to study the remote island.

The resulting glacier inventory catalogues 29 glaciers, tracing their outlines in 1947, 1988 and 2019.

The study also documents key morphological features, including area, slope, aspect and elevation, providing data for estimating mass balance, glacier volume, surface velocity and the impact of volcanic and other surface debris.

"These findings are a bellwether of change for our global climate system," said SAEF Research Fellow Levan Tielidze, lead author of the study detailed in The Cryosphere published by the European Geosciences Union.

"While Heard Island is just about as remote as it's possible to be on Earth, it has still suffered profound consequences from climate warming, which is almost certainly due to rising greenhouse gas emissions in the 20th and 21st centuries," Tielidze said.

The scientists plan a late-year expedition to Heard Island, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage-listed site located about 1,700 km north of Antarctica, to evaluate biodiversity risks from rapid glacier melt.

Their ongoing computer modeling aims to predict the future of the island's glaciers under scenarios of both significant emissions reductions and continued high emissions.

The island made headlines when US President Donald Trump imposed a 10 percent tariff on it and nearby McDonald Island, despite no trade or visits since 2016.

Solar farm deal signed

Vatican to become world's first 'carbon-neutral' state

ROME, Aug 4, (AP): Italy agreed Thursday to a Vatican plan to turn a 430-hectare (1,000-acre) field north of Rome, once the source of controversy between the two, into a vast solar farm that the Holy See hopes will generate enough electricity to meet its needs and turn Vatican City into the world's first carbon-neutral state.

The agreement stipulates that the development of the Santa Maria Galeria site will preserve the agricultural use of the land and minimize the environmental impact on the territory, according to a Vatican statement.

Details weren't released, but the Vatican will be exempt from paying Italian taxes to import the solar panels, but won't benefit from the financial incentives that Italians enjoy when they go solar. Italy, for its part, can use the field

in its accounting for reaching European Union clean energy targets. Any excess electricity generated by the farm beyond the Vatican's needs would be given to the local community, officials said, speaking on condition of anonymity because the agreement was not public.

Vatican officials have estimated it will cost under 100 million euros (\$114 million) to develop the solar farm, and that once it is approved by the Italian parliament, the contracts to do the work could be put up for bids.

Vatican foreign minister Archbishop Paul Gallagher signed the agreement with Italy's ambassador to the Holy See, Francesco Di Nitto. The Italian parliament must approve the arrangement since it has financial implications for the territory, which holds extraterritorial status in Italy.

Somalia promotes breastfeeding

Afghanistan has its 'sharpest surge' ever of child malnutrition: UN agency

ISLAMABAD, Aug 4, (Agencies): Afghanistan is seeing its sharpest-ever surge of child malnutrition, the World Food Program said Monday, adding it needed \$539 million to help the country's most vulnerable families.

Almost 10 million people, a quarter of Afghanistan's population, face acute food insecurity. One in three children is stunted.

The WFP said the rise in child malnutrition was linked to a drop in emergency food assistance over the past two years because of dwindling donor support. In April, the administration of US President Donald Trump cut off food aid to Afghanistan, one of the world's poorest countries.

The US had been the largest funder of the WFP, providing \$4.5 billion of the \$9.8 billion in donations last year. Previous US administrations viewed such aid as serving national security by alleviating conflict, poverty, extremism and curbing migration.

Food insecurity in Afghanistan is being worsened by mass returns from neighboring countries, which are deporting foreigners they say are living there illegally.

The WFP said it has supported 60,000 Afghans returning from Iran in the last two months, a fraction of those crossing the border.

"Going forward, the WFP does not have sufficient funding to cover the returnee response at this time and requires \$15 million to assist all eligible returnees from Iran," said WFP Com-



Mothers along with babies who suffer from malnutrition wait to receive help and check-up at a clinic run by the WFP, in Kabul, Afghanistan, Jan. 26, 2023. (AP)

munications Officer Ziauddin Safi. He said the agency needs \$539 million through January to help vulnerable families across Afghanistan.

Climate change is also hurting the population, especially those in rural areas.

Somalia has joined the rest of the world in marking the World Breastfeeding Week, aiming to create supportive and sustainable environments that empower mothers and their families to breastfeed their babies.

Speaking at a commemorative event on Saturday, Minister of Health Ali Haji Adam said breastfeeding is a critical foundation for a child's health, development, and survival as it delivers lifelong benefits not just for children, but for mothers, families, and communities.

"The government is committed to creating sustainable support systems that protect, promote, and enable breastfeeding across the country," Adam said in a statement issued in Mogadishu, the capital of Somalia, on Saturday evening.

Partnership aims to close cancer screening gaps

ACS, Guardant work to improve cancer detection

SAN FRANCISCO, Aug 4, (AP): The American Cancer Society (ACS) has announced a new partnership with Guardant Health, a leading precision oncology company focused on improving access to cancer screening and advancing health equity.

This collaboration supports ACS's nationwide cancer screening efforts, including the I Love You, Get Screened public awareness campaign; community-based health system partnerships; and state coalition work aimed at removing barriers to lifesaving screenings. ACS and Guardant Health aim to increase awareness, promote early detection, and improve outcomes for individuals in communities that have historically experienced limited access to preventive care.

"Regular cancer screening saves lives by finding certain

cancers early, when they are often easier to treat or even prevent altogether," said Maria Olson, Executive Vice President, American Cancer Society. "With support from Guardant Health, we can reach more people across the Bay Area with the information, tools, and services they need to take action for their health."

Despite being a hub of healthcare innovation, California continues to fall behind the national average in key cancer screening rates. Data from the American Cancer Society shows that only 64% of California women aged 45 and older are up to date on screening mammograms, compared to 69% nationally. Colorectal cancer screening rates are also lower, with 60% of eligible Californians screened compared to 62% nationwide. These gaps represent a critical opportunity to expand access and close the screening disparity.

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Digitization

Chikungunya on decline in China

GUANGZHOU, Aug 4, (Xinhua): The number of new locally transmitted cases of Chikungunya fever, a mosquito-borne viral disease, has declined in south China's Guangdong Province over the past week, though risks remain, local disease control authorities said on Sunday.

A total of 2,892 local infections were reported from July 27 to Aug. 2, with no severe or fatal cases recorded, while the majority of cases were found in the city of Foshan, it revealed.

"The recent surge has been initially contained, with a downward trend in newly reported cases across the province," said Kang Min, director of the infectious disease control institute at the Guangdong Provincial Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

Kang, notably, warned that Guangdong faces continued pressure from imported cases due to high global transmission levels, while seasonal typhoons and rainfall are also contributing to heightened mosquito activity.

Well-being: Last year, China continued its digitization drive across various public services, including medical care, health, social security, employment and elderly care, further boosting the well-being of the people, according to a newly-released report.

By the end of 2024, 418 million people were using internet-based medical services in China, and 1.07 billion people had electronic social security cards, Wen Ruisong, an official of the Cyberspace Administration of China, said at an event that saw the release of the report on China's informatization drive.

Throughout 2024, Chinese authorities continued to improve the equity, universality and accessibility of digitized services for the people, Wen noted.

Heart disease: Ischaemic heart diseases, neoplasms, and cerebrovascular diseases were the top three causes of death in the Philippines in 2024, according to the preliminary data released by the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA).

In a statement released on Wednesday night, the agency said that the leading causes of death in 2024 were consistent with the causes of death in 2023.

The agency said ischaemic heart diseases were the leading cause of death in 2024 with 116,795 cases, accounting for 19.2 percent of the total deaths nationwide.

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# Byron masters strategy to steal Cup Series lead in Iowa



William Byron (24) holds his lead over Chase Briscoe (19) during a NASCAR Cup Series auto race at Iowa Speedway in Newton, Iowa. (AP)

## Pole-sitter Briscoe finishes second

**NEWTON, Iowa, Aug 4, (AP): William Byron admitted he was nervous heading into the final laps of Sunday’s NASCAR Cup Series race at Iowa Speedway – and with good reason. Fuel strategy had bitten him twice this season, but this time, it held up.**

Byron went the final 144 laps of the 350-lap race without pitting, managing his fuel masterfully en route to his second victory of the season – the first being the Daytona 500 – and 15th career Cup win. The triumph also vaulted him past Hendrick Motorsports teammate Chase Elliott for the lead in the season points standings.

“I really feel we needed to win a race,” said Byron, who led 141 laps. “We deserved to win a race.” Byron, who finished second in this race last year, held off pole-sitter Chase Briscoe by 1.192 seconds. He credited a caution-filled final stage for helping him stretch the fuel.

“You never expect it to be a fuel-mileage race,” Byron said. “But there were so many weird cautions.” Indeed, there were 12 caution flags in total, including one for Shane Van Gisbergen’s spin on Lap 169 – the first for any on-track incident. From that point, the race turned

chaotic, with pile-ups and position shuffles intensifying the drama.

Fuel Strategy and Late-Race Drama Crew chief Rudy Fugle admitted he wasn’t confident Byron could go the distance until the final laps.

“From 30 to go until eight to go, we were able to save a really big chunk and get close,” Fugle said. “And then you’re just hoping you pick everything up.” Briscoe, who led 16 laps and ran second late, believed he had a shot.

“There at the end, I thought I was running William down,” he said. “I thought I was really in the catbird seat. I just got there and kind of stalled out.” Briscoe was involved in two late-race incidents. On Lap 243, he made contact with Erik Jones coming out of Turn 4, causing Jones to spin. Just nine laps later, Briscoe bumped Tyler Reddick, who in turn hit Christopher Bell, sending both spinning.

“I have to apologize to Reddick and Bell – that was a really bone-headed move on my part,” Briscoe said. “Got in there and got loose, and ruined their day. That’s a hundred percent on me.” Keselowski, Wallace Among Standouts Brad Keselowski, who needs a win to clinch a playoff spot, swept the first two stages for the first time since 2019 and led 68 laps. He ultimately finished third, followed by last year’s Iowa winner Ryan Blaney in fourth and Ryan Preece in fifth.

## Fever continues good run without Clark

### Thomas has another triple double, Mercury hands Sky 8th-straight loss

CHICAGO, Aug 4, (AP): Kahl-eah Copper scored 25 points, Alyssa Thomas had a triple-double and the Phoenix Mercury beat Chicago 83-67, handing the Sky their eighth straight loss.

Thomas had 10 points, 10 rebounds and 10 assists for her second triple-double with the Mercury and her 13th in the regular season.

Sami Whitcomb added 11 points for the Mercury (17-11), who had lost two straight and five of six. They outscored the Sky 56-32 in the middle two quarters and had 30 fastbreak points to just three for Chicago. All-Star Satou Sabally was not with the team for personal reasons.

Elizabeth Williams had 13 points and 15 rebounds for the Sky (7-21), who were without Angel Reese. Michaela Onyenwere also scored 13 points and Kamilla Cardoso had 12 points and 10 rebounds. Chicago was outrebounded 45-40 and outscored in the paint 46-34.

Reese missed her second straight game and fourth in five games with a bad back.

After making 5 of 25 shots in the first quarter when Chicago took a 19-13 lead the Mercury made 12 of 15 in the second and raced to a 42-34 halftime advantage. Copper had 10 points and Phoenix had 10 offensive rebounds and 17 fastbreak points.

The lead ballooned to 24 points in the third quarter as the Mercury made 10 of 16 shots.

The game featured sisters Maddy and Kathryn Westbeld facing off for the second time. Maddy was a second-round draft pick of the Sky and Kathryn made the Mercury after playing nine seasons overseas. Maddy had nine points in 22 minutes and Kathryn none in six minutes. Kathryn had 13 points in a 94-89 Mercury win in the teams’ first meeting early in the season, but Maddy did not play.

#### Fever 78, Storm 74

In Seattle, Natasha Howard scored 21 points and the Indiana Fever, playing without Caitlin Clark for a seventh straight game, beat the Seattle Storm to extend its winning streak to five.

Aliyah Boston had 16 points and 12 rebounds. Her run of nine straight Indiana points in the middle of the fourth quarter put the Fever up 73-61 with 4:41 to play.

The Storm charged back, pulling within 73-72 on a three-point play by Skylar Diggins with 3:14 to go. Kelsey Mitchell made a short jumper for Indiana before the Storm missed their next five shots, including four 3-pointers on one possession before Dominique Malonga scored inside with 12.2 seconds left.

On the ensuing inbounds play, Lexie Hull got the ball to Mitchell for a layup with 8.1 to go and the Storm couldn’t hit a tying 3 before Boston’s free throw.

Sophie Cunningham added 17 points for the Fever (17-12), who are now 9-7 in games Clark missed.

#### Dream 99, Mystics 83

In College Park, Brionna Jones scored 23 points, Allisha Gray added 22 and the Atlanta Dream overcame a slow start to pull away from the Washington Mystics.

The Dream missed their first six shots and fell behind 10-0 but dominated the middle two quarters, outscoring the Mystics 59-37. They shot 56% after going 3 of 13 in the first quarter.

Naz Hillmon had 14 points, 13 rebounds and five assists. Jordan Canada finished with 16 points and nine assists for the Dream (18-11), who won their third straight and set a season high for points in the second straight game.

Kiki Irafen scored 22 points for the Mystics (13-15), Sonia Citron and Shakira Austin both added 16 and Sug Sutton had 13. Washington has lost two straight and five of seven to drop into ninth place.

Washington led 23-12 after one quarter. Then Atlanta made 11 of 19 shots and forced nine turnovers in the second quarter to go in front 40-39 at the half.

The Dream closed the half with a 17-4 run, fueled by their defense. They forced 16 turnovers for 21 points in the first half and Gray had 12 points.

#### Aces 101, Valkyries 77

In Las Vegas, Jewell Loyd tied a Las Vegas record with seven 3-pointers and scored a season-high 27 points, and the Aces bounced back from a 53-point loss to roll past the Golden State Valkyries.

Tipping off 25 hours after getting beat 111-58 by league-leading Minnesota in the worst home defeat in WNBA history, the Aces took out their frustrations on the expansion Valkyries, who had won three straight road games.

Las Vegas led 50-25 at half-time with Aces reserves scoring 25 points, while the Valkyries’ bench had two points. The Aces finished with 18 3-pointers, tying the franchise record.

Jackie Young scored 20 points for the Aces (15-14). A’ja Wilson had 14 points and 14 rebounds, and Chelsea Gray added 11 points.

Ilana Rupert led the Valkyries (14-14) with 17 points and eight rebounds. Carla Leite and Laeticia Amihere both had 14 points and Kaila Charles added 13.

The Aces led 27-14 after one quarter, making 9 of 16 shots.

In the closing seconds of the second quarter, Golden State’s Janelle Salaun was given a Flagrant 2 foul for knocking Loyd to the ground behind the play. Salaun was ejected and Loyd made the free throws and Kirstan Bell hit a buzzer beater for the 25-point halftime lead.

## Shelton survives scare, advances to quarters in Toronto

# Tauson knocks out Swiatek as Osaka and Keys keep rolling at National Bank Open



Madison Keys, of the United States, hits a return to Karolina Muchova, of Czechia, during round of 16 match action at the National Bank Open women’s tennis tournament in Montreal. (AP)

MONTREAL, Aug 4, (AP): Clara Tauson of Denmark upset second-seeded Wimbledon champion Iga Swiatek of Poland 7-6 (1), 6-3 to reach the National Bank Open quarterfinals.

The 6-foot Tauson, seeded 16th in the hard-court event that ends Thursday, avenged a loss to Swiatek at Wimbledon to set up a match Tuesday with sixth-seeded Australian Open winner Madison Keys of the United States.

Tauson won her lone tour title in New Zealand in January, beating fellow Montreal quarterfinalist Naomi Osaka of Japan in the final.

Keys outlasted 11th-seeded Karolina Muchova of Czechia 4-6, 6-3, 7-5 in the windy afternoon session.

Osaka also advanced in the afternoon, routing Anastasija Sevastova of Latvia 6-1, 6-0 in 49 minutes – the second-fastest victory of her career. Osaka had a 42-minute win in a 2016 event in Brazil.

Osaka reached the final eight of a WTA 1000 or Grand Slam event for the first time in 19 months. On Tuesday, she will face 10th-seeded Elina Svitolina of Ukraine, a 6-4, 6-1 winner over fifth-seed Amanda



Ben Shelton, of the United States, celebrates after his win over Italy’s Flavio Cobolli in their match at the National Bank Open men’s tennis tournament in Toronto. (AP)

Anisimova of the United States.

Fourth-seeded Ben Shelton of the United States rallied in the third set to beat 13th-seeded Flavio Cobolli of Italy 6-4, 4-6, 7-6 (1) in the National Bank Open.

Shelton overcame a 4-2 deficit in the final set to advance to the quarterfinals Tuesday in the hard-court event that ends Thursday. He will face ninth-seeded Alex de Minaur of Australia, a 6-2, 4-6, 6-4 winner over seventh-seeded Frances Tiafoe of the United States 6-2, 4-6, 6-4.

The 22-year-old Shelton has two ATP Tour victories, in Tokyo on hard courts in 2023 and Houston on clay last year. The 23-year-old Cobolli won clay events in Hamburg and Bucharest this year for his lone tour titles.

Earlier, sixth-seeded Audrey Rublev of Russia led Alejandro Davidovich Fokina of Spain 6-7 (3), 7-6 (2), 3-0 when Davidovich Fokina retired because of exhaustion.

Rublev will face the winner of the late match between second-seeded Taylor Fritz of the United States and Jiri Lehecka of the Czech Republic.

## ‘Relocation decisions are made by the WNBA Board of Governors’

# Pagliuca bid to buy and move Sun not yet approved

WASHINGTON, Aug 4, (AP): Boston Celtics minority owner Steve Pagliuca said the potential deal to buy the Connecticut Sun for a record amount and move the team still needs approval from the WNBA Board of Governors.

Pagliuca released a statement through his group on social media on Sunday confirming an offer had been made to buy the team and move it out of Mohegan Sun Arena, but said there were still approvals that had not been obtained from the WNBA.

A person with knowledge of the sale had said Saturday that Pagliuca has reached a deal to buy the Connecticut Sun for a record \$325 million and move the team to Boston. The franchise wouldn’t play in its new home until the 2027 season. Pagliuca also would contribute \$100 million for a new practice facility in Boston for the team, the person said.

The person spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity on Saturday because the deal hasn’t been publicly announced.

“Central to our proposal is enabling the Sun to

play in larger capacity arenas in New England,” Pagliuca wrote. “We believe our record-setting offer and deep commitment to growing the WNBA in the region that is home to the most passionate basketball fans in the nation will significantly benefit the league, the team, and all its fans.”

The sale is pending approval of the league and its Board of Governors.

“Our offer is subject to obtaining the required league approvals, as is the case for all such transactions,” Pagliuca wrote on social media. “This approval has not been obtained thus far, and we cannot proceed without it. We will respect, cooperate with, and abide by all league rules and decisions on these matters.”

The league put out a statement Saturday, saying that moving a team was at the discretion of the WNBA and not individual franchises.

“Relocation decisions are made by the WNBA Board of Governors and not by individual teams,” the league said in a statement.

The Sun have played one regular season game at TD Garden each of the last two years, including

one against Caitlin Clark and the Indiana Fever in July.

The league has announced five expansion teams that will begin play over the next five seasons with Portland (2026), Toronto (2026), Cleveland (2028), Detroit (2029) and Philadelphia (2030) joining the WNBA. Each paid a then-record \$250 million expansion fee.

Nine other cities bid for expansion teams, including Houston, which the league singled out as getting a team in the future when it announced Cleveland, Detroit and Philadelphia in June. Boston did not.

“No groups from Boston applied for a team at that time and those other cities remain under consideration based on the extensive work they did as part of the expansion process and currently have priority over Boston. Celtics’ prospective ownership team has also reached out to the league office and asked that Boston receive strong consideration for a WNBA franchise at the appropriate time.”

The Boston Globe first reported the sale.



Golden State Valkyries guard Veronica Burton, second from right, is pressured by Las Vegas Aces forward NaLyssa Smith, front left, and guard Jackie Young (0) during the first half of a WNBA basketball game in Las Vegas. (AP)



Ayub posts a half-century in a 138-run opening stand with Farhan

Pakistan wins 3rd T20 by 13 runs to clinch series victory over Windies

LAUDERHILL, Fla., Aug 4, (AP): Saim Ayub posted a half-century in a 138-run opening stand with Sahibzada Farhan and then took a key wicket as Pakistan beat West Indies by 13 runs to clinch the Twenty20 cricket series 2-1.

Pakistan posted 189-4 and then bowled tightly enough to restrict West Indies to 176-6.

Pakistan's opening partnership ended when Farhan was out for 74 runs in the 17th over, his 53-ball innings finishing when he hit a low full-toss from Shamar Joseph (1-57) directly to Shai Hope at long-off.

Ayub continued until the last ball of the penultimate over of Pakistan's innings, when he hit a full ball from Jason Holder (1-34) to Sherfane Rutherford in the covers and was out for 66 from 49 deliveries.

West Indies raced to 33-0 after two overs in reply, taking 16 off the first over from Hasan Ali and 17 in the second from Mohammad Nawaz.

Haris Rauf slowed the run-rate in the third over, which only went for five runs, and then snared the first West Indies wicket when he had Jewel Andrew (24 from 15

deliveries) caught by Hasan Ali in the fifth over with the total at 44.

Alick Athanaze scored 60 from 40 deliveries, sharing further partnerships of 30 with Hope (7) and 36 with Rutherford until he mis-timed a fuller, faster delivery from Ayub and was caught at short thirdman. At that point, West Indies slipped to 110-3 in the 13th over.

Rutherford kept West Indies in the contest with 51 from 35 balls but his dismissal in the last over ended any chance of a comeback win.

The series was tied 1-1 going into the decider after Jason Holder took four wickets and then smashed a boundary off the final ball of the second game to lift West Indies to a thrilling two-wicket victory on Saturday.

It was the first T20 victory for West Indies in seven matches, a span that included a heavy 5-0 series defeat to Australia, on top of a test series sweep last month.

Pakistan won the series-opener by 14 runs.

Both teams travel to the Caribbean for a series of three one-day internationals.



The Pakistan team poses with the trophy after winning the Twenty20 cricket series against the West Indies in Lauderhill, Fla. (AP)

Yamashita claims first major title at Women's British Open

Young gets ends PGA Tour drought

PORTHCAWL, Wales, Aug 4, (AP): Miyu Yamashita of Japan captured her first major title Sunday when she withstood a charge by Charley Hull by not making a bogey until the outcome of the Women's British Open was no longer in doubt. She closed with a 2-under 70 for a two-shot victory.

Yamashita holed two big par putts on the back nine at Royal Porthcawl, the last one when Hull had closed to within one shot of the lead.

Her final test was the 401-yard 16th, one of the toughest on the course. Yamashita, who turned 24 on Saturday, drilled her drive down the middle and found the green, nearly holing a 45-foot putt. That gave her a three-shot lead with two holes to play.

Her final act was a tap-in for par to finish on 11-under 277, and she raised both arms to celebrate. Yamashita wiped away tears as she headed to the scoring trailer.

Hull gave it her best shot. She started the final round three shots behind, made three birdies in a four-hole stretch to get into the mix and then holed a 20-foot birdie on the 14th to get within one shot of the lead.

Behind her on the course, Yamashita hit into a bunker off the tee at the par-5 13th, blasted out and still had a long way for her third, missing the green to the left. She chipped weakly to 18 feet and buried the par putt.

She also poured in an 8-foot par putt to stay at 12 under, right after Hull got to 11 under.

Cameron Young finally got his first PGA Tour victory after seven runner-up finishes, and he made it look easy. He had five straight birdies early to build a nine-shot lead and coasted home to a 2-under 68 to win the Wyndham Championship by six shots.

He became the 1,000th player to win a recognized PGA Tour event, dating to Willie Park in the 1860 British Open.

Young followed those five straight birdies with nine straight pars, a pair of meaningless bogeys toward the end only cost him a chance at the tournament scoring record. He finished at 22-under 258, tying the record held by J.T. Poston (2019) and Henrik Stenson (2017).

Mac Meissner shot 66 to finish alone in second, worth \$893,800 and



Miyu Yamashita of Japan poses with her trophy after winning the Women's British Open golf championship, at Royal Porthcawl Golf Club in Porthcawl, Wales. (AP)

enough to move him to No. 86 in the FedEx Cup. He won't be advancing to the postseason, but it gives him a huge boost for staying in the top 100 by November to keep his full card.

The Wyndham Championship is the final tournament of the regular season that determined the top 70 in the FedEx Cup who advance to the lucrative postseason that starts next week.

Ultimately, only Chris Kirk moved into the top 70 with his tie for fifth, and Byeong Hun An (missed cut) was the only one to fall out. Matti Schmid birdied his last three holes and stayed in the 70th spot when Davis Thompson three-putted the final hole.

Julian Suri birdied four of the last six holes, hitting wedge into 10 feet on the 18th for a final birdie and a 7-under 63 that gave him a two-shot victory in the Utah Championship.

Suri won for the first time since victories in Denmark and the Czech Republic on the European tour in 2017. This one moved him to No. 16 on the Korn Ferry Tour points list. The top 20 earn PGA Tour cards. Six tournaments remain on the schedule.

Kensai Hirata had a chance to force a playoff with a birdie on the



Cameron Young chips to the first green during the final round of the Wyndham Championship golf tournament in Greensboro, N.C. (AP)

final hole. He missed the green and made bogey for a 67 to share second place with Spencer Levin (64), Barend Botha (65), Trace Crowe (66) and Taylor Montgomery (70).

Johnny Keefer, trying to win for the third time to get an instant promotion, closed with a 64 and finished three shots back.

Bo Van Pelt closed with a 1-under 71 and made birdie on the first

playoff hole to beat Darren Fichardt and win the Staysure PGA Seniors Championship at Trump International in Aberdeen, Scotland, for his first Legends Tour title. It was his first victory since the Perth International in 2012 on the PGA Tour of Australasia.

Yahui Zhang of China closed with a 3-over 75 for a one-shot victory over Fatima Fernandez Cano and Lauren Morris in the Four Winds Invitational on the Epson Tour.

Tomoyo Ikemura closed with an 8-under 64 and rallied to win the Richard Mille Charity Tournament for his third career title on the Japan Golf Tour. Ikemura won by two shots over Riki Kawamoto, who had led after each round until closing with a 69.

Daniel Young closed with a 1-under 70 for a one-shot victory in the Farmfoods Scottish Challenge for his first Challenge Tour title.

Carson Bacha closed with a 7-under 64 and defeated Jay Card III with a par on the second playoff hole to win the Osprey Valley Open on the PGA Tour Americas.

Sohyun Bae shot a 5-under 67 and won the Aurora World Ladies Championship by one shot on the Korea LPGA.

'100,000 players affected'  
Dutch foundation sues FIFA over transfer rules after Diarra ruling

AMSTERDAM, Aug 4, (AP): A Dutch group seeking compensation on behalf of soccer players who might have lost income due to transfer regulations has filed a class action lawsuit against the sport's governing body FIFA and five other football associations.

The Justice for Players foundation said in a statement that men and women across the world who have played for a club in the European Union or the United Kingdom since 2002 are eligible to join the legal procedure.

The legal move follows a landmark ruling from top EU court last year stating that some parts of FIFA's transfer regulations did not comply with the bloc's laws on competition and freedom of movement for labor.

The foundation says it is fighting for the right of players "whose earnings were compromised as a result of FIFA's restrictive rules on termination of contracts and transfers." In addition to FIFA, Justice For Players is also taking legal action against the national football associations of the Netherlands, France, Germany, Belgium and Denmark.

"Preliminary estimates indicate that the number of affected footballers may comprise approximately 100,000 players," it said.

By ruling in the Lassana Diarra case that some FIFA regulations on player transfers are contrary to EU legislation relating to competition and freedom of movement, the European Court of Justice has paved the way for deep changes in the sport's economy.

Diarra, a former Real Madrid, Arse-

nal and Chelsea player, signed a four-year contract with Lokomotiv Moscow in 2013. The deal was terminated a year later after he was unhappy with alleged pay cuts. FIFA and then the Court of Arbitration for Sport found the Russian club terminated the contract "with just cause" and ordered the player to pay 10.5 million euros (\$11.2 million). Diarra argued his search for a new club was affected by FIFA rules, making his next employer jointly responsible for paying compensation to Lokomotiv.

Some analysts have compared the ruling to the 1995 decision on Belgian Jean-Marc Bosman. That ruling removed restrictions placed on foreign EU footballers within national leagues and allowed players in the bloc to move to another club for free when their contracts ended.

But for now, the decision on Diarra has not changed how the global soccer transfer market, worth more than \$10 billion each season, functions.

Justice for Players said that economists at Compass Lexecon consulting firm estimate that FIFA regulations caused the affected players to earn about 8% less over their careers.

"All professional football players have lost a significant amount of earnings due to the unlawful FIFA regulations," said the foundation chair, Lucia Melcherts. "The past and even current system unduly favours FIFA who has far too much unilateral power. In any other profession, people are allowed to change jobs voluntarily."



In this file photo dated Friday, Sept. 14, 2018, Paris-Saint-Germain player Lassana Diarra controls the ball during a French League One soccer match against Saint-Etienne at the Parc des Princes stadium in Paris. (AP)

Team continues preseason training under Jovovi's supervision

Baka joins Kuwait Club to complete foreign quota

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4: Kuwait Club has officially completed its five-player foreign quota with the signing of Congolese international defender Henock Baka, adding strength and versatility to its backline ahead of the new season.

Baka joins an impressive group of international recruits that includes Mohamed Marhoon (Bahrain), Arsen "Malik" Zola (Congo), Yassine Khenissi (Tunisia), and Sam Morsy, the English midfielder of Egyptian descent.

Born in 1993, Baka began his professional career with Renaissance FC in Congo in 2016. He later joined Daring Club Motema Pembe in 2018, where he spent three seasons. In 2021, he moved to Tanzanian powerhouse Simba SC, staying until 2024 before signing briefly with Al-Jaish of Jordan. Last year, he reportedly received an offer from French side FC Metz, but the deal fell through.

Capable of playing both as a



The new recruit, Henock Baka.

central defender and a left winger, Baka is expected to form a formidable defensive partnership with his compatriot Zola, adding depth and flexibility to coach Nebojsa Jovović's tactical plans.

Kuwait Club, reigning champion of the Zain Premier League, continues its preseason training under Jovović's supervision. The team is holding two daily sessions: morning workouts at the club's indoor sports complex and evening

drills at Kuwait Stadium, all in preparation for a busy season that officially kicks off on September 12.

The club will begin its league campaign against Al-Tadamon, and will also defend its titles in the Crown Prince Cup and the Kuwait Super Cup.

The team's current preparations will culminate in a 20-day external training camp in Prague, Czech Republic, scheduled for

next week. The camp will include four friendly matches, offering the squad valuable match fitness and cohesion ahead of competitive fixtures.

Kuwait Club has made squad stability a key priority this off-season. The club successfully renewed contracts with key foreign players Marhoon, Khenissi, and Zola, and also extended deals with standout local talents including Faisal Zayed, Ahmed Al-Dhafiri, Mohammad Farih, Redha Hani, Saud Al-Houshan, and Mohsen Fallah — the latter now loaned to Al-Nasr.

To further solidify its defense, the club secured the signing of veteran goalkeeper Khalid Al-Rashidi, who brings vast experience from stints with Qadsia, Al-Arabi, and Al-Salmiya, as well as recent appearances with the Kuwait national team.

With a strong squad and an experienced coaching staff, Kuwait Club appears well-positioned to launch a serious defense of its domestic titles and continue its legacy of success.

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England's captain Ben Stokes, left, and India's captain Shubman Gill after end of the fifth cricket test match between England and India at The Kia Oval in London. (AP)

# Sports

Vice president takes charge

## Kuwait Handball Association suspends Al-Baloushi as Kuwait heads to Cairo for Youth World Championship

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

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4: The Board of Directors of the Kuwait Handball Association voted by majority to suspend President Fouad Al-Baloushi from his duties during a meeting held recently at the association's headquarters in Daiya. Vice President Shabib Al-Hajri was granted presidential authority until the matter is presented to the association's upcoming general assembly.

Eight out of eleven board members attended the meeting, while Al-Baloushi was absent. Vice President Al-Hajri and board member Khaled Abdulquddus were also not present, reportedly due to travel commitments.

The decision follows repeated absences by Al-Baloushi from board meetings without valid excuse, which have disrupted the federation's workflow and delayed key decisions.

The upcoming general assembly is expected to ratify the suspension and formally remove Al-Baloushi from the board. A separate assembly will then be held to elect a new president from among candidates nominated by the clubs of Kazma, Al-Qurain, Yarmouk, Qadsia, Arabi, and Shabab to serve out the current board's term until 2027.

Tensions within the board have escalated in recent months, largely centered around disagreements on the number of foreign professional players allowed per team. A majority of board members support allowing two professionals on the court with a third on the bench, while Al-Baloushi insists the third should remain off the match sheet entirely and sit in the stands.

Earlier, Secretary-General Qaed Al-Adwani expressed frustration at the president's repeated absences, noting that it obstructs the association's activities and delays its progress.



The meeting in progress.

Meanwhile, Kuwait's Under-19 handball team departed today for Cairo to participate in the 11th edition of the IHF Men's Youth World Championship, which runs from August 5 to 16.

The team recently concluded a successful overseas training camp in Croatia and Slovenia, where they played seven friendly matches against teams including Croatia, Kosovo, and Slovenia. Head coach Heine Jensen of Denmark used the camp to focus on tactical drills and finalize the tournament roster.

Kuwait will compete in Group A

alongside Sweden, Portugal, and Austria.

This year's championship features 32 teams split into eight groups. Group B includes Hungary, Switzerland, Morocco, and Kosovo; Group C includes Serbia, Spain, Croatia, and Algeria; Group D features Iceland, Brazil, Guinea, and Saudi Arabia; Group E includes Germany, Slovenia, Uruguay, and the Faroe Islands; Group F comprises Norway, France, Argentina, and Mexico; Group G brings together Egypt, Japan, South Korea, and Bahrain; and Group H features Denmark,

Tunisia, Czech Republic, and the USA.

This is only the second time in the tournament's history that 32 teams are participating, following the 2023 edition in Croatia.

The association has also approved the calendar for the upcoming handball season. The Premier League will kick off on September 2, while the First Division begins on September 4. The youth league is set to start on November 5, followed by the junior league on November 4, the cadet's league on September 20, and the kids' league on September 19.

## Al-Mutawa ends 19-year journey with Kazma

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 4: Veteran volleyball star Abdulrahman Al-Mutawa has officially announced his departure from Kazma Sports Club, bringing an end to a distinguished 19-year career with the team. The national team player shared the news via Instagram, reflecting on nearly two decades with Kazma.

"After 19 years filled with championships, titles, and unforgettable moments — both happy and challenging — I believe now is the right time for a new chapter and a fresh experience," Al-Mutawa wrote.

He extended his gratitude to everyone who accompanied him throughout his Kazma journey, saying, "I want to thank all the players, administrators, medical and technical staff who were part of my time at the club. Special thanks go to club president Asaad Al-Banwan for his unwavering support



Abdulrahman Al-Mutawa

over the years."

Al-Mutawa is currently evaluating several local offers and is expected to reveal his next move in the coming days.

## China looks to bounce back

Saudi Arabia aims for deep run in FIBA Asia Cup on home soil



FIBA Asia Cup 2025 promotional image.

BEIJING, Aug 4, (Xinhua): With new faces in the lineup, China's men's basketball team hopes to rebound from recent below-par performances in international competitions at the upcoming FIBA Asia Cup.

The most decorated team in the tournament's history, with 16 titles, most recently in 2015 on home soil, China has fallen short in the past two editions, exiting at the quarterfinal stage both times.

Adding to the struggles were 24th- and 29th-place finishes out of 32 teams at the FIBA Basketball World Cup in 2019 and 2023, respectively, along with missing the past two Olympic Games.

After what appeared to be a low point, the team is aiming for redemption at the continental tournament in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, from Aug. 5 to 17.

Under head coach Guo Shiqiang, appointed in July last year, China has embarked on a rebuilding phase with its sights set on the 2027 World Cup and the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics.

In the 14-man roster for Jeddah, newcomer Wang Junjie, who plays for the University of San Francisco in NCAA Division I, has drawn attention for his athleticism and explosiveness.

Selected for the training camp in April, Wang earned his spot with strong warm-up performances. The 20-year-old forward averaged 8.3 points and 2.5 rebounds as China won twice each against Venezuela and Bosnia and Herzegovina ahead of its departure.

Speaking about his international debut, Wang said, "I felt nervous before the game, and even almost burst into tears when singing the national anthem. Fortunately, I turned my nervousness into motivation."

With Zeng Fanbo still recovering from injury, Wang is seen as a boost on the forward line.

The Chinese Basketball Association has allowed Yang Hansen, drafted by the Portland Trail Blazers in 2025, to skip the Asia Cup to focus on his development. Zhou Qi also withdrew due to a recurring waist injury. That leaves China's inside game to rely heavily on Hu Jinqiu, MVP of the 2024-25 CBA regular season.

Bound for his second Asia Cup af-

ter debuting in 2017, Hu helped lead the Zhejiang Lions to their first CBA championship last season. He averaged a team-high 11.5 points in four recent warm-up games.

"He'd be taking on an even more significant duty, manning the fort for the continental contest's most successful team," read an article about Hu on the FIBA website. "There should be no doubt that he's more than ready to do so."

Hu will partner with Yu Jiahao, who recently signed with Spanish club Bilbao Basket and will join them after the Asia Cup. At 7-foot-3, Yu is the tallest player on the squad and led China with 6.3 rebounds per game in warm-ups.

Veteran guards Hu Mingxuan and Zhao Rui will lead the backcourt, with Liao Nanning and Cheng Shuaipeng expected to contribute. With no dominant edge in the paint, rebounding and 3-point shooting will be key to China's chances.

Drawn in Group C, China will face host Saudi Arabia, India, and Jordan — the group's main threat. The meeting with Jordan recalls the 2011 Asia Cup final, when China edged the visitors 70-69 at home.

"The rematch is a long time coming, but the memory still stings," read a preview on the FIBA website.

Saudi Arabia will look to its home-court advantage to spring an upset. Under the format, the top team in each group advances directly to the quarterfinals, while the second- and third-placed teams play for the remaining spots.

Given the group dynamics, China will target the Jordan match to secure first place and a better knockout position. That could set up a potential quarterfinal against Lebanon, which eliminated China at the same stage in 2022.

Looking ahead, Guo said, "We will go all out in every game for the best result as we can."

Two-time defending champion Australia remains the favorite in Jeddah. Ranked seventh in the world, the Boomers boast balance, experience, and size, and top the tournament's power rankings. Japan's fast-paced game and New Zealand's toughness also make them strong medal contenders.

## Messi has a 'minor' muscle injury

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla., Aug 4, (AP): Inter Miami star Lionel Messi is dealing with a minor muscle injury in his right leg after being hurt in the opening minutes of Saturday's Leagues Cup match against Necaxa, the club said Sunday.

Messi underwent tests on his right leg after experiencing discomfort following a play in which he fell while being challenged by a pair of Necaxa defenders, in a game Inter Miami won on penalty kicks.

His timeline for return isn't yet known, though it seems unlikely that he will be available for Miami's next Leagues Cup match against UNAM Pumas.

Inter Miami said in a release that Messi's medical clearance will depend on how he responds to treatment.

Messi slapped his hand against the ground in frustration after the fall, which happened in the first 10 minutes of Saturday's match. He walked slowly toward the Inter Miami bench before sitting down on the pitch. Trainers came out and worked on his right upper thigh area for a couple of minutes before he subbed out for Federico Redondo in the 11th. He then immediately walked to the locker room.

Miami coach Javier Mascherano said after the game that Messi wasn't in any pain.

# Thrills and spills at The Oval as India edges Poms to draw series



India's players celebrate their win against England on day five of the fifth cricket test match between England and India at The Kia Oval in London. (AP)

## Siraj and Krishna star in nail-biting 6-run win

LONDON, Aug 4, (AP): India won the fifth test from England by just six runs at the Oval after taking the last four wickets in a thrilling hour on Monday.

India drew the series 2-2 with a test victory by its smallest ever margin in runs.

England began a drizzly morning needing 35 runs to reach the winning target of 374 and clinch the series 3-1. England had an entire fifth and final day to get there.

But in a tension-filled 53-ball action, Mohammed Siraj took three wickets to finish with five for the innings, and Prasidh Krishna took the other.

With England down to one wicket remaining, all-rounder Chris Woakes came out to bat one-handed with a dislocated left shoulder and was greeted by a standing ovation from a sell-out Oval crowd.

He was protected from facing a ball by Gus Atkinson but Atkinson couldn't hold off Siraj and was the last man out, bowled under his attempted sweep by a Siraj full toss. England was all out for 367.

Siraj ran off with arms out in airplane mode. India took time out of its on-field celebrations to go up to Woakes and praise his boldness.

"When you have bowlers like Siraj and Prasidh like that, captaincy looks easy," India captain Shubman Gill said. "The way we responded today was magnificent. We were confident, even yesterday, we knew they were under pressure. We wanted to make

sure it stayed throughout.

"Siraj is a captain's dream. Gave it his all every ball and every spell he bowled. Two-two is a fair reflection (of the series). It shows how passionate both teams were and how well they played."

His England counterpart Ben Stokes, who didn't play because of a shoulder injury, also thought the series result was fair.

"The amount of effort from both teams to end up 2-2 is incredible," Stokes said. "Losing Woakes early on in the game changed the whole responsibility on the bowlers in particular, the roles they were selected for. The heart and passion and everything that was shown, especially in our second bowling innings, I thought was outstanding."

"To try and chase that total down in the way that we did was outstanding. That never-say-die, never-back-down attitude we've installed in the group nearly paid off for us."

Only 35 runs were needed on the final morning but both teams managed to pack in a spectacle in the drizzle with the Oval lights on.

No. 8 batter Jamie Overton started it with boundaries off the first two balls, a pull and a cut.

Then Jamie Smith, England's last recognized batter, nicked the seventh ball of the day and was caught behind with 27 runs still needed. The next ball by Siraj was also edged by Atkinson but didn't carry to the slips.

Two overs later, Overton was caught plumb trying to defend Siraj's wobbly ball. Reviews showed it

would have clipped the leg stump.

No. 10 batter Josh Tongue overturned being given out in the same over. The runs needed were down to 20 with two wickets left.

India didn't take the second new ball as the bowlers were making the old ball still work.

Then Tongue was yorked by Krishna with 17 needed, bringing out Woakes.

He dislocated his shoulder while fielding on the first day, Thursday, and took no further part in the match. But as the test looked like going to the wire on Sunday, he batted in the nets to see how he'd fare. He walked out on Monday morning with his left arm in a sling tucked under his jersey to bat one-handed.

"Good on Woakesy, he is in an immense amount of pain," England coach Brendon McCullum said. "He was never in doubt that, if needed, he would walk down the stairs and try get us across the line."

Atkinson faked the strike to protect his teammate. When Atkinson swept Siraj, the ball popped out of Akash Deep's hands and over the cow corner boundary for a six, reducing the runs required to 11.

Woakes ran a bye in agony to get off strike for the next over, and Atkinson hit another single to take guard for a third consecutive over, but his plan was upended by Siraj, and India's party started.

"My plan was to hit my areas consistently and build pressure," Siraj said. "Everything from there was a bonus. When I woke up today, I thought I could do it. I downloaded a picture from Google saying 'Believe.'"